

IN THE LAND OF THE CAMPBELLS.



IT is possible that by this time the pibroch is sounding a parody on a well-known song, and that under the bold peak of Dunaquoich and up the valley of the Aray the Gael is singing "The Cecils are coming, hurra, hurra!" as Lord Salisbury drives down Loch Fyne side, on his visit to the Duke of Argyll. In the old castle of the Maccalumore there have been many guests who were welcomed in a true Highland style. The first personage in the land has been under the ancient roof-tree, and who is there that can forget that ever-memorable day when the Marquis of Lorne arrived with his Royal Bride? Certainly not he who was ever troubled with a twinge of rheumatism. As to the writer's own experiences, they could not well be described. Yachtsmen who know what it is to be in a gale of wind with dragging anchors over the bows of a mixed fleet, with heavy showers of rain to indicate its force and direction, no idea where you were going to bring up or go down, and a free use of the Gaelic language, which would have delighted Professor Blackie, can possibly understand what were my sensations. It is to be hoped that the elements will be more kind on the present occasion, even though the month be the dark dreary one of November.

Leaving Rob Roy's country by way of Tarbert, and getting across under the grim peaks of the Cobbler Hill, up through Glencoe, by the Rest-and-be-Thankful, our little party got to Cairndhu, a snug little fishing village at the head of Loch Fyne, and a smart drive round a bend brought us in view of the well-known castle and village of Inverary; but not to tarry, however, for we were booked further south, for a parting shot on a favourite holding, which belonged to an old friend. This of course was anything but the regular route to Inverary, which is best approached from Glasgow by the Lord of the Isles or the well-known steamers and coaches of Mr. David McBrayne. Sportsmen have, however, no particular route when they ramble, and our journey was made all the more enjoyable by reason

of the fact that it was not done in the company of those "Cook's couponeers," who would like deductions made in their fares for every square mile of scenery they do not see on account of the mist. Inverary is not much of a place as regards size, indeed it consists at the most of some half-dozen houses, a few kirks, a hotel, a court-house, and a jail. It is the county-town of Argyllshire, however, and a Parliamentary burgh.

Though our feet were not on our native heath we remained "Red McGregors" still, and held on for Lochgilphead and the land of the Poltalloch, the stalwart chieftain son of which on two occasions stoutly fought for the Conservatives against Poltalloch, Lord Colin Campbell. From Skipness to Crinan Bay on the far side, every peak in the land has been written about by the deck loungers of the Columba or Iona, in fair or foul weather, while almost the whole of the West country school of Scotch artists have painted every fishing boat on the water and every peak of the peninsula's promontories. "Campbeltown Ho!" was our cry, for there were several sets of golfsticks awaiting us at the hotel there, and after two or three days' shooting we meant to have a round or two on the picturesque links of Macharohanish, which stretch away down the west side of the Mull of Kintyre. The dusk had long ago gathered down on Goatfell and the Arran peaks when we neared our journey's end, and we saw the welcome lights of the little whisky-making capital. Undoing our coat necks, we jumped down and kicked our legs at the door of the Argyll, needing but small invitation to taste and pronounce upon the native manufactures, of which whisky is called the "staple industry." We just landed in good time, for a storm, which had been sulking out to seaward all day, came in upon the place, all squalls, and ere we were ready for the post-prandial pipe, we could hear the roar of the heavy Atlantic billows in Macharohanish Bay. He who travels far in a day in the West Highlands of Scotland in October does not need to court sleep long, for, as a rule, it will gather down over him like a mist-cloud from the mountain-top. So, without exploring the place, we turned in, quite content with knowing that we were in a little city of distilleries and churches, a strong bane with a very weak antidote; or *vice versa*, although it is a moot question as to the one which proves spiritually predominant.

Breakfast next morning consisted of scones, oat-cakes, and the choice of a herring or a bit off a Campbeltown "tide-waiter." No cannibalism in this, however, for a "tide-waiter" in Campbeltown is a pig which frequents the fore-shores of the loch for what he can find left by the ebb, generally shell-fish, so that cockle-fed Campbeltown bacon is not to be despised.

