A BOOK

OF

HIGHLAND MINSTRELSY.

BY

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WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

BY

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It is hoped that the brief introductions severally prefixed to the following poems will be found more convenient to the reader than the scattered foot-notes which would otherwise have been necessary. They have no pretension to erudition, and, unless where they are the result of personal observation, have been drawn from such authorities as are most readily accessible, and as bear most directly upon the traditions, the sentiments, and the customs of a romantic people.

The writer takes this opportunity to thank her Scottish friends for the local information so obligingly communicated, which has proved of material service.

E. A. H. O.

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Time, in its progress, has deprived even this "blasted heath" of some of its romantic desolation. Farms and fields, a dwelling-house erected since the beginning of this century, and its cheerful accompaniments, combine to give the scene a less dreary air than it wore in the earlier days of its unhappy celebrity. Drummossie Muir, where the battle was fought, is, indeed, for the greater part still under heather, but at intervals is the waving of grain on its ridges, and a carriage-road may be seen winding through its graves. Yet, girdled as it is with lofty mountains and hallowed by melancholy memories, Culloden has a gloomy grandeur which cannot but impress the visitor. Every stone may be regarded as a hero's monument, every twining tuft of heather as a wreath hung by Fame over the slumber of a warrior. Then heavily and sad will come upon the soul the thought of the terrible calamities of civil war. Brothers arrayed in fight against brothers, fathers against sons, women widowed and children orphaned by the hands of their fellow countrymen; and all this devastation and sorrow wrought in singleness of heart and loftiness of soul by those who thought so erroneously of

loyalty as to sacrifice at its shrine the strongest and holiest ties of nature. If those brave, misguided men erred in spreading ruin over their country, and involving their families and connexions in beggary and death, they laid down their own lives as an atonement with a fervour of chivalrous devotion to which history has scarcely a parallel. The more hopeless the struggle became their faith burned the brighter; and never had it a purer and more unwavering glow than when all was suddenly lost, their prince an outlaw, and hunted like a very wolf, with a price upon his head. It may be readily supposed that the survivors who followed his fortunes amid the cold dependence of foreign courts, could not lose with the homes they had quitted the ardent love which had made those homes so dear to them. They were haunted in exile by heart-sickness and sorrow, yearning to look once more upon their mountains and die. It is said that "the gentle Lochiel"—who, too sagacious not to foresee ruin in the desperate enterprise, reluctantly, and not without the reproaches of his prince, drew the sword—died in exile of a broken heart. Some even dared to revisit in disguise the scenes where the mention of their names would have drawn on them a hundred foes; and it is well known that Dr. Cameron, Lochiel's brother, was taken in an attempt of this kind, and fell a victim to political justice or revenge. Who can forget the touching picture drawn by Smollett of the exiles at Calais, who went every day to the beach to gaze on the white cliffs of their native island, from which they were separated by a far wider gulf than even the stormy waters that rolled between?

THE EXILE AT CULLODEN.

THERE was tempest on the waters, there was darkness on the earth,
When a single Danish schooner struggled up the Moray Firth,
Looming large the Ross-shire mountains frowned unfriendly on its track,
Shrieked the wind along their gorges like a sufferer on the rack;
And the utmost deeps were shaken by the stunning thunder-peal —
'T was a sturdy hand, I trow ye, that was needed at the wheel!

Though the billows flew about them till the mast was hid in spray,
Though the timbers strained beneath them, still they bore upon their way,
Till they reached a fisher-village, where the vessel they could moor—
Every head was on its pillow when they landed on the shore;
And a man of noble presence bade the crew, "Wait here for me,
I will come back in the morning when the sun has left the sea."

He was yet in manly vigour, though his lips were ashen white,
On his brow were early furrows, in his eyes a clouded light;
Firm his step withal and hasty, through the blinding mist so sure,
That he found himself by dawning on a wide and lonesome muir,
Marked by dykes and undulations, barren both of house and wood;
And he knew the purple ridges—'twas Culloden where he stood!

He had known it well aforetime—not, as now, so drear and quiet;
Then astir with battle's horror, reeling with destruction's riot;
Now so peacefully unconscious, that the orphan'd and exiled
Was unmanned to see its calmness, weeping weakly as a child;
And a thought arose of madness, and his hand was on his sword,
But he crushed the coward impulse, and he spake the bitter word:

"I am here, O sons of Scotland—ye who perished for your king,
In the misty wreaths before me I can see your tartans swing;
I can hear your slogan, comrades, who to Saxon never knelt;
Oh! that I had died among ye with the fortunes of the Celt!

There he rode, our princely warrior, and his features wore the same
Pallid cast of deep foreboding as the First one of his name;
Ay, as gloomy is his sunset, though no Scot his life betrayed:
Better plunge in bloody glory than go down in shame and shade!

Stormy hills, did ye protect him, that o'erlook Culloden's plain,
Dabbled with the heather blossoms red as life-drops of the slain?
Did ye hide your hunted children from the vengeance of the foe?
Did ye rally back the flying for one last despairing blow?
No! the kingdom is the Saxon's, and the humbled clans obey,
And our bones must rot in exile who disdain usurpers' sway.

He is sunk in wine's oblivion for whom Highland blood was shed,
Whom the wretched caterans sheltered with a price upon his head;
Beaten down like hounds by whipping, crouch they from their masters' sight,
And I tread my native mountains as a robber in the night;
Spite of tempest, spite of danger, hostile man and hostile sea,
Gory field of sad Culloden, I have come to look on thee!"

So he plucked a tuft of heather that was blooming at his foot,
That was nourished by dead kinsmen, and their bones were at its root;
With a sigh he took the blossom ere he strode unto the strand,
Where his Danish crew awaited with a motley fisher band;
Brief the parley, swift his sailing with the tide, and ne'er again
Saw the Moray Firth that stranger or the schooner of the Dane.

THE LADY OF LOVAT.

It seems impossible to contemplate without a feeling of compassion the spectacle of a hoary head laid on the block and severed from the aged frame. Yet such were the vices and crimes of Simon Fraser, last Lord Lovat, and so shamefully did he abuse the long term of years which Heaven's mercy had allowed him for repentance, that we can give him little pity when we see him, at the age of eighty, arrived at a violent end.

His life has been so amply and frequently related, that few of his flagrant enormities need be recapitulated here. He was, it is said, far from prepossessing in person—a fact which none who have seen his picture by Hogarth will dispute. But he possessed great abilities, a winning tongue, whose aptitude for falsehood enabled him to play any part necessary for his crafty policy, and a rare talent for acquiring and retaining unbounded influence over his vassals, whom he made the instruments of his secret resentments.

The description of him in his day of power by a contemporary writer makes one's heart ache for the deluded creatures who were ever ready at his bidding to undertake the darkest crimes, and of whose lives he was utterly regardless, so long as he could sit safely entrenched behind their fidelity.

Such a man was not likely to shew to much advantage as a husband,

and we are not surprised to find that his marriages partook largely of the deceit and cruelty of his general character. His first wife he obtained by force; but as the affair threatened to ruin his fortunes instead of forwarding them, he returned the victim to her relatives, the powerful family of Athole, denying "he had had any thing to do with her."

His second wife was the daughter of the Laird of Grant; and during her life he contented himself with annoying and harassing his neighbours, whenever offended with them—an event which seems to have taken place very frequently.

This lady dying, he took him a third wife, the unhappy subject of the poem. Having occasion for the interest of the Argyle family in some of his crooked schemes, he paid his addresses to Primrose, daughter of Campbell of Mamore, and niece of the first Duke of Argyle. The young lady shrinking in horror from his suit, he decoyed her from the house of her sister, Lady Roseberry, by means of a forged letter, which implored her presence with her mother, who was represented as lying dangerously ill in a house in Edinburgh, to which she was directed. On hurrying thither, she found in place of her mother her unprincipled suitor. He told her she was in his power, for that the character of the house was such that, did she not leave it as his wife, her fair name would be irretrievably sullied.

Distracted and helpless, after a struggle of some days the poor girl consented to the distasteful nuptials, immediately after which he carried her to his castle of Downie, near Inverness. Here he immured her in a turret, deprived of proper or sufficient clothing, and occasionally under the terror of absolute starvation.

Many years elapsed before the real circumstances of her situation transpired, when Lady Lovat obtained a formal separation, and returned to the quiet home of her girlhood. She passed the latter years of her life

in Edinburgh, and the reader of Chambers' very interesting "Traditions" of that city will find many curious anecdotes of her eventful career.

Her husband, after numberless evasions and windings of policy, was at last submerged in the vortex of 1745, having declared for the Stewart cause when deceit was no longer practicable, the lure which confirmed his wavering faith being the promise of a dukedom from the court of St. Germains. He was then very old and infirm, but the energies of his mind were unimpaired. In the general rout after the defeat of Culloden he was compelled to fly, and was hidden for some days in a secret cell in the roof of Cawdor Castle.

This refuge proving ineffectual he repaired to Moidart, on the coast of Argyle, where he was present at a futile meeting of the Jacobite lairds, whose attempt to rally being hopeless, they once more dispersed, and Lord Lovat was in a few days discovered by the military, concealed in the trunk of a tree as aged and hollow-hearted as himself. Lady Lovat, hearing of his capture and removal to London, offered to join him in his prison; but he refused her kindness, as feeling himself unworthy of such a generous return. In this alone he shewed evidence of a softened heart, levity and sneering indifference marking his conduct to the end.

He defended himself in person at the bar of the House of Lords, displaying great acuteness, and his exertions to procure a pardon were unremitting and full of cringing and meanness. All was in vain, and he met death with a careless fortitude.

The tradition of a gory head appearing to a member of the family in Scotland, while its owner was executed in London, was heard by the writer in early youth; but as no published accounts of the times take any notice of such an apparition, it is difficult to decide whether the story referred to Lovat or to either of his companions in misfortune, Lords Balmerino and Kilmarnock.

THE LADY OF LOVAT.

I.

THE mournful Lady Lovat,
She sat within the tower;
"Now would, thou false, false Fraser,
I were beyond thy power!

Now would I stood on Jura's steep,
  Or Scarba's iron isle,
Or 'neath my kinsman's roof might sleep,
  In the halls of proud Argyle!
For if I were by blue Loch Fyne,
  That feeds the western main,
Where every eye looks scorn to thine,
  I'd hold thee in disdain.
A wife without the honour,
  A mistress without power,
The daughter of a noble house,
  And prisoned in thy tower.
Oh! friends I left behind me—
  Oh! Lorn, my gallant chief,
Ye reck not of my misery,
  Ye bring me no relief!"
    Said the mournful Lady Lovat.

II.

In the ancient Castle Downie,
  There seemed unwonted stir,
The piper blew the welcome
  He once had blown for her.
A clattering sound of horses

She heard within the court,
The noisy vassals suddenly
Arrested all their sport.
And the Fraser to a noble guest
Went forth in feudal power,
But the lady of the castle
Sat weeping in the tower.
"I know that stranger's accents,
That stranger's form I know;
It is my cousin Annabel,
Who loved me long ago!"
Said the mournful Lady Lovat.

III.

The mournful Lady Lovat,
She had not dried her tears,
When a trampling on the turret-stair
Rewakened all her fears;
A trampling on the turret-stair—
It was her gaoler stern;
I wot her heart was spiritless,
When the lock began to turn!
With a mocking smile he entered—
With a mocking grace he bowed;

"Come down, my Lady Lovat—
Come down!" he spake aloud;
"Here rides thy cousin Annabel,
To question of thy weal;
For men have spread ill tales of me—
Of me, thy husband leal.
And thou must doff that squalid weed,
And don this garment gay;
And as thou art of Christian creed,
Mark well the words I say!
With rings upon thy fingers,
With brooches on thy vest,
With golden nets around thy locks,
Thou shalt be bravely drest.
And see thou wear the smiling eye
Befits a happy wife,
And see thou praise me tenderly,
As thou dost heed thy life!
And sit thou at the banquet
As suits a chieftain's bride,
And drink to her right merrilie
Who drinketh by thy side.
So turn thou back the scandal
Men spread abroad of me.

Now, swear to me obedience—
  Now, swear it on thy knee!"
He flashed his dirk before her,
  He forced her on her knee;
She vowed to him obedience,
  So faint of heart was she.
"Thou false, false Lord of Lovat—
  God judge 'twixt us, I pray!
Like mercy from the merciless
  May fail thy dying day!"
    Said the mournful Lady Lovat.

IV.

The wily Lord of Lovat,
  He led her down the stair,
And she was decked with broidery,
  With jewelled vestments rare;
And she was gay with forcèd smiles,
  And spake in forcèd tone,
But never the Lady Annabel
  Gat speech of her alone.
They two were bred as sisters
  Beside the blue Loch Fyne,

And with the love of sisters
  Their hearts did intertwine;
And neither had a separate thought
  In days of youth gone by,
But now the Lady Lovat,
  She did not dare to sigh.
She led her to the banquet,
  She placed her by her side,
With courtly grace she ruled the feast,
  As suits a chieftain's bride.
"I pledge thee, cousin Annabel,
  I pledge thee joyfullie;
Right welcome is thy leal fair face
  Unto my lord and me!"
"A boon!" cried Lady Annabel;
  "I pray, my lord, a boon!
Thy presence and thy lady wife's
  In our castle of Duntroon.
We hold a festive gathering,
  Within Loch Crinan's towers;
And might we hail you for our guests,
  What cheerful hearts were ours!"
The wily Lord of Lovat,
  With cunning sneer he heard:

"There sits my lady and my wife,
I will abide her word!"
"Content thee, cousin Annabel,"
She cried in hurried fear;
"I cannot leave my happy home,
Although thou art so dear!
My lord has business here awhile,
And I have work at home;
And truly as I love Argyle,
Need be, I cannot come."
"Well said, thou lady of my heart!"
The treacherous Fraser cried;
"Nor thou nor I can live apart—
We'll dwell at home, my bride!"
Then mused the Lady Annabel,
"I find not what I sought;
Here is too much of loving word
For much of loving thought!
Yet gained I for one hurried hour
My cousin's ear alone,
Despite this arch-dissembler's power,
Her secret heart were known!"
"But go thy ways, keen Annabel—
Thou art outwitted here;

For thou hast nought at home to tell,
And I have nought to fear!"
Said the wily Lord of Lovat.

V.

The mournful Lady Lovat,
She saw her friend depart,
She had not left for comforter
Aught save her own weak heart.
But man hath bounds in tyrannie,
And woman turns when stung;
And at his sneer she lost her fear,
And brake out with her tongue:
"Thou false and cruel Fraser,
That dost rejoice in lies,
Thou hast put words into my lips,
And looks into mine eyes;
Thou hast constrained me to my hurt,
Hast worked me to my fall—
Yet hear, thou Lord of Lovat,
Thou shalt account for all!
The books are full against thee,
The furies hotly burn,
Thou art upon a downward track,
And there is no return!

I see the sordid grasping
  At an unreal name,
The futile plots and counterplots—
  Their end a flight of shame.
I see the fruitless shelter
  In Cawdor's castled height,
The creeping o'er the battlements,
  The fleeing forth by night;
I see the troops pursuing,
  Through Moidart's midnight gloom—
They hunt the wretch whose aged head
  Is bending to the tomb.
I see the airy semblance
  Of greatness fade and die;
I see the headsman with his axe,
  The people crowding by.
Thine—thine the hoary temples
  That stoop upon the block—
Blench not, my Lord of Lovat,
  Thou must abide this shock!
Then shalt thou fawn and flatter,
  And cringe to friends and foes,
And cry with age's idiocy
  'Gainst such an age's close.

