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Electric Scotland's Weekly Newsletter for July 21st, 2023

## Electric Scotland News

### Hamster wheel government

At first blush, Rishi Sunak's pledge to cut NHS waiting lists looks not just sensible, but absolutely imperative. The backlog since Covid alone numbers in the millions and horror stories of monstrous delays abound.

Even a seemingly obvious policy has its pitfalls though. According to Matthew Taylor of the NHS Confederation, focusing too heavily on waiting lists means the Government is 'caught on an endless hamster wheel', doling out ever more cash to treat sick people, because we haven't focused enough on stopping them getting ill in the first place.

Taylor's comments are reasonable, if not especially novel, in the context of British healthcare. Quite a few observers have noticed that we spend a relatively trifling amount on prevention, but an enormous amount on treating the already sick. (Indeed, it's one of the issues we discussed on this week's CapX podcast with Isabel Hardman of The Spectator).

But that 'hamster wheel' analogy is a useful way of looking at other areas of policy where the Government is constantly picking up the pieces of deep policy failures, without really addressing their root causes.

Take reports that Rishi Sunak is about to clamp down on the number of students doing 'low value' courses. Part of this is down to his own predecessor's decision to uncap student numbers in 2016, which has added to a surfeit of low-earning graduates who can't pay back their student debt.

But it's also a symptom of a much deeper problem of 'elite overproduction', whereby successive governments have insisted we produce a certain proportion of expensively educated graduates, rather than preparing young people for the realities of our jobs market. Capping student numbers might deal with the tip of that iceberg, but it won't solve the underlying issue.

Or look at energy, where ministers have kept the hamster wheel spinning by subsidising household bills, at enormous cost. Of course, this was prompted by the war in Ukraine, but it also exposed decades of shortsighted policy on gas storage and infrastructure – decisions that went on to cost us all more in the long run.

Or look at childcare. As our deputy editor Alys Denby has written, the response to high costs has been to spend billions on various packages of 'free' hours. Far from freeing up parents to work more or ensuring the long-term vitality of the sector, we now have a policy that manages to be illusory, regressive, costly and detrimental to childcare providers all at once.

This week's big issue of public sector pay is starting to feel a bit hamster wheel-y too. The recent agreement to raise millions of workers' salaries by 6-7% (depending on which service you work in) may be good politics. But

as Mark Lehain wrote on Friday, it risks sending a clear message that if you strike often enough, the Government will give in.

Not only is our chronic short-termism a very unsatisfactory way of making policy, but the hamsters spinning the wheel are struggling British taxpayers – and they are getting very, very out of breath.

John Ashmore  
Editor, CapX

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I have added two books to the site this week both entitled "Lectures on the Mountains". The first series is about "The Gordon Richmond Banffshire Highlands and Highlanders" and the second series is about "The Highlands and Highlanders of Strathspey and Badenoch" and the story this week is the Address given in the first series giving a view of the author and why he wrote these books. I personally enjoyed what he wrote and thought it would make an interesting read for you.

## Scottish News from this weeks newspapers

I am partly doing this to build an archive of modern news from and about Scotland and world news stories that can affect Scotland and as all the newsletters are archived and also indexed on Google and other search engines it becomes a good resource. I might also add that in a number of newspapers you will find many comments which can be just as interesting as the news story itself and of course you can also add your own comments if you wish which I do myself from time to time. Here is what caught my eye this week...

### Hospitality in Scotland

Key Issues for the Future of the Sector. This briefing shares findings from research with hospitality employers and workers on potential future developments for the hospitality industry in Scotland, identifying actions that governments and the industry could take to alleviate issues around in-work poverty in the sector.

Read more at:

<https://electricScotland.com/independence/sip/Hospitality-in-scotland-report.pdf>

### A brief history of Guisachan goldens

Deep in a Highland glen 155 years ago the world's first golden retrievers were born.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cp69g34p48ro>

### Why syphilis is rising around the world

Syphilis is one of the oldest known sexually transmitted infections. Once thought to be in decline, it is now resurging at an alarming rate.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20230706-the-troubling-rise-in-congenital-syphilis>

### UK leads the way in ending appeasement of Iran

Happily, this appeasement policy is not being followed by the UK, where Foreign Secretary James Cleverly last week announced heavy new sanctions against the regime.