But there is little time left to tell of a Campbeltown breakfast. The trap is at the door, the gun cases are inside, so are the golf-sticks, looking anxious for a taste of the green; and so are we ourselves five minutes afterwards, and whirling away westward.

The garden of Argyll, as is well known, lies well to the southward of all the Maccalumore's extensive dominions, which extend from the shadow of Ben Nevis to where the light on Sanda Island casts its warning glow across the loom of the dreaded Mull or Moil of Kintyre. Possibly from his building grounds on the Cowal coast most of his rental is derived; but the best of all his agricultural land is in the Campbeltown district. Some of the finest herds of Ayrshire cattle are to be found there, and the Clydesdale horses, which have been reared on the lime-containing pasture, have many a time and oft won the leading prizes at all the principal shows of Scotland. New and commodious steadings have in recent years been built, fences made, and lands reclaimed, and, indeed, from Campbeltown west we could not find in all England a more prosperous-looking country in harvest time. The tenantry are all enterprising men from Ayrshire and the Galloways, and a good old fraternal feeling still exists between them; the Galloway and Ayrshire farmers chartering special steamers, and showing stock and visiting at the Kintyre Agricultural Exhibition, and the Kintyre folks as regularly visiting in the same way the Ayrshire and Galloway shows. Having in the south many of such enterprising farmers with capital and enterprise, and in the north and west, on his Highland properties, poor hard-working crofters, the Duke of Argyll has had opportunities possessed by no other landlord of testing the relative questions of large or small farms, and so possibly has had ample reasons for taking up his present strong position on the land question. The improvements on the Kintyre property during the past forty years have been very great and very effective, and anyone who has driven through it in the month of

August or September would think he was quite guaranteed in saying that it was indeed what I have stated it to be, "The Garden of Argyll."

But our driver does not let us linger long among the scenes of rural prosperity. We leave the stubble land and the land of full stack-yards, for one of heather, alder trees, birches, and boulders—the land of grouse and black game, the original tenants whom Nature seems to have given fixity of tenure. A Highland welcome, a true Highland shake of the hand, a "How do ye do?" an inquiry as to friends left behind, and we soon were enjoying the warm glow of our host's blazing fire. But only for a minute or two. Guns, dogs, and men were in waiting; the morning was fair and bright after the shower; the sun was getting high, so we were soon out and at the old game. Grouse we found were as wild and as wary as curlews. So we could not make much of them; but dipping into a ravine we found, in a small forest of natural elders, black game as thick as lapwings. The old cocks were wary, however, but by dint of a little dodging we managed to get some rare shots at them, and with a good charge in, sent them bowling over in a style which even surprised ourselves. The delightful sensation of catching an old cock fully and fairly as he rises out of an alder clump, at thirty yards, and of sending him down with a thump as if you struck him with a hammer, is one of the grandest in the world. He is, indeed, if not a foeman, a bird worthy of your ounce and a quarter of lead—a bird who has stolen all the artificially grown food he ever ate from off the corn-stacks of the farmers, and under any circumstances refuses to be petted or tamed in any way.

But while we have been busy with the black game in the glen of alders, the keeper and his assistants have been away round the shoulder of the hill, and when we get to the top we are just in time to meet the grouse which they have been driving in our direction. On they come like a rain shower, and holding forward for the chance of heart and head, have the satisfaction of seeing our bird killed clean and fall dead. But the last of the laggards has gone, the keepers appear in sight and count our slain, and we think it high time to sample again the "staple industry," and have a seat on the grey boulders, and enjoy the scenery. Jura we can see to the north, running away out seaward

with the smoke of a rounding steamer just marking the headland. Ireland we can dimly discern through the sea haze, while half-way over to Malin Head is an outward-bound Transatlantic liner. Dipping down into an undisturbed glen, we shoot a few black-cocks on our way homewards, and wisely retire before a sweeping shower which comes in from the Atlantic. Satiated with shooting, next day we get out our sticks and make for the lonely, lovely golfing course of Macharohanish. There, watching the ball, wind-carried at times by the squalls which send up masses of foam on the Brent-clad beach, or aiming with deadly putt for the little round circle which lies as neat as a plover's nest in the centre of the circle of close-nipped sward, we spend a happy day, and enjoy ourselves far away from Cockneydom in the land of the Campbells.