When thou shalt crave compassion,
And pray and be denied,
Then in thy spirit's anguish,
Remember me, thy bride!
Remember, in like manner,
I sued to thee in vain;
Smile not, my Lord of Lovat,
I heed not thy disdain!
When the knell of death is pealing,
When the axe of death is bright,
When the rabble by the scaffold
Are shouting at their height—
My spirit shall be with thee,
To look upon thy doom,
Or if I be on Scottish land,
Or if I swell the tomb!"
She spake with heat of passion,
Yet every word had might—
He shivered like an aspen leaf,
He fled beyond her sight,—
Fled the guilty Lord of Lovat.

VI.

The mournful Lady Lovat,
It is her youth's decline,

She sitteth in her kinsman's halls,
Beside the blue Loch Fyne;
A widow with a husband
She fled from like a slave,
Bound with a chain of dissonance
That stretcheth to the grave.
She hath not seen the Fraser
For many a peaceful year,
Who late to win a coronet,
Hath served the Chevalier.
She looks upon the sunny shore,
Upon the tranquil bay,
Where calm the verdant shadows sleep
From wooded Dunnaquaich.
She turneth to the arrassed walls,
And lo! upon the floor,
The semblance of a human head
All slowly dropping gore;
The matted hoary tresses
Have crimson on their snows,
The eyes are full of agony —
Those dreadful eyes she knows.
She cries with grief remorseful,
The vision melts away;

She seeth but the arrassed walls,
The tranquil, sunny bay:
"Too well am I avengèd
For all I suffered long,
Too terrible this recompense,
Lord Lovat, for thy wrong!
Thy failing limbs unpitied,
And shamed thy locks of grey—
The mercy of the merciless
Hath failed thy dying day!"
Said the mournful Lady Lovat.

CRAGGAN AN PHITHICK;

THE ROCK OF THE RAVEN.

THE ruined castle of Invergarry is seated on a rock on the banks of Loch Oich, Invernesshire, close to the confluence of the river Garry with the lake. The crag on which it is built was the ancient gathering place of that branch of Clan Colla called the Macdonells of Glengarry, and gave its name, "the Rock of the Raven," to the slogan of that formidable tribe. By some authorities the castle is honoured with the appellation of "ancient;" but Mrs. Thomson, in her recently published "Memoirs of the Jacobites," mentions its founder as that Chief of Glengarry who was a Lord of Session, and the immediate predecessor of "the heroic Alaster Dhu," which would fix the date of the castle at about the same time as the battle of Killiecrankie. However this may be, we learn from Captain Burt's "Letters from the North" that it was partially burned in the rebellion of 1715, that it was repaired by a trading company who had leased Glengarry's woods for the purpose of smelting ore with the charcoal of the timber, and that on the agent of the company attempting to live in it, he was rudely expelled by the gentlemen of the Macdonell clan, who could not brook the idea of a trading Sassenach being the occupant of their chief's hereditary mansion. Invergarry had a gleam of its ancient splendour at the commencement of Prince Charles

Edward's rash enterprise; for we read in Chambers's "History of the Rebellion" that the prince spent a night there in August 1745, and was visited by an emissary from the deceitful Lord Lovat. Once again Charles slept in the castle, but in sadly changed guise, for it was on the morning after the fatal fight of Culloden. A few days afterwards the deserted fortress fell a prey to the destroying army of Duke William of Cumberland. Its strength resisted in some measure the flames with which it was assailed, and the blackened and ivy-grown bulwarks still rear themselves grandly over the blue waters of Loch Oich.

The modern house of Glengarry lies lower down on the beach, and scarcely interferes with the solemn gloom of the ruined fortalice.

The cruelties practised by the duke and his generals were beyond description. Miller's "Survey of the Province of Moray" informs us that so active were the ministers of vengeance, that "in a few days neither house nor cottage, man nor beast, was to be seen within the compass of fifty miles—all was ruin, silence, and desolation."

It appears that the Chief of Glengarry himself took no part in the rising, nor did his eldest son, who was absent in France. The younger son was the leader, and the intended scapegoat for the family; but the government was too irritated to attend to distinctions of so doubtful a character, and, accordingly, in the succeeding vengeance, the Macdonells of Glengarry suffered bitterly for their disaffection. In 1794, the Macdonells were formed into a government corps under the command of their chieftain; but this regiment being disbanded in 1802, the principal part of the clan removed to Upper Canada, where they have given to many scenes the same beloved names as those borne by the glens of their fathers. The remnant of these Macdonells live peaceably in their old locality, nor is there in all Scotland a more interesting or beautiful district than that of Glengarry.

THE ROCK OF THE RAVEN.

Beware of Macdonell, beware of his wrath!
In friendship or foray, oh! cross not his path!
He knoweth no bounds to his love or his hate,
And the wind of his claymore is blasting as Fate;
Like the hill-cat who springs from her lair in the rock,
He leaps on his foe—there is death in the shock;
And the birds of the air shall be gorged with their prey,
When the chief of Glengarry comes down to the fray,
With his war-cry, "The Rock of the Raven!"

The eagle he loveth dominion on high,
He dwells with his kindred alone in the sky,
Nor heedeth he, sailing at noon o'er the glen,
The turbulent cares and dissensions of men.
But the raven exulteth when strife is at hand,
His eyes are alight with the gleam of the brand;
And still, when the red burning cross goeth round,
And gathers Clan Colla at fortified mound,
The first at the tryst is the Raven.

On the Rock of the Raven, that looks o'er the flood,
All scathed with the cannon, all stained with the blood,
Had old Invergarry long baffled the snows,
The gales of the mountain, the league of the foes;
And sternly its bulwarks confronted the tide,
And safely the skiff in their shadow could ride,
For upwards and downwards as far as the sight,
That castle commanded the vale and the height,
From its eyrie, the Rock of the Raven.

But woe for Duke William! his doom shall be bale,
When against him in judgment upriseth the Gael,
When they cry how green Albyn lay weltering in gore,
From western Loch Linnhé to Cromarty's shore;

How the course of the victor was marked on the cloud,
By the black wreathing smoke hanging down like a shroud
O'er the hut of the vassal, the tower of his lord,
For the fire worketh swifter than carbine or sword,
And giveth more joy to the Raven.

Then downcast was Colla, sore smitten with dread,
And hunted for sport with the fox and the gled,
While old Invergarry, in silence forlorn,
Resounded no longer the pipe and the horn.
But the Raven sat flapping his wings in the brake,
When the troops of Duke William marched down by the lake ;
Their march was at sunset—at dawning of day
In smouldering heaps were those battlements gray,
And the castle was left to the Raven.

From mountain and loch hath departed its sway,
Yet still the old fortress defieth decay ;
The name of Duke William is foul with disgrace,
But the bastions he fired are as firm in their place ;
And the clansmen he scattered are gathered again,
The song and the dance are restored to the glen,
And the chief of Glengarry hath builded his halls
On the low woody beach in the shade of those walls
That frown from the Rock of the Raven.

And still hath Macdonell the soul of his sires,
And still hath Clan Colla the old Gaelic fires,
For the pulse beateth strongly for honour and pride,
As it throbbed in their breasts who for loyalty died;
With peace and with plenty the valleys rejoice,
And the wind hath forgotten the slogan's dread voice,
And the home of the Gael is as tranquil and bright
As Loch Oich when it sleeps on a blue summer's night
At the foot of the Rock of the Raven.

DUNFALLANDY.

English travellers and Lowland neighbours have united in representing the Highlanders as barbarians and savages, destitute of the higher attributes of humanity, who lived by rapine and feud. On the other hand, their own traditions and the enthusiastic zeal of later Celtic writers have done much towards clearing their fame, and proving that over the darkness of a lawless and predatory people there played much of the light of man's diviner nature. Romance, likewise, steps eagerly forward to aid in their vindication. Their virtues were on the same exaggerated scale as their vices. If their revenge was unrelenting, their good faith was unwavering; if they hated to the death, their love lived even beyond the grave. Their passions were those of a nation, often persecuted, always misunderstood, with a certain wild chivalry which casts the grace of poetry over their memory.

The policy adopted with regard to them by the ancient Scottish kings was indiscriminately cruel and uniformly injudicious.

The jealousies between rival clans were oftener fomented than healed by statesmen who looked on them as so many wild animals, whose destruction would prove rather a benefit than a misfortune. The same treatment was extended to them after the union of the kingdoms; in

short, until recent times, the whole history of the Gael exhibits a series of sanguinary feuds and formidable insurrections. With the more paternal sway of the third George a new era commenced for the clans, and kindness has done what severity failed to achieve; it has crumbled into dust the ancient bulwarks of their patriarchal government.

As danger drew them more closely together, so freedom has dispersed, and the Highlanders are now loyal subjects though more indifferent vassals. The chieftainship exists but in name; the clansmen are scattered through the far colonies of Britain, and have almost forgotten the romantic peculiarities of their ancestors.

The story of Dunfallandy, or "The Bloody Stone," is characteristic as a record of the past. Its date lies so far back, that the former name of the estate has passed away, and the peasants of the vicinity are unable to supply any failing links in the tradition.

The present generation have been too plodding to care for the preservation of those local legends which it was the pride of their fathers to narrate, and which have thus descended with the old people into the tomb.

The modern house of Dunfallandy is plain and unadorned; it crowns a green terrace above the river Tummel, and looks down, somewhat contemptuously, upon the low haugh on the level of the stream, where, in former days, dwelt that Laird of "Middlehaugh" whose ruthless style of courtship has given rise to the ballad.

The creaghs were the forays undertaken by large bodies of Highlanders at certain seasons of the year; the bright moonlight of autumn was their favourite period, and the cattle of the Lowlanders, or the herds of a rival clan, were liberally laid under contribution.

The chiefs did not think it derogatory to lead the bands who set forth on such expeditions. Often, indeed, a chieftain would make a contract

with his daughter's bridegroom to give as her dowry the purchase of three Michaelmas moons; hence arose a Lowland proverb, "Highland lairds tell out their daughters' tochers by the light of the Michaelmas moon."

Petty thievery was almost unknown; even the English visitors remark with commendation on the honesty of the meanest kerne. Every thing in the hills was conducted in due form, and they went forth to rob as they went to fight, attaching nearly equal merit to success in either undertaking.

The Highland ladies wore the rich silks and velvets which were readily imported from France; the lower classes contented themselves with a garment called arisaid, of striped cloth, probably not unlike the tartans which formed the distinguishing apparel of their male kinsmen: that they at times wore the tartan itself appears from Martin's work on the Western Islands, and also from an English writer who dwells on the fastidious nicety displayed by the Highland ladies in the arrangement of the coloured checks, which they drew with their own hands as a pattern ere the work was woven in the loom.

DUNFALLANDY.

In the good old stirring time
  Celt and Saxon lived at feud,
Oft their hands in foulest crime
  By that variance were imbrued;
Passions then were falsely large,
  Love impulsive, fierce desire,
Hate bequeathed in dying charge
  To the children from the sire;

Life was cheap and vengeance stern,
  Death familiar presence wore,
Softer was the Druid's cairn
  Than the warrior's heart of yore.

Then the heather and the broom
  Clothed from head to foot the strath,
Few were gardens trim in bloom,
  Shaven turf or gravelled path;
Poor the crops along the haugh,
  Wild the pastures on the hill,
And the burn knew not the law
  Of the life-supporting mill.
Then with Autumn's yellow leaves
  Swept the creagh through the glen,
And the Saxons' choicest beeves
  Vanished with the Highlandmen.

Then in pride of silken dress
  Walked the dames of high degree,
Those of homelier comeliness
  Garbed by simple housewifery.
Maids untochered maids were left,
  While the heiress richly dowered

Oft was from her parents reft,
And by outrage overpowered,
When, at deadest of the night,
On her sleep the suitor broke,
Bore her off in friends' despite,
Forced into the bridal yoke.

Yonder house that, glaring white,
Crowns the bank of mossy green,
Standing like a beacon bright
Far adown the valley seen;
Tame, prosaic, though the look
Of its unromantic pile,
Yet its walls are as a book
Where I read of blood and guile.
Long before its stones were placed,
Long before our grandsire's sire,
Yon fair hillock was disgraced
By a murder strange and dire.

Vague and garbled is the tale
Shewn by faint tradition's gleam,
How an heiress ruled the vale
From that mount above the stream;

How a Laird of Tummelside,
Dwelling on the farther shore,
House and holm aspiring eyed
With an envious heart and sore.
If he loved the maiden's self
Story hath forgot to tell,
But he loved the maiden's pelf,
Lands and rental, passing well.

Then he sought a neighbour friend,
Spake him fair in loving guise,—
"Unto me assistance lend,
For I know thee good and wise!
Muireal, queen of Tummelside,
I have loved with love intense,
Win that maiden for my bride,
Rich shall be thy recompense!
I am rude of speech and look,
Thou hast clerkly wit at will;
Thou art sweet-voiced as a brook,
I am mute as yonder hill."

Forth went Donald, soft of tongue,
To the lady of the mount,
And his suit auspicious sprung
From his breast's o'erwelling fount.

Words of love, her face so fair,
  Words of hope, so kind her tone,
That the youth's impassioned prayer
  Wooed her for himself alone:
Wooed and won her, all forgot
  How the silent suitor waited,
Till was tied the marriage-knot,
  And his ardent passion sated.

One forgot—the pleasure-crowned,
  One remembered—the betrayed,
Night and day he watched the mound,
  Hidden in a bushy glade;
Crouching by a huge grey stone,
  Armed, he breathless long had stood,
When the bridegroom passed alone
  From the dwelling to the wood.
Proud of heart and step he came,
  Gloating on the peaceful scene,
While his foe took deadly aim
  From the covert's rocky screen!

Did the widow wail and shriek?
  Did she rouse her vassal kerne?
Ah! too oft is woman weak
  When her ire should fiercest burn.

Mayhap 'twas a wanton heart,
  Mayhap terror crazed her mood,
Mayhap force might have its part
  On her helpless womanhood.
Ere the evening's twilight died,
  Ere the corse was stiff and cold,
Ere the murderer's hand was dried,
  She was wedded in its hold!

Now oppressor and oppressed
  Both have gone to their account,
And a race of gentler breast
  Hold the lairdship of the mount.
Rooted up as noxious weeds
  Have the traces passed away,
Nor, like many barbarous deeds,
  Chant they this in barbarous lay.
Now on Tummelside the farm
  Thickly hath its produce sown,
You may sleep and fear no harm
  E'en beside "The Bloody Stone."

So it is with human deeds,
  Too ephemeral to last,
Bounteous loves and lustful greeds
  Intermingle in the past.

So confused the records stand
  Of this crime-traditioned glen,
When the Gael had Ishmael's hand
  Raised against his fellow-men;
Nought remaineth but the name,
  Spectre-like that clings to thee,
Handing down thy gory fame,
  Hill of blood, Dunfallandy,
    From the good old stirring time!