Read more at:

<https://thinkscotland.org/2023/07/uk-leads-the-way-in-ending-appeasement-of-iran/>

Brothers launch model ships bound for Antarctica

Model ships built by two young Aberdeenshire brothers have been launched on what is planned to be an epic journey around the South Pole.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-north-east-orkney-shetland-66222535>

Canada & UK expand work permit agreement

The announcement comes weeks after the UK and New Zealand announced similar changes to their Youth Mobility Arrangements, while Australia and the UK have also increased eligibility and visa lengths for those wishing to live and work in either country.

Read more at:

<https://www.canzukinternational.com/2023/07/canada-uk-expand-work-permit-agreement.html>

What's CPTPP worth to Britain?

Gloomy reporting of the economic benefits of the UK's accession to CPTPP are based on projections almost a decade old. Placing so much stock in a single number is a terrible approach to both journalism and policymaking and wildly underestimates the advantages of free trade.

Read more at:

<https://capx.co/cptpp-membership-is-worth-much-more-to-britain-than-0-08-of-gdp/>

Canada wildfire smoke leaves millions under air quality advisory

Air quality in the north and eastern US is rapidly declining as hundreds of Canadian wildfires burn out of control. Twenty US states were under air alerts on Monday, according to AirNow, a government website that tracks harmful airborne pollutants. Major Canadian cities are also affected.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-66229511>

SNP crisis escalates as police expand probe to include potential embezzlement

The scope of the investigation will now include allegations of misuse of funds and potential embezzlement.

Read more at:

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/1792956/SNP-police-probe-embezzlement>

Brexit victory as Jaguar Land Rover owner announces huge multi-billion factory

The investment could lead to the creation of up to 9,000 jobs in the Bridgwater area.

Read more at:

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/1792522/brexit-victory-jaguar-land-rover-tata-factory-somerset>

HMS Unicorn receives game changing £1.1m restoration funding

HMS Unicorn, Scotland's oldest ship, has received £1.11m in funding towards its continued restoration and preservation.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-tayside-central-66202473>

Ocomtún: A long-lost Maya city that was just discovered

Archaeologist Ivan prajc has spent nearly 30 years uncovering long-lost cities buried deep in Mexico's Yucatán Peninsula. His latest discovery is capturing the world's attention.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/travel/article/20230704-ocomtn-a-long-lost-maya-city-that-was-just-discovered>

Nicola Sturgeon left SNP deeply demoralised with party weaknesses exposed  
Professor James Mitchell, an expert on the recent history of the SNP, said Sturgeon's departure had exposed weaknesses in the party previously hidden from public view.

Read more at:

<https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/politics/nicola-sturgeon-left-snp-deeply-30512146>

## Electric Canadian

William Henry Drummond

By V. B. Rhodenizer from his article in the Canadian Bookman Magazine of February 1927

You can read about him at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/lifestyle/poetry/William-Henry-Drummond.htm>

Wilson MacDonald

Poet

You can read about him and watch a video at:

[http://www.electriccanadian.com/lifestyle/poetry/wilson\\_macdonald.htm](http://www.electriccanadian.com/lifestyle/poetry/wilson_macdonald.htm)

Thoughts on a Sunday Morning - the 16th day of July 2023

By the Rev. Nola Crewe

You can watch this at:

<http://www.electricscotland.org/forum/communities/rev-nola-crewe/26376-thoughts-on-a-sunday-morning-the-16th-day-of-july-2023>

Labrador, The Country and The People

By Wilfred T. Grenfell, C.M.G., M.R.C.S., M.D. (Oxon.) and Others (1922) (pdf)

You can read this book at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/newfoundland/labradorthecount014134mbp.pdf>

A Labrador Doctor

The Autobiography of Wilfred Thomason Grenfell, M.D. (Oxon), C.M.G. with illustrations (1919) (pdf)

You can read about him at:

[http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/newfoundland/labradordocorau00gren\\_0.pdf](http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/newfoundland/labradordocorau00gren_0.pdf)

## Electric Scotland

Some Nineteenth Century Scotsmen

Being personal recollections by William Knight, Professor of Philosophy in the University of St. Andrews (1908) (pdf)

You can read this book at:

<https://electricscotland.com/history/somenineteenthcenturyscotsman.pdf>

Hylton Newsletter

Got in the July 2023 Newsletter which you can read at:

<https://electricscotland.com/familytree/newsletters/hylton/index.htm>

Eastwood

Notes on the Ecclesiastical Antiquities of the Parish by the Rev. George Campbell, Minister of the Parish (1902) (pdf)

You can read this book at:

<https://electricscotland.com/history/glasgow/EastwoodNotes.pdf>

The Correspondence of the Rev. Robert Wodrow

Minister of Eastwood and Author of the Sufferings of the Church of Scotland, edited from Manuscripts in the Library of the Faculty of Advocates, Edinburgh by the Rev. Thomas M'Crie, (1842) (pdf)

You can read these volumes at:

Volume 1 - <https://electricscotland.com/history/correspondenceof01wodr.pdf>

Volume 2 - <https://electricscotland.com/history/correspondenceof02wodr.pdf>

Volume 3 - <https://electricscotland.com/history/correspondenceof03wodr.pdf>

The Miscellany of the Woodrow Society

Containing Tracts and Original Letters, chiefly relating to the Ecclesiastical Affairs of Scotland during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, selected and edited by David Lang, Esq. (1844) (pdf)

Added to the Woodrow Society page at:

<https://electricscotland.com/history/selectbiographiess.htm>

The Life of Archibald Alexander, D.D.,

First Professor in the Theological Seminary at Princeton, New Jersey by James W. Alexander, D.D. (1870) (pdf)

You can read about him at:

<https://electricscotland.com/history/scotsirish/lifearchibaldal00publgoog.pdf>

Lectures on the Mountains

Or, The Gordon Richmond Banffshire Highlands and Highlanders, as they were and as they are by William Grant Stewart (First Series) (1860) (pdf)

You can read this book at:

<https://electricscotland.com/lifestyle/lecturesonmount00stewgoog.pdf>

Lectures on the Mountains

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[https://electricscotland.com/lifestyle/Lectures\\_on\\_the\\_mountains\\_or\\_The\\_Highlan.pdf](https://electricscotland.com/lifestyle/Lectures_on_the_mountains_or_The_Highlan.pdf)

Hospitality in Scotland

Key Issues for the Future of the Sector. This briefing shares findings from research with hospitality employers and workers on potential future developments for the hospitality industry in Scotland, identifying actions that

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## Story

Lectures on the Mountains  
By William Grant Stewart

### ADDRESS

In appearing before the world in a public character, it is customary for the debutant to give some account of himself and his antecedents, in order that the public may judge of his qualifications for the character he assumes —Whether as an actor himself, or as a delineator of the actions of others.

Without entering at large on a piece of autobiography, which might not, probably, either interest or benefit the reader, it may be sufficient for the author to state, shortly, his opportunities of knowing and describing “The Highlands and Highlanders, as they were and as they are.”

Fifty years ago, when the gentlemen of England did not, as now, find it as necessary to have a Box in the Highlands as a Box at the Opera, to qualify for Almack’s and the Haut-ton, the glens and mountains of Scotland knew little of the Twelfth of August, as a remarkable day in the calendar; for, unless the grounds were proximate to, or set apart for, the special sport of the Lord of the Manor, and his immediate friends and retainers—and who seldom continued the pastime of shooting grouse for more than a few days—no Saxon lord or commoner of those days, thought it a part of the breeding of an aristocrat, or man of fashion, to become the occupant of a smoking bothy, bleak and sometimes stormy moors; and, before new roads and modern luxuries found their way to the mountains, to live, or rather exist, on Highland mutton, deer, grouse, oat-cakes, and whisky, for some weeks together; so that, fifty years ago, the deer, the grouse, and, it may be, the poacher, had a happy time of it, a sort of miUenium, when the ox, the sheep, the deer, and the grouse, might lie down .together.

In those days, the boundless territories now required for the amusement of the southern votaries of sport and fashion, were comparatively of little value to the lords and lairds of that time; and unmeasured tracts of mountains and glens, were rented by tenants of capital, for cattle and sheep grazing, at a rent of something like a penny per Highland acre, probably not one-twelfth part of the rents now drawn for such grounds from sportsmen alone.