THE IMPRECATION BY THE CRADLE.

A YOUNG lady of rank, belonging to an ancient family in the north of Scotland, was betrothed, with the consent of her relations, to a gentleman of equal birth. Their union being delayed by unforeseen obstacles, the lover found means to ruin the unhappy girl, whose affection for her plighted husband left her more exposed to his unprincipled passion. Then, notwithstanding the wealth to which she was heiress, he deserted her, and completed his perfidy by carrying his addresses to the daughter of a neighbouring earl, by whom they were accepted.

The distracted lady heard of his new betrothal when on the point of becoming a mother. With a strength almost supernatural in one so delicately reared, she rose from her bed the very day her child was born, and attiring herself in costly garments, went to a public assembly, where her fickle lover and his engaged wife were to be present. There she danced so gaily and so lightly as completely to belie the rumours scandal had circulated regarding her.

But shortlived was her assumed gaiety. Returned to her dishonoured home, heartbroken and a prey to her emotions, she knelt down by the cradle of her son and prayed that on the father's head sorrow and retribution might descend, and that he might never know happiness in his home or child in his wedlock.

Her adjuration seemed a prophecy, for she who had filled her place in his affections, learning the story of her hapless rival, conceived a violent hatred for her husband. So far did this dislike proceed that her mind became unsettled. She repeatedly attempted both her own and her husband's life; and at last, confined to prevent fatal consequences, she died a raving and a childless maniac.

The boy, whose birth had brought misfortune on both his parents and caused so much sorrow on all sides, grew to manhood, when he distinguished himself greatly in the profession of arms, gaining both honour and wealth in his country's service.

Such are the romantic incidents of a story which is literally true.

THE IMPRECATION BY THE CRADLE.

PART I.

Slumber sweet, my babie,
Slumber peacefullie,
Mickle grief and mickle wrang
I have borne for thee!

Hush thee, heir of sorrow!
Sleep and sleep away,
All of thy fause father's heart
Mingled with thy clay.

Dinna wear his likeness,
Dinna smile his smile;
I should hate thee, innocent,
For that look of guile!

Dinna speak his accents,
Lest my heart of fire
Spurn the child for blandishments
Borrowed from the sire.

Faint with mother-anguish
From my bed I rose,
Kamed the locks he praised so weel,
Donned my richest clothes,

Danced amang the blythest,
Gay as ony bride,
All the weakness of my limbs
Iron-braced by pride.

Fair is Lady Ellen,
He her hand did hold,
Breathed to her the flatteries
Breathed to me of old.

Dancing down the measure,
Ne'er his thoughts could be
How to him a child was born
That dark day by me.

Oh! ye dreams of vengeance,
Which the injured haunt,
If ye come like evil powers
Evil prayers to grant,

Cursèd be his union!
Cursèd be his name!
Trodden in forgetfulness,
Blotted out in shame!

Barren be his wedlock,
Desolate his hearth,
Never may his ancient halls
Echo children's mirth.

Childless Lady Ellen!
Never may her hand
Rock the cradled little one,
Heir of all her land.

Land and lordly glories
Passing to another,
Never may a lawful heir
Mock his elder brother!

Slumber sweet, my babie,
Slumber peacefullie,
Mickle grief and mickle wrang
Life has yet for thee!

PART II.

Slumber sweet, my mother,
Slumber peacefullie,
Dinna heed the grief and wrang
Life has brought to me!

Dinna heed the scorning
Of thy haughty kin,
Dinna weep sae bitterlie
Lang repented sin!

Dinna heed the portion
  Lawful heirs enjoy,
Forfeit lands and forfeit name
  Wrested from thy boy.

Dinna weep the traitor
  Who thy youth betrayed,
Wooed thee in the sunny time,
  Left thee in the shade.

For the curse is working,
  At my birth conjured,
Sharper griefs are piercing him
  Than thyself endured!

Lonely are his castles,
  Desolate his halls,
Never child hath propped the house
  Which to ruin falls.

Hate is in her bosom,
  Who the long night lies
Gazing in his haggard face
  With unquiet eyes.

Crazed is Lady Ellen,
  She whose beauty won
Lover from his plighted bride,
  Father from his son.

Crazed is Lady Ellen,
  Yet her madness knows
Horror for his perjury,
  Pity for thy woes.

Softly sleep, my mother,
  He can sleep no more,
Fearfulness and gaunt remorse
  Knocking at his door.

Outcast from my lineage,
  He to me denied
Father's love and father's name,
  Wealth and rank and pride;

Yet my blood is burning
  With ancestral fires,
And the glory of the child
  Shall outshine the sire's.

And the landless soldier,
From the gory field,
From the ramparts won shall carve
His unspotted shield.

Softly sleep, my mother,
Slumber peacefullie,
Justice for its cruel wrong
Life shall yield to me!

THE OLD HOUSE OF URRARD.

THE pass of Killiecrankie, justly celebrated for its beauty, is said to have derived its name from the Gaelic expression, "Coile-chrionaich," signifying decayed brushwood. Most inappropriate in the present day is this title, since its precipitous sides are now clothed with towering foliage of every kind. Among the other trees the gracefully feathered birch is conspicuous, whose golden columns, anticipating in summer the hues of autumn, shed a peculiarly beautiful lustre over the pass. The abandonment of the old road by the river-side in favour of a modern one which follows a more elevated course, added to the tasteful distribution of the woods, has changed what was formerly a savage defile to a sylvan glen. Thus the imagination of the present traveller can scarcely realise the horror felt by the Hessian troops, who drew back in terror from the entrance, and absolutely refused to penetrate its gloomy recesses.

It was here that in 1689 the Hanoverian army sustained a bloody defeat from the Highlanders under Viscount Dundee, "that last and best of Scots," as Dryden emphatically terms him. The battle raged most hotly in the fields and garden immediately surrounding the house of Urrard, which, from a high, wooded bank, overlooks the northern outlet

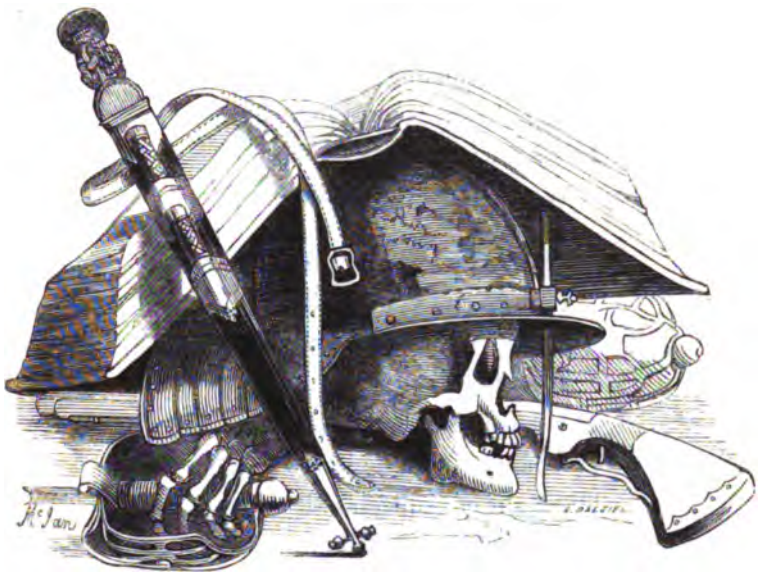
of the pass. A green mound, darkened by overhanging branches, points out the spot where the gallant Claverhouse fell. The missile which pierced him is said to have been a silver button employed by a fanatic enemy, who believed him proof by the power of Satan against all more ordinary weapons. With his death victory was bought at too high a price, as it paralysed the subsequent exertions of the Jacobites, and proved more disastrous to their cause than a reverse could have been. After receiving his wound, Dundee was carried to die in the castle of Blair, where he had been previously residing, and was buried in the neighbouring churchyard.

The house of Urrard has been of late years altered and enlarged, though enough of the old building remains to keep alive the memory of its traditions. In the progress of these alterations the workmen laid open a secret passage, wherein were found two skeletons, their rusted swords and mouldered garments. It was supposed from the appearances that one combatant having been pursued thither by another, both had fallen in the struggle, and their bodies were left forgotten to decay. The adjoining room was of course peculiarly obnoxious to spiritual intrusion. Often has the writer, when a child, lain awake at nights listening apprehensively for the expected knocks and groans by which the imprisoned spectres expressed their dislike of confinement. As the wainscot was old and the window-frames addicted to rattling, there was no danger of the listener being otherwise than confirmed in credulity.

The garrets were likewise the nocturnal resort of ghostly company. Thither they came to array themselves in the brocaded robes and sweeping trains which lay garnered in certain old chests. The servants used to tell the children about hearing sounds of silken dresses trailed along the floor, and the idea had a kind of grotesque horror attractive to the young imagination. Vanity beyond the grave, love of dress in mouldering corses,

skeletons arrayed in stiff and pompous robes—such were the strange fancies that haunted the sleep of childhood.

Moreover, Dundee himself (said the learned) was to be evoked by the bold wight who should approach at midnight the spot where he received his death-wound. One occasion is particularly remembered when a party sallied out on such an adventurous errand; but whether it was that the number of the spirit-hunters frustrated the spell, or that the redoubtable warrior scorned a summons from the lips of frightened school-girls, the green-shadowed mound continued still and undisturbed in the moonlight, and the ghost-seekers returned as wise as they went.



THE OLD HOUSE OF URRARD

Dost fear the grim brown twilight?
  Dost care to walk alone
When the firs upon the hill-top
  With human voices moan?
When the river twineth restless
  Through deep and jaggèd linn,
Like one who cannot sleep o' nights
  For evil thoughts within?

When the hooting owls grow silent
The ghostly sounds to hark
In the ancient house of Urrard,
When the night is still and dark?

There are graves about old Urrard,
Huge mounds by rock and tree,
And they who lie beneath them
Died fighting by Dundee.
Far down along the valley,
And up along the hill,
The fight of Killiecrankie
Has left a story still.
But thickest shew the traces,
And thickest throng the sprites,
In the woods about old Urrard
On the gloomy winter nights.

In the garden of old Urrard,
Among the bosky yews,
A turfen hillock riseth,
Refreshed by faithful dews;
Here sank the warrior stricken
By charmèd silver ball,
And all the might of victory
Dropped nerveless in his fall.

Last hope of exiled Stuart,
  Last heir of chivalrie,
In the garden of old Urrard
  He fell, the brave Dundee!

In the ancient house of Urrard
  There's many a hiding den,
The very walls are hollow
  To cover dying men;
For not e'en lady's chamber
  Barred out the fierce affray,
And couch and damask curtain
  Were stained with blood that day.
And there's a secret passage,
  Whence sword and skull and bone
Were brought to light in Urrard,
  When years had passed and gone.

If thou sleep alone in Urrard,
  Perchance in midnight gloom
Thou'lt hear behind the wainscot
  Of that old haunted room
A fleshless hand that knocketh,
  A wail that cries on thee,
And rattling limbs that struggle
  To break out and be free.

It is a thought of horror—
I would not sleep alone
In the haunted rooms of Urrard,
Where evil deeds were done.

Amid the dust of garrets
That stretch along the roof,
Stand chests of ancient garments
Of gold and silken woof.
When men are locked in slumber
The rustling sounds are heard
Of dainty ladies' dresses,
Of laugh and whispered word,
Of waving wind of feathers,
And steps of dancing feet,
In the garrets of old Urrard,
Where the winds of winter beat.

By the ancient house of Urrard
Its guardian-mountain sits,
Whene'er those sounds arouse him
His cloudy brow he knits;
For he the feast remembers,
Remembers eke the fray,
And to him flit the spectres
At breaking of the day.

There under mossy lichen
They couch with hare and fox,
Near the ancient house of Urrard,
'Mong Ben-y-Vrachy's rocks.

BESSIE BELL AND MARY GRAY.

Who knows not the old ballad of "Bessie Bell and Mary Gray," simple and pathetic both in its melody and theme?

The sisterly affection of these young girls—their flight together from the dreary, plague-stricken town to the healthful solitudes of nature—their unconscious rivalry in love, and the melancholy consequences of their lover's eager pursuit, by which he communicated to them the pestilence from which they had fled—their deaths together and burial in the same grave, "to beek forenent the sun,"—all these sad features of their story make up a picture of beauty to which the Scottish muse has ever been feelingly alive.

The following relation is given in the "New Statistical Account of Scotland:"—

"The common tradition is that Bessie Bell was the daughter of the Laird of Kinvaid, and Mary Gray of the Laird of Lednock. Being near neighbours, a great intimacy subsisted between the young ladies. They were together at Lednock when the plague which ravaged Perth and its environs broke out, in 1645. To avoid it they retired to a romantic spot called Burn Braes on the estate of Lednock, where they lived for some time, but afterwards caught the infection from a young gentleman, an

admirer of both, who came to visit them in their solitude; and here they died, and were buried at some distance from their bower, upon a beautiful bank of the Almond."—See Parish of Methven, Perthshire.

Acting on the hint that "the young gentleman" was an admirer of both, Allan Cunningham has added to the ballad one or two verses representing the youth in a state of perplexing vacillation between the charms of the affectionate rivals. With what taste these verses were appended to the simple old fragment, in which some nameless bard had given immortality to the names of Bessie Bell and Mary Gray, every reader can judge for himself.

The grave where these fair maidens lie will disappoint the expectations of the enthusiastic visitor. Though the scene be a deep glen, through which runs the rapid Almond, flinging its bells of foam within a few feet of the slumberers' resting-place, though the bank rises behind precipitously, and an old pine waves its dark branches overhead, shutting out the excessive beams of summer, good taste is offended by the heavy square stone sunk to a level with the ground, and the high, inelegant railing which surrounds the slab, giving the tomb the dull, gloomy air of a city churchyard.

The present arrangements were effected by the late Lord Lynedoch, the proprietor, whose cottage occupies a sunny bank amid those scenes of song. The gallant veteran, it would appear, knew better what became a hero's life than a maiden's grave, or he would have left in their primitive rusticity the grassy mound and unhewn headstone which formerly pointed out the tomb of Bessie Bell and Mary Gray.

BESSIE BELL AND MARY GRAY.

Oh, Bessie Bell and Mary Gray,
Ye damsels famed in Scottish lay,
How knew ye I was roving
By Lynedoch's elms and hazel bowers,
Where Almond sings unto the flowers,
Where ye were lost through loving?

How knew ye by your grave I stood,
Where thickest twines the tangled wood
And saddest plains the river;
Where overhead, with feeble stir,
Trembled an old and withered fir,
As whispering, "Lost for ever?"

How knew ye I bemoaned the tomb
Where ye were laid in youthful bloom,
Now curbed with stone and paling

So high and strong, and closely barred,
The fielding-mouse would find it hard
To creep within the railing?

Oh where, I cried, the heaving mound
That clasped you in its mossy bound,
The lichened stone that headed;
When ye were left to buds and dews,
Save when some faithful Scottish muse
Your glen sequestered threaded?

The trace of many a vulgar soul
Is carved upon the pine-tree's bole,
Your deathless fame to borrow.
Ah, tasteless hands! to lacerate
That aged trunk, long consecrate
To love alone and sorrow!

Oh! Bessie Bell and Mary Gray,
My heart has thrilled to hear your lay
From bard or harper hoary!
But why, ye ghosts, disturb my rest,
All scarred with that contagious pest
Whereof ye died in story?

Ye stood together by my bed,
Blue haloes round your features played,
From ruder gaze to screen you;
For oh! your bloom was sadly changed,
Since lover's heart uncertain ranged,
And could not choose between you.

"Alas!" ye sighed, "we heard your moan;
'Where is the damsels' burial-stone,
That whilome marked their slumber?
What evil hand this weight hath laid,
The gentle breast and youthful head
With iron cage to cumber?'

Oh! stranger, once above us grew
The feather fern, the harebell blue,
And decked our bosoms lightly;
And through the slender crested grass,
Unto the free air we could pass,
When stars were shining nightly.

And we could wander on the brae,
Where still he came at break of day,
His fond allegiance proving.

Ah! had we been content to dwell
Without him in our hermit cell!—
  But we were lost through loving!

From dire disease in danger's hour
We fled unharmed to Lynedoch's bower,
  While horrors raged around us,
For never yet had Almond's glen
Been tainted by the breath of men,
  Till that true lover found us.

He brought us food and kindly cheer,
And dying words from parents dear,
  Our hearts to anguish moving;
But in his looks and in his breath,
And in his presence, there was death,
  And we were lost through loving!

Yet still of us it shall be sung,
Two maidens lived admired and young,
  By envy's cark unblighted;
Though to the same belovèd youth
Their virgin innocence and truth
  In secret soul were plighted.

But now no more our restless sprites
May wander forth on dewy nights,
  Each fond remembrance hailing.
Allhallows' Eve alone is ours,
When nought can bind the viewless powers,
  Nor stone nor iron railing.

Or when some sympathetic spell
Of minstrel mourning in our dell
  Brings friendly help to free us;
Then may we roam till peep of morn,
And sigh our symphonies forlorn,
  And mortal eye may see us.

Oh! stranger, heed the boon we ask—
No irksome toil, no sinful task,
  No soul-defiling duty;
We seek but pity for our fate,
Imprisoned, dark and desolate,
  In Lynedoch's glen of beauty.

We seek but freedom—from us far
Be tablet-stone and iron bar,
  Our peaceful ashes crushing;

Let us again feel sun and showers,
And hear the tinkle of the flowers,
And Almond's waters gushing.

So, when ye list the mavis sing
On Lynedoch's braes in early spring,
Beside some dear one roving,
Shall grateful accents swell the lay
From Bessie Bell and Mary Gray,
Those maidens lost through loving!"

So said the ghosts, or rather sung
With a sweet, sighing, dolorous tongue,
That melted me to sorrow;
When on my couch a red ray fell
From the waked sun, they knew it well,
And hasty cried, "Good morrow!"

A cold air swept me, as if stirred
By the strong pinions of a bird
Who skyward fast is roving.
And thus I learned the mournful lay
Of Bessie Bell and Mary Gray,
Those maidens lost through loving.

THE SHRIFT OF JANET CAMPBELL.

The following tale, which is based on a current tradition, has undergone some alteration in the handling. The character of the Lord of Balloch is entirely fictitious. However, the dark annals of a Scottish family relate that once an aged husband, roused to jealousy by the indiscreet levity of his young and beautiful wife, immured her in a closet in his own castle, keeping watch himself with horrible perseverance till his victim died of starvation.

Balloch Castle was the former name of the seat of the Marquis of Breadalbane, now called, from its position, Taymouth. The present building is of recent erection; the ancient one (to which we have transferred the locality of the poem) was the work of Sir Duncan Campbell, the Black Knight of Lochawe. He, by authority of royal charter and by force of arms, drove out the unfortunate clan Gregor from the vale of Breadalbane, which they had possessed for more than a century; and his descendants have ever since remained the lords paramount of the goodly heritage.

The doctrines of the Covenanters, widely spread over the south of Scotland, made but slow progress in the Highlands. They were not congenial to the spirit of clanship, which supposed a sacrifice of personal

opinions to the superior wisdom of the chief. But the Campbells of Breadalbane, influenced by their relationship to Argyle, had generally sided with the cause of the Covenant. Hence, Janet Campbell's father is described in the poem as belonging to the Cameronian sect, one of the severest among the Covenanters; while it is evident that the fierce character of the imaginary tyrant, the Lord of Balloch, would ill assimilate with a party who entertained such rigid notions of religion, and insisted on such unbounded freedom of political action.

Among the Highlanders the nuptial tie was kept sacredly inviolate; but it is to be feared that previous to marriage Celtic manners were not so laudably rigid, and that the frailty of a vassal maiden, when her chief was the tempter, would have been reckoned but a venial sin. The new and purer faith adopted by Janet's father would inspire him with very different sentiments on the occasion of his daughter's fall.

The summary punishment inflicted by the Lord of Balloch on his wife will not surprise those who remember the arbitrary power possessed by the chiefs. Though public opinion placed some restraint upon them (for the most irresponsible and powerful Gael was ever jealous of his reputation), and the deference they were expected to pay to the elders of their tribe frequently called others to their counsel, still instances were frequent where unbridled fury scorned all these barriers, and the evil effect of an irresponsible authority over life and death displayed itself in glaring colours.

This "power of pit and gallows," as it was termed, was not formally revoked by government till near the end of last century. We may imagine how often it must have been abused, how often the innocent must have suffered where law and a regulated system of justice were unknown. It must, in fairness, be allowed that the mutual affection which united the chieftain and his clan made such ebullitions of despotism

very rare, as, indeed, they would have been unsupportable if frequently indulged.

Like all mankind when in a half-civilised state, the Gael possessed virtues and vices strongly inconsistent. Generous as he was, almost chivalrous in high-toned sentiment, he held it cowardly to forgive an injury. The memory of offences was carefully treasured in the songs of the bards; resentment grew in strength, instead of wearing away under the softening influence of the past. The spirit of the injured dead called on his descendants for vengeance on his wrongs. He who would willingly have forgotten was not allowed to forgive; the prejudices of education, the voice of his people, the stirring strains of the minstrel, stimulated the meekest into fury. Wrong was accumulated on wrong; and thus the sin of one ungoverned heart might prove the death-doom of hundreds unborn.

THE SHRIFT OF JANET CAMPBELL.

PART I.

"Stir the flame and heap the faggot—do not leave me, child, I pray!
Nothing here hath power to startle in the lightsome look of day:
But the night—the night is peopled, full of voices, full of forms;
Rather than in darkling chamber, I would lie out in the storms.

Stir the flame!—the shadows flicker with the bursts of driving rain,
And the wind behind the wainscot moaneth o'er and o'er again;
And the secret door that leadeth to the inner closet small—
Hist!—what hands are at the fastening, and what woman's voice doth call?"

"Hush thee, Janet—good old Janet!" through the gloom the child replied,
With a girlish terror crouching to the wretched pallet's side;
"Hush thee, Janet! none is calling, none is here but little Jean;
Nothing moveth at the wainscot: fearful words!—what can they mean?"

"Nothing! saidst thou?" cried the beldam, springing up upon her bed,
With her long grey hairs dishevelled, backwards streaming from her head;
"Nothing! see'st thou not those embers burning to foreshew my doom?"
From the sycamore's dark branches came a sighing through the room.

"Hush thee, Janet!—how thou starest!" sobbed the girl, and caught her arm
"Lie thee down and try to slumber, here is nought that need alarm;
I will read thee from the Scriptures all the blessèd words He said,
Yon old minister whose praying left thee calmer in thy bed."

"Prayers and preachings for the guiltless! not for me, child—I am foul
With red blood and dare not worship, dare not think I have a soul.
Now she calleth! now she cometh!—hold my hand, thou sinless child;
Evil things will stand at distance, thou art meek and undefiled.

Hast thou courage, youthful Jeanie, for a tale of sin and wrong?
Weary, weary is this sickness, and the darkness lasts so long!
I must speak before I perish, or my spirit, unconfest,
Still would haunt the mouldering body were I dead and laid to rest.

Haggard now is Janet Campbell, yet men once said I was fair,
And the fair have many lovers, and love proved to me a snare;
Round me came the youth of Balloch, undissuaded by my pride,
And the Lord of Balloch loved me, and I thought to be his bride.

But my sire, the Cameronian, was a hard man and austere,
And it vexed his solemn spirit all my levity to hear;
So he spake to me at evening, when the weary prayers were done,—
'Child, these prayers may rise against thee ere the setting of youth's sun!'

Little recked I then of warning, little grieved I then for blame,
Yet his words came back to scorch me when I sank in sin and shame;
For the Lord of Balloch wooed me, drew me swiftly through love's fire
To the loss of home and honour, to the curses of my sire.

Lord of many a fruitful manor, courtly gallant in the hall,
I, the daughter of his vassal, I was born to be his thrall;
I was poor and he was wealthy, I unlearned, and he was skilled
In all arts that conquer woman, so he made me what he willed.

And he loved me then; he promised, 'If the babe that thou shalt bear
Shew man's likeness I will wed thee, and thy boy shall be mine heir!'
I was lured by hope of riches, hope of honours for my child,
So my sins were unrepented, and my heart was still beguiled.

In this turret I was sitting when he came to me one day,
'Janet, war has ta'en the Lowlands and they summon me away;
I will think of thee in battle, and, whene'er the fight is done,
Rush with all a father's rapture to embrace my firstborn son.'

Oh, man's promise! ever ready, ever broken at the last;
Never came he to his infant, nor redeemed his pledges past;
With the royal troops he followed in the footsteps of Dundee,
And the hunted Covenanters had no fiercer foe than he.

From the south he sent a letter when he heard my infant's birth;
'Knew I not man's fickle fancy? all his vows were made in mirth.
Fie upon my credulous fooling! illness surely crazed my head!
He, the Lord of stately Balloch, with a cottar lass to wed!'

Yet he shunned to meet his victim, or he followed whim perchance,
When he sought the courtly nobles and the sunny clime of France;
Thence he sent me golden monies, while I toiled in want and pain,
And I grasped the hire of passion for the payment of my stain.

Then I took my son and decked him in fine linen needle-wrought,
To the holy church I bore him with a drooping brow of thought;
'If that mercy be in heaven man has banished from the earth,
The baptismal rites may cleanse him from the foulness of his birth.'

But beside the plate of offerings, with his hand upon its rim,
Stood my father in the doorway, and his look was cold and grim,
And he waved his arm repelling, to withstand the sinner's foot,
'Go, thou lost one and degraded, sit in sackcloth and be mute!

Go, repent ere thou approachest!' But I laid my sleeping child
On the step of stone beneath him, and the babe awoke and smiled,
Stretched his arms towards his grandsire,—all the old man's ire it brake,
To his breast he clasped the smiler, and in gentler accents spake:

'Thou that once hast been my daughter, thou that heaped'st age with shame,
Leave this innocent, I charge thee, but return not whence thou came;
Live obscurely and repentant!' Then I wept and hid my face,
And without a word of pleading went in silence from the place,

Through the crowding congregation, who beheld me hurrying by,
With a pleasant self-complacence that they were not such as I;
Who stood up before their Maker and confessed them sin-defiled,
With a sneer upon their faces for the outcast and her child.

There were spates that stormy winter, flooding all the vale of Tay,
And the Loch rose like an ocean, sweeping huts and herds away;
In that flood my father's cottage, while its inmates were asleep,
Floated tomblike down the valley to the waters of the deep.

Oh, my Kenneth, drowned in sleeping! while thy father, all the same,
Slept in foreign halls voluptuous, never asking of thy name;
While I wished to die and could not, while I sought from fate a sign,
And a voice rose in my bosom, 'Live, and vengeance shall be thine!'

Help me, Jeanie, words are weary, breath is short, and feeling wanes,
And the chill of dissolution creepeth o'er my sluggish veins;
Life will fail me ere I finish—oh! the guilt that tears my breast!
Oh! this conscience ever gnawing!—oh! for life to tell the rest!"

PART II.

There was silence in the chamber save the trickling of the shower,
And the dashing of the branches on the window of the tower;
All deserted was that turret, blasted by an evil name,
'Twas the home of Janet Campbell, and her fate had been the same.

Other towers had Balloch Castle, where the rich and great might dwell,
This was left to desolation, and it matched her fortunes well;
Owls were roosting in the closet, and the bat clung to the beam,
And it roused the dying woman with its sudden shrilly scream.

" Hear her, hear her! she is calling as she called on me for food,
As she called on him who starved her, shut within that chamber rude;
Young she was and famed for beauty, when he brought her home his wife—
That was my reward, oh Jeanie, for the misery of a life!

On his homeward voyage sailing (many years had passed the while)
Baffling winds detained his vessel on the coast of Erin's isle;
There he saw her, long descended, but impoverished were her kin,
She was bartered to the stranger—'twas a trafficking of sin.

Life the sooner wears for trouble, grief accelerateth age,
I was worn and memory-blighted, she had barely turned youth's page;
Young as might have been his offspring, ill-consorted sure were they—
How she queened it on her palfrey as they trode the bridge of Tay!

How she smiled and how she dallied with a squire was in her train!
Meeter for her happy bridegroom than the lord who held her rein;
By the bridge I stood and watched them, and I marked their looks and sighs,
Vowing, by my wrongs neglected, he should see them through mine eyes.

' Oh, deceiver!' inly said I, ' now deceivèd in thy turn,
Thinkest thou in life's declension woman's love for thee will burn,
As mine did to self-destruction? Hopest thou for wedlock's peace?
Here I swear that thorned suspicion in thy soul shall never cease!'

Artfully and slow I shewed him, word by word and sign by sign,
That the star of his devotion on another bent to shine;
If she smiled with eye averted, if she sighed when he caressed,
He would fling her from his presence with the furies in his breast.

By the water's edge one morning as I walked in sullen mood,
I espied the Lady Campbell and the stripling in the wood;
Side by side they stood together, and they spoke of love and death,
But as sinless was her passion as an infant's earliest breath.

'Fly with me,' he said in anguish; she repelled him, gently strong,
'Dearest friend, 't is thou must leave me; well I know this love is wrong!
Yet my heart was never wedded—by my parents was I sold,
For they saw that he was wealthy, and they cared not he was old.

It is o'er! my life is darkened, but my soul is pure of sin;
Go—thou hast a traitorous helper in the love I crush within!
Add not Conscience to mine enemies!' To the castle then I crept;
To the presence of Lord Campbell with a haughty jeer I stept.

'Ha! thou false one! that didst trifle with each woman as a toy,
See thyself, thou churl decrepit, ousted by a beardless boy!
Seek in Balloch wood!' He rushed there, saw them stand in weeping drowned;
With a howl he felled the stripling, stunned and bleeding, to the ground.

Not a word of rage he uttered, but he wrenched the lady's arm,
And his cheek had bloodless pallor, and his eye had deadly harm;
Back he dragged her to this castle, to this turret rude and small,
There he barred her in that closet—Jeanie! hark! I hear her call.

Here we guarded night and morning, we that once in love were bound,
Now united in hate's shackles—but we never looked around;
With a steady purpose gazing on the doorway of her den,
Only for subsistence quitting—sleep we ne'er might know again.

Through a crevice in the wainscot did we feed the prisoned wretch
From a little pan of water, which I daily went to fetch;
Upon that she lived and struggled many a day and many a night,
Gasping, fainting, and yet living, as we listened in affright.