From the noble family of Gordon the author’s father held a tract of the Grampian Hills, in Banffshire, the bounds of which, we are sure, he never personally perambulated—including, within the vast range, Cairngorm, famed for its gems—Ben-Macdhui, said to be the highest ground in Britain—the dark and awful gorge of Lochavon, on which the sun but seldom shines —Clachdian, or the shelter-stone at Lochavon —Clachvan, or Clach-na-Ban (the women’s stone, once, and, sometimes even now, the resort of females in an interesting condition, to ensure them an auspicious hour), and many other objects of surpassing local interest and Alpine grandeur.

Not far from those romantic regions, at the foot of the hoary Liapean, on the banks of the Fergy, and within the sounds of the roaring Avon, stood the peaceful mountain mansion of Achnahyle, in which the author first drew the . breath of life—“A child of the mountains, cradled by their fountains,” and hushed to sleep by the carols of a Gaelic nurse. His footsteps first wandered by the fairy dwellings of Cragganmore; and, as his ideas were “taught to shoot,” he haunted the dwellings of the Seanachies and legendary chroniclers of the neighbouring

hamlets, imbibing and recording on the tablet of a retentive memory an ample store of tales and traditions — a volume of which, written while the author was yet a boy, published by Constable and Co. of Edinburgh, and Hurst and Co. of London, was very favorably received by the public. And although the pursuits of education and professional avocations called the author away from the scenes of his early youth, his lot has been cast amongst the most original, brave, ingenious, and intelligent bodies: of Highlanders existing; and having a knowledge of their language and manners, his professional and official avocations afforded him ample opportunities of a dose study and observation of the Highlander's characteristics, in all their bearings, and of acquiring a mass of new and original matter.

With these prefatory remarks respecting the author's opportunities and qualifications, a few observations on the subject on which he intends to treat may not be impertinent.

Little more than a century has passed since the Highlands of Scotland, so far as regards the internal condition, and the manners and habits of the inhabitants, was a sort of a terra incognita to the rest of the world. Formerly, isolated as the inhabitants were from their fellow-subjects, by a different language, different dress, and different forms of government, and inhabiting a mountainous country enclosed by natural bulwarks, long scarcely accessible to any but themselves, they were seldom seen by their Lowland neighbours, except when, as marshalled hosts, the clans, at the command of their chiefs, descended to wage war for or against their nominal sovereign; or when policy, or it may be necessity, occasioned a foray on some contumacious Lowland neighbour, who perhaps refused to pay compulsory police assessment, for protecting his goods and chattels from spoliation—it may be on the part of the protectors themselves. On such warlike visitations, it must be allowed, that, for want of an organised Commissariat, necessity obliged them to help themselves to “such creeping things as came their way,” without much ceremony or acknowledgment, so that, in the times we are writing of, a Highlandman was regarded as a sort of a Turk, or white Sepoy, capable of committing any depredation on man, woman, or child; and, being no candidate for popularity, he took no pains to propagate a more just and favourable opinion of his real character. But when the rebellion in 1745, and its consequences, nearly annihilated feudal or patriarchal power, and broke down the wall of partition by which the mountaineer and the inhabitant of the plain were so long divided; and when a new system of government, and the formation of roads, promoted the gradual establishment of commercial and friendly national intercourses, a new light was reflected upon the Highlanders' manners and habits; and on the decay of mutual prejudices, the virtues of the moun-ta-Sneer, which were previously reserved for home consumption, were duly appreciated by the world. No longer afraid to pass the Grampian barriers, men of letters, like the great Dr. Johnson, from time to time performed perilous journeys, perilous chiefly on account of bad roads and worse means of conveyance, in search of historical and statistical knowledge of the country and its inhabitants; and these explorators proclaimed to the world that a Scottish mountaineer, instead of being a rude and unprincipled depredator, was possessed of many accomplishments and virtues, which he was by no means supposed to possess, and that a “people, whom more barbarous nations have sometimes called barbarians, carried in their demeanour the politeness of Courts, without the vices by which they are too frequently dishonoured;” and, in respect of poetry and music, and national literature, were equal, if not superior, as a community, to any similar class of their fellow-subjects.