Oh! to hear her shriek of anguish! 'Give me food, but give me food!
Or else kill me with your claymore—oh! my husband, that ye would!
Help me! never, never sinned I 'gainst thine honour or my own;
Give me food!' and then her screaming died away into a moan.

So she wailed until she perished; till upon that guilty cell,
After those despairing ravings, deep and sudden silence fell;
Then we knew our work was finished, that her soul had fled away;
And the boy, whose wound had fevered, died of pain and grief that day.

By his corse I stood and pondered, for strange memories came back,
Strangely summoned by his features, by his eyebrows straight and black;
By the curve of lip and nostril; and I cried, 'Alas! my son,
Had he lived to such a manhood, had been like thee, hapless one!

Such his sire was when I loved him!' as I looked I saw a scroll
Hidden in his garment's foldings, which I careless did unroll;
'Twas unsigned; oh, fatal writing!—'t was the letter of my lord,
When he hurled me to destruction with his cold and scoffing word.

This I bound about my Kenneth in the madness of my scorn,
This had been upon his bosom when to church I him had borne,
When his gloomy grandsire took him—yes, my Kenneth, it was thou,
Lying murdered by thy father, with his handmark on thy brow!

Thou wert, then, his wife's young lover, thou her squire from Erin's isle,
With thy father's fatal beauty, with thy father's treacherous smile;
Ah! what film mine eyes had darkened, bleared with passion truth to shun?
Dulled, indeed, the mother's instinct when she knew not 'twas her son!

Pacing up and down this chamber was the unrelenting Lord,
By the dead wife of his bosom keeping late and useless ward;
'Go thou down!' I said in frenzy: 'once to thee a son I bore;
Thou hast slain him in thy fury—go, and look on him once more!

For that squire is our own offspring!' Loud he laughed in scornful rage,—
'Janet, wouldst thou melt my spirit to weak pity for her page—
For her paramour?' 'Nay, look here, proof is plain if thou canst read;
Man! I say our son lies murdered, and thy hand has done the deed!'

Vacantly he stared and listened, stupefied and slow he went
To the place where Kenneth's body lay in cold abandonment;
But, upon the very threshold, swift he turned and fled away,
And for years a raving maniac roamed the terror of Strath Tay.

Oh, that I like him had maddened, had forgotten all my woe!—
Better quick annihilation than this agony so slow,
Eating cancerous my bosom; death itself me cannot save,
For the evil of our courses doth pursue us in the grave.

And for me there's no repentance!" "Say not so!" cried Jeanie then;
"Mother tells me of forgiveness in His Name who died for men!"
"Ay! for thee—for childish follies, disobedience, pettish tears—
Thou canst kneel for that forgiveness, and sleep calmly without fears.

But for me there's no returning, no repentance 'vaileth me,
Till the Tay that leaves the mountains shall flow backward from the sea;
Blood of woman, young and spotless—blood of man, mine only son,
Did the sky rain down for ages, 'twould not wash what I have done!

Hear her! hear her! I have listened to her groans and to her cries,
When the air is calm in summer, when the winter blast replies;
Here, with Terror for companion, I have passed my wretched life,
Fixed in this deserted turret, where she died, that fair young wife.

Ever have I watched unceasing, fearing, though I knew not why,
She would break out were I absent, and stand forth beneath the sky:
Therefore have I never left her; night and day throughout the year,
When the birds in heaven are singing, still my dreadful post is here.

Here I die; and let them lay me not by any kindred grave,
Not where churchward steps are passing, not where airy blossoms wave,
But in yonder darksome closet, near the stanchioned lattice high,
Where her skeleton is bleaching, where I heard her wail and die.

Dost thou heed me well, my Jeanie?"—but the child spoke not for dread,
For the clammy touch appalled her of that creature almost dead;
And the images of horror gathered by that fearful tale,
And the morning twilight ghastly breaking o'er those features pale.

She had fainted, and she woke not, till her mother's loving tone
Called her back to life and sunshine, now no longer left alone,
With her little arms close clinging to the pallet of the corse,
For the soul of Janet Campbell passed away in that remorse!

THE RETURN OF EVAN DHU.

THE paraphrases of Scripture, appended to the Bible as circulated in Scotland, were principally written by Logan, a Presbyterian minister of great poetical taste. Almost as much a part of a Scottish education as the sacred volume itself, they well merit the distinction, for they transfuse into measured verse the language and spirit of the Bible, and make its subject more winning to the youthful ear, ever susceptible of the charm of melody. Long after the thoughtless child may have passed into the hardened man, the simple but powerful music of earlier years reverberates unbidden in his soul, and perhaps succeeds at times in checking the career of ungodliness.

Early associations are the firmest bulwarks of religion round so sensitive and impressible a thing as the human heart. Reason fails the wisest and most learned; but the mysterious sympathies of our nature are independent of our will — they "constrain us by the law of love." Of such influences the following poem attempts an illustration.

The reformed Presbyterian religion has displaced that of Rome over the greater part of the Highlands; indeed, the Gael has of later years learned from his Lowland neighbour a love of argumentation unknown to his simple and credulous forefathers, who believed every thing they were taught without examination or dispute.

No sight can be more interesting than the gathering of a Highland congregation round the door of the church at the deep-voiced summons of the bell. These places of worship, though generally of rude and ungainly architecture, are often found in the most beautiful situations—sometimes in the hollow of a glen, sometimes half way up a hill that commands a magnificent prospect, sometimes on the brink of a wide-spreading loch. One knows not where the attention is most riveted among the serious and composed faces around. The men with their decent blue Sunday suits, their manly Glengarry bonnets, and, if they have come from any distance, the plaid wrapped loosely over their shoulders; the old women in scarlet shawls, and clean "mutches" bound closely over the grey hair and shrewd, puckered features; the younger females, wives and maidens alike, gay with Lowland finery, each young face fresh-coloured and bright, with its own natural liveliness struggling through that serious rigidity of feature which forms what in Scotland is called "a Sunday face;" and the little children, proud of the honour of accompanying their elders to church, yet somewhat inclined to barter that privilege for a good romp in the churchyard among the daisied and thymy mounds, of whose mournful import they have as yet so vague an idea. The sight of these earnest-minded Highlanders assembling to worship amid the solemnising scenery of their mountain glens, disposes one's thoughts to seriousness, and is no unworthy preparation for the absorbing services of the sanctuary.

THE RETURN OF EVAN DHU.

As swarming bees upon the wing,
The people crowded o'er the hill;
And now the bell had ceased to ring,
The Highland kirk had ceased to fill.

The mountain burn that washed the graves
  Murmured a hymn while running by;
And with the solemn chime of waves
  A hundred voices clomb the sky.

The sunbeams through the open door
  Came streaming in across the place,
And, messengers of gladness, bore
  Heaven's radiance to each humble face.

On upturned foreheads, sage and good,
  They lingered with seraphic smile,
When in the darkened doorway stood
  A stranger man, and paused awhile.

His raiment had a foreign air,
  His brow was burnt by foreign skies;
And there was fierceness in his stare
  That suited ill Devotion's eyes.

He looked around with changing cheek,
  Then to the nearest seat withdrew,
As one whose heart, too full to speak,
  Those time-worn stairs and benches knew.

The preacher eyed him as he went,
  Remembrance on his features shone;
His pleading waxed more eloquent,
  A warmer pity shook his tone.

"Why will ye die who know full well
  Your sentence just, our warning true?
The Lord our God is terrible,
  And yet the Lord hath bled for you!

Whate'er your weakness, e'er your guilt,
  His fountains wash the blackest crime;
Ah! not in vain His blood was spilt!
  Turn, sinners, in th' Accepted Time!"

The stranger stirred, as ill at ease,
  And shunned the preacher's earnest gaze;
When, strong as wind that shakes the trees,
  Upswelled the stately Paraphrase:

"As long as life its term extends
Hope's blest dominion never ends;
For, while the lamp holds on to burn,
The greatest sinner may return."

From lisping child and tuneful girl
The glorious measure rolled on high;
Ah, Evan Dhu, the battle's whirl
Ne'er sent such dimness to thine eye!

Oft on the lawless Spanish main,
When pirate colours shamed thy mast,
The voice of that reproving strain
At midnight o'er thy slumbers passed!

Oft heaving on the southern swell,
A thousand watery leagues from land,
The Highland kirk's familiar bell
Rang through the stillness, close at hand.

"Hope's blest dominion!" for those years,
Of reckless youth, of hardened prime!
The stricken wretch arose in tears,
And fled as from pursuing crime.

The hymn sank down, the singers' eyes
Each other sought in wondering dread,
Until an old man spake, with sighs,
"My son is living, who was dead!

Yes, 'tis the son whom I have wept
  As false to God, and lost to me;
But He whose hand the wanderer kept,
  Will set the slave of Satan free."

With tears upon his visage old,
  The trembling father sought his son,
Who, flung upon the heathy mould,
  Embraced his mother's burial-stone.

A woman sat beside the tomb;
  Her youth was fled, her eyes were dim;
For she had lived away her bloom
  In agonising thoughts of him.

Ah, Evan Dhu! beloved of yore,
  Thy wooing met no coy denial;
But pleasure gilt a foreign shore,
  And she was left to faith and trial!

Thou, all unworthy of her love,
  Debased thy heart to low desires;
She was a star that watched above
  The marshes' false, uncertain fires.

Long watched, long waited, till, at last,
  Her soul was from its anchor driven;
And reason was by love o'ercast,
  And every link of memory riven.

With inexpressive sweetness smiled
  Her eyes, that knew not friend from friend,
While, harmless as a gentle child,
  Her daily steps would church-ward tend.

Ah, Evan Dhu! beside thee sat
  This idol of thy young romance;
Ah, Evan Dhu! returned too late
  To wildered brain and vacant glance!

She knew him not, but chanted low
  An ancient lay of love and sorrow,
And aye its sad returning flow
  Was "Smile to-day, grief comes to-morrow."

But many years were yet for him,
  A penitent, heart-broken man,
To drain a cup that o'er the brim
  With bitter juice of memory ran;

Long years for him to tend the maid,
Whose restless eyes still turned away,
Who spoke his name but to upbraid
With tender plaints the Far-away.

This was his penance, by her side,
To mark the wreck, to feel the shame,
She never knew him, though she died
Calling on his beloved name.

CRAIG ELACHIE.

"THERE are two rocks of the same name, one at each extremity of the country called Strath Spey, about thirty miles distant from each other. Each of these rocks is called *Craig Elachie*, 'Rock of Alarm.' Upon the approach of an enemy, the signal was given from the one to the other for all fit to bear arms to appear at an appointed place of rendezvous. Hence the Grant's motto, 'Stand fast, Craig Elachie!'"—*Beauties of Scotland—Inverness-shire.*

How imposing must have been the flashing of the fiery cross in those troublous times down the broad valley of the Spey! and how well is the idea of unanimity communicated by the circumstance of both the boundary crags bearing the same name, as if all who dwelt within their limits had but one heart and soul!

The upper Craig Elachie, the more lofty of the two, commands a magnificent range of hill and valley, standing near Aviemore, at the head of the noble strath through which runs the river Spey. On this stream rises the lower Craig Elachie, at a point where the waters take a sudden bend, and are curbed by a stately suspension bridge. The castellated style of this structure harmonises well with the sheer and rugged preci-

pice that springs up behind its round, hollow towers. It was built very shortly before the remarkable floods of 1829, and was among the few bridges that withstood the destructive force of the swollen Spey.

The Clan Grant were not of the Jacobite faction in 1745; on the contrary, their chief was one of the warmest supporters of the cause of Hanover. Their sufferings began with the Disarming Act, a measure whose operation was not confined to the rebellious tribes. Although as effectual as its originators could wish in destroying the turbulent quarrels among the Highlanders, and reducing them to the state of harmless peasants, it produced the strongest feelings of shame and indignation in the free, proud spirit of the Gael. The loss of their weapons, and the prohibition of their national dress, were considered grievous affronts, to which, as their strength was too much broken to resist, the clans submitted with a sullen despair.

But the hand which dealt the death-blow to their old habits and affections was that of their own chiefs. After the final ruin of the Stewarts, the Highland proprietors experienced the usual influence of a state of ease and security. Being obliged to give up their former love of independence, a love of money crept in as its substitute; if they could no longer remain powerful rulers of a warlike people, they might become wealthy subjects of a peaceful state. They began to copy the southern and more lucrative mode of farming; they ejected the small farmers, who had from time immemorial cultivated the land in small glebes, or occupied the fields with herds of cattle, and threw the whole extent of their possessions into large grazing sheep-farms, under the management of agents from the south.

This plan brought the proprietor a great increase of income, but it was the ruin of the poor tenants, who were turned out to starve. With tastes and habits widely differing from the Lowlanders, the Gael, thus

cruelly thrust from his native glens, became too frequently an idle and spiritless vagabond.

Those were fortunate who, by entering the army, found some outlet for the ardent energy of their youth. They made excellent soldiers; and every battle-field where British valour has shone, is bright with a memory of their deeds.

But thousands were left destitute and helpless. Emigration, that last resource of an impoverished population, was all that remained to them. They were unfitted by nature and education for the factory; but the vast forests of America offered a home and liberty as free as the wild animals themselves enjoyed. The beloved glens of their childhood could afford them neither of these blessings. Partly by public assistance, partly by their own exertions, the Highlanders went forth to an unknown world in the far West, and there they built themselves dwellings, and, like the patriarchs of old, "called the lands after their own names."

The following poem originated in a desire to shew the unflagging energy, as well as regretful remembrance, with which the Gael commenced his new career amid the savage solitudes of his Transatlantic home.

CRAIG ELACHIE.

Blue are the hills above the Spey,
The rocks are red that line his way,
Green is the strath his waters lave,
And fresh the turf upon the grave

Where sleep my sire and sisters three,
Where none are left to mourn for me:
Stand fast, stand fast, Craig Elachie!

The roofs that sheltered me and mine
Hold strangers of a Sassenach line;
Our hamlet thresholds ne'er can shew
The friendly forms of long ago;
The rooks upon the old yew-tree
Would e'en have stranger notes to me:
Stand fast, stand fast, Craig Elachie!

The cattle feeding on the hills,
We tended once o'er moors and rills,
Like us have gone; the silly sheep
Now fleck the brown sides of the steep,
And southern eyes their watchers be,
And Gael and Sassenach ne'er agree:
Stand fast, stand fast, Craig Elachie!

Where are the elders of our glen,
Wise arbiters for meaner men?
Where are the sportsmen keen of eye,
Who tracked the roe against the sky—
The quick of hand, of spirit free?
Passed, like a harper's melody:
Stand fast, stand fast, Craig Elachie!

Where are the maidens of our vale,
Those fair, frank daughters of the Gael?
Changed are they all, and changed the wife
Who dared for love the Indian's life;
The little child she bore to me
Sunk in the vast Atlantic sea:
Stand fast, stand fast, Craig Elachie!

Bare are the moors of broad Strathspey,
Shaggy the western forests grey;
Wild is the corri's autumn roar,
Wilder the floods of this far shore;
Dark are the crags of rushing Dee,
Darker the shades of Tenassee;
Stand fast, stand fast, Craig Elachie!

Great rock, by which the Grant hath sworn,
Since first amid the mountains born;
Great rock, whose sterile granite heart
Knows not, like us, misfortune's smart;
The river sporting at thy knee,
On thy stern brow no change can see:
Stand fast, stand fast, Craig Elachie!

Stand fast on thine own Scottish ground,
By Scottish mountains flanked around,

Though we uprooted, cast away
From the warm bosom of Strathspey
Flung pining by this Western sea,
The exile's hopeless lot must dree,
Stand fast, stand fast, Craig Elachie!

Yet strong as thou the Grant shall rise,
Cleft from his clansmen's sympathies;
In these grim wastes new homes we'll rear,
New scenes shall wear old names so dear;
And while our axes fell the tree,
Resound old Scotia's minstrelsy:
Stand fast, stand fast, Craig Elachie!

Here can no treacherous chief betray,
For sordid gain, our new Strathspey;
No fearful king, no statesman pale,
Wrench the strong claymore from the Gael.
With armèd wrist and kilted knee,
No prairie Indian half so free:
Stand fast, stand fast, Craig Elachie!

THE PARTING ON THE BRIG.

THE reformed faith, when it penetrated into the wild Highlands in the end of the sixteenth century, found an appalling array of visionary terrors established in the minds of the inhabitants. The devoted ministers, however, exerted themselves strenuously to dispel these clouds of error; and although at first their progress in the work was discouragingly tardy, for they had to annihilate the impressions strengthened by many centuries, they have now so fully succeeded that the inquisitive traveller finds great difficulty in discovering any traces of the once prevalent superstitions. The Highlanders are, in fact, rather ashamed of their "auld warld" tales, and seem rather indignant if they fancy themselves suspected of placing any reliance on the traditions of their forefathers.

Among many others which have died away there was one superstition of mingled poetry and sadness, which it were a pity to have let pass into oblivion. It is alluded to by Miss Sinclair, in her lively tour entitled "Shetland and the Shetlanders," in these words, "friends or lovers who part on a bridge never meet again."

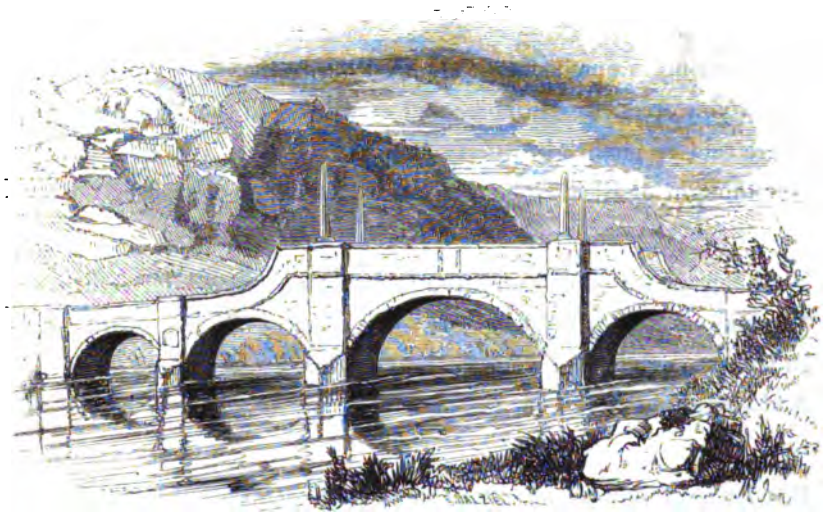
What fatality did the Gael's imagination attach to the running waters below his parting feet? Did the friends then separating think that the

stream which could not pause or return in its hurrying course typified the current of their lives, which, once dividing, might never flow back to the meeting place?

This curious fancy was directly in opposition to all other Highland ideas regarding running water. It was generally considered to have an influence quite destructive of evil spells; and the fairies, when engaged in their predatory excursions, were often baffled by the intervention of a stream.

The Tahusk was the spirit-voice heard before a death. Sometimes it was like a human voice, but more frequently it would seem to come from the wild birds, whose mournfully piercing notes rung at evening over the mountains. From whatever quarter, however, it arose, there was always something unearthly in the tones by which the warning of death could be distinguished. The corncraik was one of those birds whose cry was particularly ominous.

The "Brig of Tay," built by Marshal Wade on the great military road constructed after Earl Mar's insurrection in 1715, is a massive and ancient looking structure—older, indeed, in appearance than it is in reality. It spans the river at a wide reach near the town of Aberfeldy, and forms one of the most picturesque objects in the rich and luxuriantly wooded Vale of Tay.



THE PARTING ON THE BRIG.

Oh! Hamish, lover of my youth and husband of my vows,
When shall I loose the maiden snood from these betrothèd brows?
When will you clasp your mournful bride, whose hopes in absence wane?
For they who parted on a brig maun never meet again!

It was upon the Brig of Tay ye took the bountith fee,
It was upon the Brig of Tay ye looked your last on me;
A year hath dragged its heavy course since that ill-omened night,
But heavier weigh upon my soul the bodings of a fight.

The shearing in our harvest-field sped busily that day,
When ye were sent with horse and cart down to the Brig of Tay;
There sold ye birthright liberty for less than Esau's hire,
Nor thought of Elsie Robertson, your minnie, or your sire.

Your tongue was slow to tell the tale that saddened your return,
Ye came not to our trysting-tree that grows beside the burn;
In silence ye departed from the home where ye were bred,
And streaming were your minnie's eyes, and bowed your father's head.

But I went following after you down to the Brig of Tay,
And there I clung unto your breast and woeful words did say,
And might have won you—but, alas! came marching through the glen
The best and bravest of the clan, all picked and chosen men.

By king and country were they sworn unto the death to fight,
An iron-hearted band they trod, though self-exiled that night;
Red grew the cheek of him I clasped, he tore himself away,
And left me standing on the brig, the aged Brig of Tay.

Fair art thou, water of Moness, with many tinkling falls,
And proud, old Aberfeldy, rise thy ancient piers and walls,
And glorious are ye, heather hills, along the strath that wind—
But deep I cursed you in my heart when I was left behind.

The moon from broad-browed Ferragon her silver pennon spread,
The frosty stars went shivering to follow where she led;
The troops moved onward to the south, the pibroch died away,
And still I leaned upon the brig, the aged Brig of Tay.

That stalwart band in perils now is tossing on the wave,
Fate surges onward to the field of many a bloody grave;
Ah me! I fear thou art foredoomed to fall on battle plain,
For they who part upon a brig maun never meet again.

Upon the muirland yesternight I heard the Tahusk cry;
It was no voice of earthly bird, no living thing was nigh.
I had a vision yesternight, thy shrouded form and stark,
While sleeplessly I lay and stared right onward through the dark.

Our minister from Holy Writ brings promises to cheer,
He speaks such gracious comfortings as should dispel my fear,
He tells me Hands Omnipotent can ward the blows that strike,
That eyes of Love Divinest watch o'er thee and me alike.

Yet ever come those childish words by childish fancy caught,
Words far too terrible for jest, or e'en to scorn in thought;
Whene'er I think of meeting you they peal across my brain,
"Ye parted on the Brig of Tay, ye maunna meet again!"

THE HAUNTED TARN ON THE MOOR.

From the lonely mountains among which the Highlander dwelt every murmur of wind or wave bore to him a spiritual meaning, every shape of tree or rock, confused by the misty twilight, assumed a spiritual form. He saw portents in the cloud, and heard prophecies in the stream.

There was attached a peculiar sacredness to the rites of sepulture. It was believed that the spirit of the dead hovered restless and discontented around its former tenement, till the body to which it clung so affectionately was laid with becoming ceremonies in the grave. The unburied corpse was thus an object of indescribable horror to the living.

"To be buried decently" was, and is to this day, one of the wishes that lie nearest to the heart of a Highlander. It happened, within our own knowledge, that a poor woman was reduced to the extremity of indigence. Her emaciated and bedridden form was often in want of necessary sustenance, subsisting precariously on the alms of the charitable; and yet she preferred thus to starve by slow degrees rather than to break a small sum which she had deposited with a trusty friend to defray the expenses of "a decent funeral."

In another case, a Highland woman dying in the Lowlands told her two sons she wished her remains to be interred among her kindred in a churchyard far embosomed among the hills. Notwithstanding that the sons were hardworking, scantily paid labourers, they cheerfully devoted the joint sum, trifling as it was, which their industry had saved, to the fulfilment of their beloved mother's last request. Accordingly, her corpse was conveyed upwards of forty miles to the Highlands, and laid with her own people in the burial-ground of her tribe.

The ghost of Celtic faith differed widely from the clumsy hobgoblins who excited the terror of Saxon rustics. To every living man was ascribed a wraith or double resembling him exactly in appearance, though generally invisible to all—born at his birth, growing with his growth, and descending with his body into the tomb. The wraith occasionally appeared during the lifetime of its mortal partner, but its visible presence always portended evil. From the grave it often returned to arrange business which the deceased had left unsettled, or, in cases of violent death, to stimulate the survivors to revenge.

Sometimes, however, the ghost played a more Christian part, when it visited the mourning friends to console or rebuke them, if their grief for the dead passed the bounds of religious resignation.

The two lochs of Tummel and Rannoch occupy a long valley, connected by the river Tummel, and overlooked by high hills and wild moors. On one of the latter, at a considerable height above the lochs, lies the gloomy tarn, or mountain-pond, mentioned in the ballad. The neighbouring district was long held by the Macgregors; but here, as in Breadalbane, this ill-fated clan was dispossessed by a more powerful tribe.

The Robertsons, or Clan Donnachie, were the successful intruders, and their chief fixed his hereditary residence at Mount Alexander on the river side, under the shadow of the cone-shaped and lofty Schihallion.

The Stewarts of Athole and Appin, whose lands lay contiguous, looked upon Rannoch's new possessors with no friendly eye, and the skirmishes which ensued on every slight pretext kept the country in continual excitement.

The little tarn upon the moor may be supposed to have been the scene of one of the many combats of these rival tribes, for its situation and gloomy character suggest to the mind of the spectator no associations save those of sorrow and misfortune.

The cheerful fields and lifelike moving woods lie far below in the valley. The lochs catch the rays of the setting sun, but the cold shade of the overhanging mountains intercepts their brightness from the tarn. Even the heather grows scantily among the rocks that scatter their broken masses along the barren soil. Here and there the ground suddenly sinks into deep pools, filled with thick, brown, stagnant water, where large clods of peat are slowly settling down, as they become gradually detached from the treacherous sides of the chasm. There are the pits left in many places, whence the fuel has been dug till its depth of layer has been exhausted. These are very dangerous at night, as the sod around them is saturated with the bog-water, and yields to the slightest pressure.

THE HAUNTED TARN ON THE MOOR.

THERE lies a lonely mountain tarn
On Albyn's wildest ground,
Scarce known but to the heather bee
On homeward errand bound,
Or to the weary shepherd boy
Who seeks his charge around.

It is a solitary moor,
  Girt by a giant band;
Schihallion throned, like Jove on high,
  With his thunders in his hand;
While a hundred lesser mighty ones
  In glory 'neath him stand.

From either side, below the tarn,
  Two vales together blend;
Loch Tummel and Loch Rannoch stretch
  Their arms from end to end;
Down to their margins from the steep
  The yellow birches bend.

Hamlets and wooded knolls are there,
  And fields of plumy grain,
And troops of cheerful labourers
  Work busy in the plain;
But tillage on this mountain moor
  Were all bestowed in vain.

No plough has torn its clotted moss,
  No foliage waves in sight,
Save one dark clump of ragged pines
  That crest a rocky height—
A fearful place it were to pass
  On a gusty winter night!

A tale is told of battle fought
'Twixt clans a feud that bare:
The Robertsons, by Stewarts chased
From Rannoch's forest lair,
Turned by the lonely tarn at bay,
And took them unaware.

Then had the Robertsons revenge,
Their foes were rash and few;
The waters gurgled red with blood
Their mossy basin through,
Nor was a Stewart left to tell
What hand his clansmen slew.

Down in the vale beside her fire,
The wife of one there slain
Sang to the babe upon her knee
That could not sleep for pain;
When, hush! a sound is at her door
Of neither wind nor rain.

Nor sound of foot, though shape of man,
Pale, shadowy, blood-defiled,
Withouten latch or turn of hinge
Stood by her and her child,
Then glided back with beckoning hand
Towards the gloomy wild.

She sprang and called her sister dear,
A maiden fresh and young,
"I pray thee tend my little child,
I shall be back ere long;
I fear me lest the Robertsons
Have done my husband wrong."

She kissed the babe, whose downy limbs
Lay folded in her breast,
She gave it to her sister's charge
From its maternal nest;
Then, with her plaid about her wound,
Unto the moorland pressed.

The shadowy wraith beside her stood
Soon as she closed the door,
And, as she passed by kirk and wood,
Still flitted on before,
Guiding her steps across the burn,
Up, up unto the moor.

The moon was hid in weeds of white,
The night was damp and cold,
The wanderer stumbled in the moss,
Bewildered on the wold,
Till suddenly the clouds were rent,
The tarn before her rolled.

The heather with strange burdens swelled—
  On every tuft a corse,
On every stunted juniper,
  On every faded gorse;
The woman sank, and o'er her eyes
  She clasped her hands with force.

Again she was constrained to gaze,—
  Lo! on each dead man's brow,
A tongue of flame burned steadily,
  Though there was breeze enow
To shake the pines that overhead
  Waved black, funereal bough.

And, dancing on the sullen loch,
  A ghostly troop there went,
Whose airy figures floated high
  On the thin element;
And fiercely at each other's breasts
  Their mock claymores they bent.

One brushed so near, she turned her gaze,
  She stood transfixed to stone;
It was her husband's spectre face,
  Close breathing on her own—
Damp, icy breath, that filled her ear
  With a deep, hollow moan.

She started back with frenzied shriek—
  Shriek echoed by the dead;
She gave a hurried prayer to heaven,
  Then o'er the moorland fled;
Until she reached the village kirk,
  She dared not turn her head.

Not long her thread of life endured,
  Not long her infant hung
Upon that bosom terror-dried,
  That mouth no more that sung.
She died, and ever since the tarn
  Is shunned by old and young.

For still the gusty breezes raise
  The phantoms' anguished cry,
Still by the water's marge they flit,
  When winter storms are high;
Still flames, nor wind nor wave can quench,
  Are ever burning nigh.

Nay, if you doubt it, wend your way
  In twilight's deepening blue,
And watch beneath those shuddering pines
  One stormy midnight through;
And, if your courage fail you not,
  You shall behold them too!

EILAN MOHR.

Loch Swin, an arm of the Atlantic, which stretches almost across the peninsula of Cantyre, is as worthy of a visit as any part of the Highlands. Dr. M'Culloch pronounces its scenery no less romantic than that of Loch Katrine, the latter conveying but a faint idea of the picturesque beauty of its briny rival.

Loch Swin stretches for about ten miles into the land, but divides into three parts at some distance from its mouth, and the many windings of these branches make its whole extent about fifty miles in circuit. The waters indent the shores with deep bays, and are in other places driven back by rocky projections and promontories; the hills rise on every side clothed with luxuriant natural verdure; the dwellings are thinly scattered, and suited in wild roughness to the character of the scenery; sea and land are so intermingled that every step presents a new and wonderful combination of objects, and over all broods a deep and thrilling solitude.