But it was reserved for the most illustrious novelist of the time to open up a new mine of materials, which, like the golden mines of

Australia, had long been buried in obscurity. His intuitive sagacity led him to seek, in new and unexplored fields, for materials which his master-mind moulded into those rare combinations of history and romance which have so much charmed and instructed an admiring world. The Wizard of Abbotsford, like the Witch of Endor, could raise the spirits of the dead! At the great magician's incantations, the grave gave up its mouldering inhabitants, which creative genius again clothed with the attributes of life and mortality, presenting to the enchanted mind in the closet, or the theatre, new and living personifications of the persons, the language, the dress, and the characteristics of those who had performed their parts on the stage of life, and thrown off the “mortal coil,” generations and ages ago. But “still even in their ashes live their wonted fires,” for who has hung enraptured

over the magician's pages, and witnessed the creations of his genius on the stage, and has not regarded the principal heroes and heroines as beings whom we are taught in the course of time to recognise as old and familiar acquaintances—cherished hallucinations, which, instead of dying out under the exercise and influence of sober reason and judgment, were, as if by the founder's blast, fanned and kept alive by a succession of similar creations, proceeding from the same furnace, and cast by the same master hand ! And when to Scott's splendid gallery of poetical pictures, the gallant Stewart of Garth added his series of military portraits, of Highland warriors, who, during the French war, reflected so much honour and glory on the British arms, the Highlands and Highlanders were painted in the most splendid and captivating colours.—Just at the time when George the Fourth, monarch of our mighty empire, in 1822, clad in the splendid costume of Scotland's Kings, stood, in the Royal halls of Holyrood, where, in 1745, some of the ancestors of those who now stood before him in the same halls, had surrounded the person of the last of the Royal Stuarts, as an aspirant to the throne of his Royal race. Led away by generous and chivalrous feelings towards a young and fascinating Prince—"the favourite of men and the idol of Women"—they answered the appeals to their hearts and affections by staking life and fortune on the issue of his cause—a stake which ended so disastrously to the principal actors in the tragedy. Descendants of some of those noble martyrs to generous sentiments and aspirations, in the persons of a Lovat, a Glengarry, a Lochiel, a Cluny Macpherson, a Grant of Glenmoriston, and many others, now appeared side by side with the descendants of those who, judging more wisely, stood by the throne which they had sworn to defend, and to bend the knee, in loyal homage, to the chief of chiefs—the Monarch of the British Isles. Proud of his name, his lineage, and his family glory, each chief might well be proud of the Court and retinue, which, in his character of Lord of his clan, he brought to do homage at the foot of the throne. Beside him stood a stately dame, of polished mien and courtly air, followed by a train of chieftains young and ladies fair—an assemblage of the Graces, from which the painter or the sculptor might select a Venus or an Apollo, equal, as a model, to those of Florence or of Rome; while true representatives of the MacIvors, a Roderick, a Helen, a Vernon, and other creations of the arch magician (who with rapture gazed on the brilliant throng), might be figuratively recognised in some of the manly persons and lovely forms moving in this grand tableau—a scene beheld by the Monarch with so much admiration that he, in presence of some of his attendants, declared, that the Highlanders " were a patrician race of heroes and heroines, on whom nature peculiarly lavished her choicest gifts in mental powers and personal graces." Invested as it was with the spells and witcheries of poetry and romance, the garb of old Gaul reigned proudly in the ascendant in the Palace of Holyrood—the gorgeous uniforms and glittering appointments of England's proudest sons (the Guards) paled before the Eagle plume, the bonnet, and the plaid. The eyes of the fair were bent with admiration on the Chief and his tail, forming the elite of his clan, marching in gallant array to the pibroch's inspiring strains of " My heart's in the Highlands," and " Nanny wilt thou gang with me," finding a fervent affirmative response in the eyes and hearts of the enchanted daughters of the British plains.

No wonder, then, that such a combination of national adulations, should conspire to clothe the Highlands and Highlanders with so much of romantic interest and eclat. "Old Cairngorm," that supplied so many brilliant gems to adorn the persons of his sons and daughters, in addition to his " robes of azure hue " and perennial stars of snow, had his " scalped brow" crowned with a halo of national glory—a brilliant beacon—the centre of animal magnetism, whose magnetic influence attracted the footsteps of poets, painters, antiquarians, geologists—" et hoc omne genus" For within the last forty years scarcely one of any note in the world of letters that has not left footprints on Benledi, Benlomond, Benevis, and Cairn Gorum, and wandered by the lakes and scenes rendered dear to heart and eye by the songs and stories of Ossian and Scott 5 while the most celebrated of these classic scenes have been transferred to canvas by the pencils of Williams, Landseer, MacCulloch, and others—the first artists of the age. Nor has this ardent penchant for visiting the Highlands and Highlanders suffered abatement from the lapse of time. Despite grouse disease, dear deer-forests, high rents, and expensive accommodations, the tartan fever and heather mania, propagated by the wand and pen of the Wizard of Abbotsford, and the pens and pencils of other poets and painters, are still in the ascendant; for, on that great day in the new Highland calendar, the Twelfth of August, every moor and shealing, shooting lodge, and Highland inn, is graced and cheered by the presence of the nobility and gentry of England and the plains of Scotland, in pursuit of the feathered denizens of the moor, the antlered monarch of the forest, or the silvery tenants of the stream; while the graceful forms of England's proudest and fairest daughters are seen patiently enduring toil and privation, in



their endeavours to stand on the tops of our highest mountains—a feat to be recorded in their family histories. And, whether it be that the old spells of romance, which bound the fair to the land' of the Gael, be revived and increased by feelings of admiration of the gallant deeds of our devoted Highland legions on the burning plains of Hindostan, dealing out signal vengeance on the recreant heads of the slayers of Britain's sons and daughters, certain it is that those feelings were never more enthusiastically ardent than at present; for it is a fact that, during the summer season of the present year, double the usual number of sportsmen, tourists, and visitors, have crowded, the roads, conveyances, inns, and steam-boats in the Highlands—spending money with liberal heart and hand among the natives of all classes, for the pleasure of being for a time located in Tartanland.

But notwithstanding the vast number of gifted persons that have employed their pens on Highland subjects, one having extensive local knowledge will be struck with the paucity and identity of the information conveyed by most of the writers who have followed in each other's wake. Confined chiefly to the historical department, including the ancient national institutions, the origin and descent of the clans, and political condition of the people, the numerous works extant appear to be like copies taken of pictures by original masters—the copies varied only by additional colouring, by way of embellishment, which by no means adds to the fidelity of the new work. And, notwithstanding all the research that has been employed, in delineating the manners of the inhabitants, and the many graphic descriptions we have had of Highland scenery, there are still many hidden treasures which, save in the records of local chroniclers of traditions, have not yet been found in history—an observation which applies with great truth to those more inland and romantic regions which, from their secluded situations, had long been inaccessible to the research of men of learning and of genius, and where the native inhabitants, from want of intercourse with the active, refined portion of their fellow-subjects, are the true representatives of the ancient inhabitants, in all their feelings and habits. Were the “Great Unknown” and old a Christopher North” still spared to their country and the world (how that Edinburgh, the metropolis, is only distant from Inverness, the Highland capital, one day's journey), and had they time to prosecute favorite researches in those unexplored regions (on which the illustrious Christopher, forty years ago, appeared like a passing meteor, collecting, in his transition, some food for the lamp of his genius, which produced some brilliant articles on the romantic glories and wild grandeur of Glenavon), it would be found that there are still to be redeemed from obscurity ample materials for the historian, the poet, and the novelist.

Leaving the busy haunts of men, either of those master-minds, by fancy led, accompanied by some ancient professor of legendary lore, would explore the mansions of the dead in the rural churchyard of a sequestered glen, and trace the last resting-places of men still living in traditional story in their native land; they would visit the rude, enduring, monumental stones and cairns, designed to transmit to later ages the memories of warriors, “ Village Hampdens and Cromwells,<sup>99</sup> and bards and musicians, “who waked to ecstasy the living lyre” He would visit the hallowed green knolls, perhaps still indicated by a tree planted by some pious hand, to mark the spot where once some of those men lived, and spoke, and sang. He would visit the most enduring monument—the overflowing spring at which they drank, and told the “tales of other years.” He would ascend the height above the old baronial castle, perhaps now an aweinspiring ruin, where the owl holds its solitary reign, and there, abandoning himself to the vision of inspiration, the poet would call into life, in his creative mind, scenes which were enacted by chiefs and clans in days of yore — see chiefs, clad in their warlike panoply, arraying their clan (just gathered by the summons of the fiery cross, and shouting their war-cry)v into martial order. He would see the parting scene betwixt a Hector and a Helen, or a Donald and a Malvina, perhaps for the last time, and hear the pibroch's march and measured tramp of shouting clansmen eager for the battle fray; and soon would he reduce all these glowing mental images to poetic numbers or historical legends, as enduring as tablets of brass. But, alas!