On a rock overhanging the loch at its entrance from the sea stand the bold and ancient walls of Castle Swin. Immemorial tradition points out Sweno, prince of Denmark, as the founder of this fortress, which for many centuries was the key of Loch Swin, and of great importance in the continual warfare between the Scots and Scandinavians, and afterwards between the Lords of the Isles and the Scottish kings.

Here Robert the Bruce besieged Alexander of the Isles, and bestowed the castle on the family of Menteith. It subsequently reverted to the crown, and was then held, like Dunstaffnage, in charge of a powerful

noble styled "the heritable keeper." Finally, when possessed by the house of Argyle, it was burned by Alastair Mac Cholla, the lieutenant of Montrose.

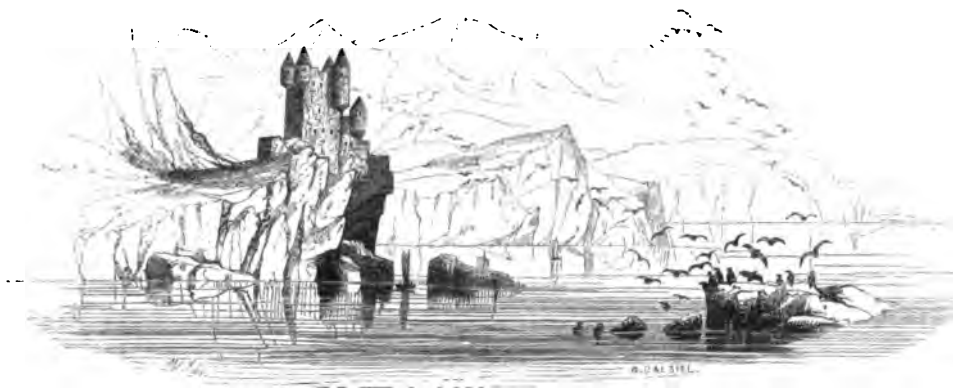
Eilan Mohr vic O'Charmaig lies in a group of smaller islets between the mouth of Loch Swin and the opposite coast of Jura. It is very barren and rocky, having its edges covered with sea-weed, and crusted with the moss-like, variegated branches of the Highland coral, which abounds on these western shores.

The chapel, or convent, as it was called by the old Highlander who shewed it to our party, was built by O'Carmaig, an Irish saint, who possessed this island, and who, after founding some very beautiful chapels on the mainland, expired here, and was buried in a tomb which is still to be seen about a hundred yards distant from the ruined convent.

The stone cross on the summit of the island bears a rudely carved representation of the crucifixion, with two female figures at the feet of the dying Saviour.

In the side of the hill is a vaulted cell, used as an oratory or occasional chapel in former days, whose miraculous effects upon intruders were gravely announced by the old peasant before mentioned, who likewise related the legend belonging to the stone cross. He was a white-haired, venerable-looking Gael, the very portrait of a Seannachie, and delivered his traditions in Gaelic with much volubility, the boatmen who had conveyed us to the island acting as interpreters.

To add to the impression excited by these local marvels a violent thunderstorm came on, and the rain compelled the whole party to take refuge in that small portion of the convent which still retains its roof, and which had been devoted to the entire use of the only tenant of Eilan Mohr, a huge bull, too wild to be kept on the mainland. The bull was driven out to allow a shelter to the visitors, who, seated on the stone sarcophagus, which is said to contain the bones of more than one of the former priests, listened well pleased to the legends of the mountaineer.



EILAN MOHR.

I.

In the cold Atlantic billows,
Where they toss on Jura's shore,
Rousing all the ancient caverns
With the fury of their roar;
Where thy rocks, old Corryvrekan,
Vex the downward speeding main,
Stemless as a passion-torrent
That returneth not again;

Where the wind with fitful howling
Through the mountain gully drives,
And the crew that breast the current
Row in silence for their lives:
There thou stretchest black and rocky,
Weed and shingle cumbered o'er,
With the cross of stone downfallen
On thy summit, Eilan Mohr.

II.

On that cross is ancient sculpture
Sore defaced by gale and tide,
'Tis the crucified Redeemer,
With his mother by his side.
Once an impious rover, landing,
Stole that hallowed slab away,
In his vessel straight he bore it,
While the billows sleeping lay.
On a sudden woke the tempest
Like a tiger from repose,
And the conscious sinner trembled
When the angry sea arose;
Then he cast the cross, imploring,
From the frail and sinking boat,

And at once the waves were tranquil,
  And the massive stone, afloat
On the firm sustaining waters,
  Glided backward to the shore,
Till it rested on thy bosom,
  Ever-hallowed Eilan Mohr!

III.

Where the ground more gently slopeth
  To the shelter of a cove,
With dark Jura's peaks in distance,
  And the dim grey sky above,
Sleeps a convent old and ruined;
  Half its roof is torn away,
Letting in on cell and chancel
  The unbidden light of day.
Long a holy man of Erin
  Called the islanders to prayer,
In a chapel rudely hollowed
  'Neath the cross-crowned hillock there.
(Now in sand to ruin to crumbling,
  For tradition's awful lore
Every wandering footstep scareth
  From thy chapel, Eilan Mohr!)

IV.

Long ago it was St. Carmaig
To this lonely isle withdrew,
Where he still could see the mountains
Of far Erin, dimly blue;
Here he kept austerest penance,
Here he built a convent rude,
And he taught the Gael religion
From his sea-girt solitude.
Chapels rose upon the mainland,
Men repented at his word,
For his voice, like inspiration's,
Brought a message from the Lord.
And the people loved his teaching,
And his fame, from shore to shore,
Went abroad with acclamations
For the saint of Eilan Mohr!

V.

Then it chanced a Danish pirate
Held those western seas in sway,
In the castled walls of Sweno
He was wont to store his prey;
While the bastions, nightly guarded,
Scorned surprisal from the foes,

In the richly garnered chambers
  Riot rang till morning rose.
He had one fair child, whose meekness
  Still could soothe his maddest ire,
And for her his callous bosom
  Owned a spark of human fire.
But her spirit, vexed with evil,
  Turned for shelter unto heaven,
And the church her vows accepted,
  In that island-chapel given.
When the pirate heard he trembled
  Pale with anger, and he swore,
" We shall find a day of reck'ning :
  Wait thou, Priest of Eilan Mohr !"

VI.

'Twas a day of solemn service ;
  From the isles and from the coast
Thronged the seamen and the landsmen
  To adore the sacred Host ;
In the holy mass they chaunted,
  When a barbarous shout behind
Scattered all the crowd asunder—
  Withered leaves before the wind.

"Fly! the Danes, the Danes are on us!"
With a coward speed they ran,
Leaving only in the chapel
One undaunted holy man.
"Back! pollute ye not God's dwelling!"
Rang his loud, appealing cry;
Stopped the Danes upon the threshold,
Quailing at his steady eye.
"Strike!" in vain the pirate shouted,
Then in wrath he strode alone
To the priest beside the altar,
And he dashed him on the stone!
Bruised and dying fell St. Carmaig,
But he raised his arm to heaven,
Saying, "Lo! a sign prophetic,
Hardened one, to me is given.
Thou hast sullied God's own altar,
Thou art childless from this hour;
For the guiltless dies the guiltless,—
Bear me witness, Eilan Mohr!"

VII.

In the deepening glow of sunset
Homeward soon the pirate hies,
But a darker gloom is o'er him
Than now falleth on the skies!

Many a soul his hand remorseless
To its last account had sped,
And his heart had never sickened
With the pressure of the dead.
But those dying eyes are glaring
Through the darkness of the seas,
But those fearful accents haunt him,
Shrieking sharply in the breeze.
Late at night he nears the castle,
Moors his boat the walls below,
Sees unwonted lights are gleaming
At the casements to and fro;
Hears within a voice of wailing—
Now the pirate's cheek is white,
And he bends the mast beside him
In his anguish and his might!
Soon the menials cluster round him,
Not a word of doom is said,
But he looks into their faces,
And he feels that she is dead.
Ages since have swept the island,
But a curse still hangeth o'er,—
"Whoso entereth thy chapel
Shall be childless, Eilan Mohr!"

A TALE OF FORRES TOWN.

The following ballad claims no more than to be a simple paraphrase of a true story of "the '45," the circumstances of which cannot be more appropriately detailed than in the words of the lady in whose family they occurred:—

"When a mere child, I used to sit at my father's knee and listen greedily to tales of Prince Charlie. My grandfather, like many of the well-born though unwise gentlemen of the north, had the honour of being ruined in Charles Edward's cause.

"My father was a boy of six years of age when the prince with his followers rode into Forres before the battle of Culloden. He said he could never forget the lovely, almost femininely-fair, countenance, with the long curled hair hanging about the shoulders, and a star on the left side.

"The prince rode a Spanish jennet, and sat exactly as a lady sits on the saddle, riding slowly that all might see him.

"My father, with other little children, attended a dame's school, and

the worthy woman had that day, as the safest plan, placed what she called a loyal cockade (that is a Hanoverian one) in the hats of her pupils. When he came from school his mother plucked it out indignantly, and put the white cockade in its stead.

"After Culloden matters were sadly changed. My grandfather was obliged to fly for his life, and my grandmother's house was filled with the officers of the king's army, even the dining-room being used by them as a stable for their horses.

"In the midst of this, my father said, that he and his brothers being huddled together in one room to be out of the way of their unwelcome visitors, he had a vivid recollection of seeing a beggarwoman come into the chamber when they were in bed, and weep over and hug them and their mother.

"The poor little fellows soon found out it was their father venturing thither to take a last look at them before leaving them for ever, nearly beggared by his ruin. He himself had to wander about till he escaped to Maryland, whence he never returned, his young and high-spirited wife being left, as too many were in that day, to struggle with poverty and hopeless separation."

Forres and its inhabitants are said to be of Flemish origin; certainly the style of building in the old parts of the town is very unlike the generality of Scottish cities. Part of the parish is situated in the Highlands, and at one time Gaelic was spoken at one end of the town and English at the other, but the Gaelic is now falling fast into disuse.

The Cloven hills, which have also the name of Clunie, lie close to the town; they are well-wooded, and laid out in winding walks. The tallest of them is crowned with one of those nondescript round towers

which it seems the taste of the day considered the most appropriate form of homage to be offered to the hero of Trafalgar. The top, however, commands a view nearly as magnificent as that unrivalled one from the Calton Hill of Edinburgh, which is also, like the Cloven hills, disfigured by a "Nelson's monument."

A TALE OF FORRES TOWN.

Oh, bonny are the Cloven hills
  By Forres town that lie,
As brothers guard a sister fair
  Who grows beneath their eye;
Fair Forres of the sunny streets,
  Far glancing o'er the deep,
Where old Ben Wywis shakes the snows
  From off his winter sleep!

Fair Forres, glorious sight was mine
  Ere yet from childhood grown,
That army of red Highlanders,
  Whose march shook England's throne.
The shout of men, the tramp of horse,
  Came sounding on our ears,
A group of boys who sat in school,
  We sprang and joined the cheers.

The quiet streets were all astir,
  With tartans gay bespread;
The meanest clansman walked a king,
  So haughty was his tread;
And with them gallant cavaliers
  And chiefs of old renown,
While woman's hand and woman's voice
  Gave welcome through the town.

Before them rode a lovely youth,
  His cheek as maiden's fair,
And all adown his corslet plate
  Fell curling yellow hair;
Upon his breast a diamond star—
  But brighter shone his eyes
To mark his people's loyalty,
  Their love and glad surprise.

I shouted for the Chevalier,
But in my cap disgraced
The adverse badge of Hanover
Our Whiggish dame had placed.
How knit the Gael their brows at me!
I sobbed and shrank away;
The Stuart emblem, snowy white,
Had empire for that day.

My mother snatched the Whig cockade
And cast it in the flame:
"Well, boy, thy Cumming blood may mount
To own that badge of shame!
They deck them as for bridal feast
Who charge for prince and land;
Now Heaven's applause attest the cause,
Thy Father's in the band!"

But woe for sunny Forres town!
And woe for Scotland wide!
Three days beheld that brave array
Cast down from all its pride,
Slaughter and flight, and hot pursuit,
And plundered homes and ruin;
O Fate! that pulse of loyalty
Should be true hearts' undoing!

Again the streets were all astir,
King's troopers rough and wild
Filled humble cot and lordly house,
And swore at wife and child.
Into my mother's helpless home
They rode with greeting small,
And stabled twenty chargers
In our stately dining-hall.

Unwelcome change! for loyal toast,
For courtly feast's parade,
The champ of bit, the neigh of steed,
The flash of threatening blade.
We children in an upper room
Together huddled sate,
And wondered at the soldiers' arms
And hearkened to their prate.

It was but like a jest to us,
A game of feats exciting;
But hopelessly our mother wept
While we saw nought affrighting.
Death—death, the word on every tongue,
Our father's fate unknown;
Danger in every face she met,
And doom in every tone.

One night we laid us down to sleep,
But could not sleep to hear
The horses grinding at their corn,
The noises were so near,
When stealthily the door was moved,
And stealthily alone
A woman crept across the floor,
An aged beggar crone.

We hid beneath the coverlet,
But to our beds she came,
Fell weeping on our shrinking necks,
And called us each by name;
Our father's voice, and such disguise!
We laughed in childish glee.
"Now hush ye," said the beggar crone,
"Ye would not murder me?

I am your father, thus reduced
In rags to crouch and crawl,
Foes in mine ancient dwelling-place
And horses in mine hall;
No longer mine—nor home have I,
Nor shelter, save the deep;
One kiss, my children, ere I go,
One blessing, turn and sleep!"

Ah! bitter was his parting kiss,
The last that father gave,
He wandered on the Highland hills
Till he could reach the wave;
Far, far in Maryland he died,
Heartbroken for his king,
And we were left in penury,
That base, contemnèd thing.

In sleep alone that beggar crone
Oft weeping o'er me bends,
But, widowed mother, never more
Returned thy friend of friends;
And never more through Forres town
With tartaned clans beside,
With pipe and cheer and trumpet clear,
Shall Charlie Stuart ride.

I who had then but summers six,
Am now a white-haired man,
Have seen the crown thrice handed down
In recollection's span;
The sceptre cast to stranger hands,
Transferred the right divine;
The Stuart cause an old man's tale,
Extinct the Stuart line!

THE WIDOWS OF LOCHY.

In the sixteenth century a sanguinary conflict took place between the Macdonalds of Clanranald and the Frasers, the latter headed by their chief, Hugh fifth Lord Lovat. The circumstances which led to this battle are sufficiently characteristic of the times:—

The young chieftain of Clanranald had been fostered and educated among the Frasers, with whom he was connected by the mother's side; and, on reaching manhood, he went home to take possession of his estates and feudal dignity. He had probably been sent by the Frasers to one of the Lowland universities, as was sometimes, though rarely, the case with young men of rank among the Highlanders, for he was called "Donald Gaulta," the Lowlander, or "Stranger" as some accounts have it.