The minstrel's robes ore cold and white as snow,  
His chamber is the lowly grave;  
The poet's heart lies still and cold and low,  
And o'er his tomb the midnight breezes wave.

Stillman industrious workman, lighting his taper at the lamp, and following in the wake of genius, in the field we

have mentioned, will not fail to exhume “ many a gem of purest ray serene ” from caves of obscurity, and to bring to light many a flower which would otherwise be “ born to blush unseen, and waste its sweetness on the desert air.”

But it is not the design of the author to enter on a new, systematic history of the Highlands and Highlanders, after the manner of those able and gifted writers, who have largely written on Highland subjects, such as the M'Phersons, M'Culloch, Stewart of Garth, Skene, Logan, and Brown—works all able and interesting, and some of them (especially the work of Dr. Brown) replete with erudition and the fruits of great research. The author, less ambitious in his aspirations, would adopt the plan and spirit of the ingenious Mrs. Grant of Laggan, whose interesting and popular sketches of the superstitions, manners, and habits of the Highlanders, and letters from the mountains, published fifty years ago, conveyed, in a light, pleasing, and instructive style and manner, much new and interesting information respecting the general characteristics of the country and people, and their social and domestic relations. Like Tarleton, the editor of ‘ Ireland's Legends,’ or Galt, author of the ‘ Annals of the Parish,’ he would be the historian of the political condition, manners, habits, and opinions, and the editor of the legends of his country and people.

No doubt, the lapse of a half-century, marked with great and rapid improvements, consequent on national associations and private enterprise, and the general diffusion of knowledge and civilization, have produced a mighty change on the condition of the inhabitants; and a work on the model and in the manner of Mrs. Grant's, giving faithful portraiture of the Highlands and Highlanders, as they were in her time, and as they are in the time of the author, may prove both amusing and instructive, as counter reflexes, illustrative of the characteristics of the ancient and modern Highlanders. Observing the avidity with which popular treatises and lectures on national institutions and men and manners are now received by all classes, the design of the author is to offer a series of similar sketches, having for their object the concentration, in small compass, of a variety of historical and traditional information relating to the Highlands and Highlanders, including, under the head of Chiefs and Clans, notices of clansmen who, as warriors or civilians, have distinguished themselves in the public service, or have done honour to their native land,—interweaving historical and descriptive narratives,—with a selection of popular tales and anecdotes appropriate to the subject. And combining with these, under the heads of “Forest Moors and Rivers,” and “ Highland Tour and Tourists,” sketches illustrative of the manners, habits, and pastimes, of those noble and honourable naturalized semihighlanders, who are the welcome frequenters of our Forests, Moors, and Rivers, Roads, Mountains, and Inns, during the sporting and travelling seasons of the year.

In the author's pages the lover of the marvellous will find the truth of the adage, that “Facts are stranger than fictions,” for tales founded on fact, abounding in the Highlands, will, in point of romance, compare with the creations of the poet or the novelist; and, if the author will have recourse occasionally to the aid of fiction, it will generally be for the purpose of filling up chasms, and adjusting the fair proportions of narratives which would be otherwise inconsistent and incomplete. Like marrying music to verse, or applying the illustrations of the artist to bring out the charms of a subject, it may be sometimes expedient to blend facts and fictions in the page of a Highland Tale, so as to bring it more home to the head and heart of the general reader. But, upon the whole, the author's descriptions and illustrations will be chiefly founded on original native materials, historical and legendary.

In accordance with the plan thus propounded, the author's prelections, written in the course of his researches, will be collected and published in a series of small volumes, comprising in each a limited number of subjects and sketches, such mode of publication being deemed most suitable for the tourist, the traveller, and general reader; exhibiting, it is hoped, in a cheap, popular, and attractive form, a digest or compendium of what is most interesting in the present condition of the people, and what may ultimately, as an entire reprint, form a popular picture of “The Highlands and Highlanders, as they were and as they are.”

W. G. S.

VIEWVILLE, GIENURQUHABT, November, 1859.

For links to these two books see the Electric Scotland section above.

END.

Weekend is almost here and hope it's a good one for you.

Alastair