Great preparations were made by the Macdonalds to receive their chieftain with due honour. Oxen and sheep were slaughtered in profusion for a grand festival; but this unbounded hospitality seemed more than necessary to the young man, who found himself the unconsulted host in so magnificent a display. With a truly Lowland prudence he asked if a few hens would not have been sufficient for himself and his retinue. This uncongenial remark circulated from lip to lip. Parsimony in a chief was a sin of the deepest dye. The more than patriarchal hospitality

which the heads of the clans exercised towards their dependants, whom they fed as a father feeds his children, made a niggard spirit the most revolting of all in the eyes of the Gael.

"We will not have a hen-chief to rule over us!" cried the indignant vassals, their overflowing welcomes suddenly changed into contempt and anger.

Unusual as it was to depose a chieftain, the Macdonalds proceeded at once to this strong expression of disapprobation. They elected in the place of Donald Gaulta a natural son of the late Clanranald, and the rightful heir fled for assistance to his friends the Frasers.

As these had allowed him to be reared in such principles of economy, they felt themselves bound to support him under the inconvenient consequences of his Sassenach education. They at once espoused his cause, and sallied forth to attack the Macdonalds.

The two parties joined battle at Kinloch Lochy, on the banks of Loch Lochy, on the 15th July, 1544. The fight began at morning, and was obstinately contested till nightfall. The day being sultry both parties stripped to their shirts, wherefore that battle was ever after distinguished by the name of "*Blaranlien*." Lord Lovat, his son, and eighty gentlemen of the Fraser clan, fell in the fight, and the unfortunate Donald Gaulta was taken prisoner by his rebellious vassals. His heedlessness of speech seemed fated to be his destruction, for having irritated them amid the turbulent rejoicings for their victory by some foolish boast, they cruelly murdered him in their passion.

The following anecdote occurs in an MS. history of Inverness and its vicinity, written in 1644 by a clergyman of the Fraser clan, and is extracted in Mr. Carruther's extremely clever "Highland Note-Book:"—

"In 1574 Lord Lovat, mustering his men at Tomnaheurich near Inverness, had eighty pretty fellows, whose mothers bore them immediately

after their fathers were slain at the battle of Lochy in 1544. A singular providence it was that by God's blessing these eighty widows, whose husbands were killed in that bloody battle, should each safely bear a boy, and that these same children should come to perfect age, surviving many of their kindred, and all happily meet together at a muster thirty years after with their chief."

The green hills that border Loch Lochy are very thinly wooded, and as thinly peopled, the villages and farms lying in the glens that stretch away into the interior. It is a quiet, solemn lake; the green shadows of the mountains rest motionless on the water, and the stillness of the scene is almost melancholy.

It is rather incongruous to see the steamer which plies between Inverness and Fort William dashing with all the hurry, smoke, and noise of its kind through the calm solitudes of the hills, nor can the passengers easily reconcile the prosaic accompaniments of their boat with the dreamy romance of the scenery through which it sweeps them.

THE WIDOWS OF LOCHY.

On the banks of Loch Lochy, ere fight had begun,
Gay mustered the Frasers at rising of sun,
And proudly Lord Lovat led forward his clan,
His brave Duinhewassels fourscore in the van—

All banded like brothers, with claymore and targe,
But himself and those eighty fell dead in the charge;
And eighty sad women were widowed in fight,
And never was shriek like the shriek of that night,
Like the cry of the Widows of Lochy.

For the right of the orphan the Frasers arose,
But Fortune forsook them to side with their foes;
The lawful Clanranald a captive is slain,
The hands that befriended are stiff on the plain;
And dark Eilan Tyrim, the sea-beaten rock,
To the victor usurping its gates must unlock;
The victor who shrank not, who cared not for wrong,
But a voice to the heavens went forth, and was strong,
'Twas the cry of the Widows of Lochy.

In sadness, the Frasers returned to their vale,
And loud was the chant of the coronach's wail;
From stern Corryarrick the echoes were swept,
And Ness, the unfathomed, was stirred as he slept;
Ben Nevis the hoary, the ancient of years,
From his snows in the sunshine was dropping with tears;
And Foyers, the gloomy, roared deep in his linn,
And startled was Aird by the funeral din,
By the cry of the Widows of Lochy.

On the banks of the Beauly there 's gladness at morn,
When eighty fair boys into daylight are born ;
Each boy hath the face of his father the dead,
Whose blood by the waters of Lochy was shed ;
Each boy to his mother recalleth her grief,—
The fall of her husband, the doom of her chief.
' Oh, swift as the torrent to ocean that runs
Up grow ye for vengeance, ye fatherless sons!'
Was the cry of the Widows of Lochy.

Thrice ten flew the summerso'er mountain and shore,
When Lord Lovat assembled his Frasers once more;
And lo ! Duinhewassals fourscore in array,
All banded like brothers, all born in a day ;
Full armed for the combat those orphans were seen,
Undaunted in spirit, unflinching in mien ;
For nurtured to vengeance from boyhood they grew,
And Death passèd by when his victims he slew,
By the sons of the Widows of Lochy.

Lead on, noble Lovat ! they shout to their Lord ;
Long, long for Clanranald we've whetted the sword ;
The blood of our fathers is red on his hands,
The fate of our fathers reprisal demands ;

And they shall be childless who orphaned our morn,
And they shall be orphans who yet are unborn;
And the fire of their dwellings shall crimson the cloud,
And the wail of their women tenfold shall be loud
As the cry of the Widows of Lochy!

MARY OF THE OAKENSHAWS.

It has been well said by Mrs. Grant, of Laggan, that the Second Sight of the Highlanders differed from all heathen divinations in this important respect, that it was entirely involuntary. It is described by this elegant and imaginative essayist, as a "shuddering impulse, a mental spasm, that comes unsought, and often departs without leaving a trace behind by which it may be connected with any future event."

The Highland seer did not go about, like Balaam, to seek for enchantments; his gift was a fatality, and was generally as unwelcome as unlooked for. He was not consulted by those curious to pry into futurity; he made no trade of imposture; no honours were attached to this mysterious endowment; the prophet was shunned rather than regarded by the vulgar. Instead of possessing he was possessed by the spirit within him, over the working of which he had no control.

The seers were almost always persons of weakly health, of solitary tastes, of morbid and melancholy temperament. They were themselves deceived, not deceivers of others; living much alone in the seclusion of the mountains, indulging in gloomy reveries, till the dreams on which their diseased fancy habitually fed grew at length distinct and palpable. Hence it was no wonder, if predisposed to credulity by education, they should imagine such appearances realised to their senses as well as to their thoughts.

The seventh son of a seventh son was supposed, by the accident of his birth, to be gifted with this unenvied power. The consciousness of being so considered by those around him would of itself foster in the mind of the unfortunate child a dreamy habit of reflection, an abstraction of manner, and a feeling of being unlike others, calculated, as he grew to manhood, to isolate him more and more from his fellows, and to teach him to people with apparitions the solitude of his soul. Such a character is that attempted to be portrayed in the following ballad.

Duntroon Castle, the ancient seat of an influential family of the Campbell clan, occupies a commanding site at the entrance of the Loch or Bay of Crinan, where it communicates with a similar salt-water firth, the Loch of Craignish.

Duntroon has had its days of military pride, when it stood sieges and defied invaders by sea and land; but it is now a peaceful dwelling-house.

The present proprietor has refitted and modernised the whole building in the interior, and yet with excellent taste has contrived to preserve something of its martial appearance, so that the voyager, as he sweeps under its walls, may still imagine it a fortalice of the olden time, hanging darkly from its wave-girt steep.

The coast-line of this part of Argyle is remarkably varied. The shores, now precipitous and barren, now undulating and richly cultivated, carry the visitor through a succession of beautiful prospects, each differing from the last. The waters are studded with innumerable islets, some wooded, and all grassy, which afford shelter to sea-fowl of every description. The nests, hidden among the weeds, are rarely disturbed by the hand of man; the Argyle peasants being seldom reduced, like the inhabitants of some of the desolate Hebridean isles, to live upon the birds of the sea.

The wild goose, the swan, the rare velvet duck, and many other sorts,

frequent these lochs, and form not the least beautiful objects in the scene, with their white wings glancing across the waves.

The people are nearly amphibious, every man is a boatman; yet, notwithstanding the universal skill and experience, accidents are but too common among the rapid tides and perilous eddies of this difficult navigation. The little daring boats are continually to be seen as they dart in and out among the creeks and islands. The sociality of the people is so great that the waves which intervene are no barrier to weekly or daily intercourse. Parties on the opposite sides of a loch keep up as friendly communication as the dwellers on the opposite sides of a street—nay, it may be questioned if the wave-divided neighbours meet not more frequently than those whom but a few steps of stone separate. It is a delightful close to a long summer day of wandering with pleasant companions through romantic scenery, to return home in the cool of the evening by water, the clear moon playing brightly on the boat's track, the fresh air making the little wavelets leap for joy, and the hilly coasts fading into that dreamy blue of distance which, more than all, "lends enchantment to the view."

The ballad referred to of Lord Reoch's daughter is an old and deserved favourite with the Highland maidens, who have a natural aptitude for song, and to whom the simple pathos of both the words and air of this exquisite fragment possesses a touching interest. It concludes with the following lament:—

"Ochone for fair Ellen, ochone!
Ochone for the pride of Strathcoe!
In the deep deep sea, in the salt salt bree,
Lord Reoch, thy Ellen lies low!"

MARY OF THE OAKENSHAWS.

It was upon a summer night,
A tranquil night of June,
We rested on our idle oars
Beneath an amber moon
That mirrored upon Crinan's loch
Thy ruined walls, Duntroon.

The sky was calm, the air was balm,
The night was clear as day,
Our eyes could trace each wooded isle
On Crinan's breast that lay,
And e'en the mist of Scarba's hills
Far out beyond the bay.

It was a night to meditate,
But full of speech were we,
As lark that singeth from the cloud,
Or mavis from the tree;
There was Mary of the Oakenshaws,
With Willie Bhane and me.

Sweet Mary of the Oakenshaws!
So thrillingly she sung;
No burn above its mosses flowed
So smoothly as her tongue,
No bluebell e'er so beautiful
In cleft of granite hung.

I scarce had hoped to mate with her,
Yet she to me was vowed,
And blushed so full of happiness
That well I might be proud;
For I had won her manfully
From all the rival crowd.

And Willie Bhane, no common youth
Was fashioned like to him,
Of lineament so feminine,
So delicate of limb,
With eyes where saddest sentiment
Welled ever o'er the brim.

A stranger to our mountain shores
In earliest youth came he.
His mother was a dark-eyed dame
From climes beyond the sea;
There was a spirit in her mien
That spake of ancestry.

There was a lightning in her glance,
Although her tones were mild,
And there were sad and cloudy cares
Upon her forehead piled;
She never gazed as mothers gaze
Upon an only child.

But silent in that fisher glen
She dwelt where first she came,
And if her homely neighbours asked
Of lineage or of name,
She said, "He is a seventh son,
His father was the same."

She must have known that ominous word
Would work with evil spell,
She must have guessed the coward fear
That on the fishers fell,
Whene'er they met the lonely boy
Beside the fairies' well.

He mingled not with other lads,
He loved to stray alone,
To climb the loftiest rugged rocks
With slippery weeds o'ergrown,
To watch the sunset on the sea
From a spray-watered stone.

And unappalled in soul was he
(For all his cheek so pale)
As ever roughest fisherman
That braves the autumn gale
And oft when every mast was bare
He boldly carried sail.

For well the currents of Loch Fyne
And well the shoals he knew,
And 'mong the rocks in Crinan hid
He held a practised clue;
No fisher-lad like Willie Bhane
For helmsman good and true!

But most his mood was pensiveness
When he would dreaming lie,
As if beneath the bubbling wave
Strange visions met his eye;
And whoso next he looked upon
They said was soon to die.

Thus half we clung to him in love,
And half we shrank in dread,
Until he grew to be my friend,
And hers, that maiden dead;
And words of angel sympathy
To him she pitying said.

Ah! never deemed her guilelessness,
That strove his gloom to cheer,
How love is built on gratitude,
How smiles become too dear;
And thus his fate was cast away
Ere either woke to fear.

But when she told him she was pledged,
And gladly pledged to me,
Without upbraiding or complaint
He left her hastily;
And many a dreary day and night,
He drove upon the sea.

At length he stood by us again,
Still paler than of old,
His matted locks hung o'er his brows,
His wasted hand was cold,
His voice was tremulous with fear,
His, who had been so bold.

He said, "To-day it is your plan
Across the loch to row,
But as I am a living man
I charge you not to go;
There is a fate against the deed
To work you death and woe!"

I shuddered at his warning words,
But Mary playful smiled,—
"Talk not to me of omens now
Who am no more a child;
The wind shall be our seer, Willie,
And that is soft and mild."

I yielded to her winning tones—
What else could lover do?
He were not man who could resist
Her eyes beseeching blue;
But alway to my dying hour
That weak consent I rue.

A woeful man was Willie Bhane—
"Self-slayers!" was his cry,
"Oh, Mary of the Oakenshaws,
How gladly would I die,
If but your life might be redeemed
By such a wretch as I!

If once your foot be on the loch
You are a doomèd maid,
You shall not sleep beside the kirk
Where all your kin are laid,
But your corse shall sink within the deep,
Where the coral reefs are made."

But nighest doom is blithest bloom,
She mocked his warning drear,—
"Now went ye to the seas, Willie,
To learn my death is near?
And came ye from the seas, Willie,
To bring such message here?"

Lightly tripped she to the strand,
Lightly urged the boat,
And with her deft and ready hand
The skiff was soon afloat,
While Willie stood there speechlessly,
As if choking in his throat.

But when he saw us push from land,
And raise the oars to ply,
He leaped beside us on the bench
With a loud and bitter cry,—
"Oh, Mary of the Oakenshaws,
I'll come with thee to die!"

He grasped the helm nor further spake,
And o'er the loch we shot;
The clouds were moveless overhead,
The air was still and hot,
And through the waves' transparency
Shewed coral reef and grot.

For many a mile we rowed along
To find an islet green,
Where seafowl brooding o'er their young
By Mary had been seen;
And there with rushy diadem
I crowned my Island Queen.

Ah! peaceful was that solitude
Upon the silent flood,
The shrubby knoll of birches black
Beneath whose shade we stood,
The distant hills, the winding shores,
The pasture and the wood.

Spent was the day when we returned,
And bared the starry lift,
And lazily across its shine
We saw the cloudlets drift:
E'en Willie Bhane in that repose
Forgot his fatal gift.

And thus it was we floated back
That balmy night of June,
And interchanged our sympathies
Beneath the amber moon,
Beside the shadow of thy walls,
Old Castle of Duntroon.

Then one by one we sank in thought,
And each began to muse;
Our hearts absorbed the gentle calm,
As flowers the summer dews;
When Mary's voice spontaneously
Its magic did infuse.

So sweet she sang, so soft she sang,
That mournful tale and true
Of all the father's agony
Lord Reoch's bosom knew,
When lovely Ellen's boat went down
Far, far from Allan Dhu.

So sweet she sang, so soft she sang,
She wiled our hearts away;
Forgetful of the helm and oar,
We drifted from the ray
Of moonlight to the darkest shades
And shallows of the bay.

So sweet she sang, so sad she sang,
Our tears she did unlock;
When, all unsteered, the helpless boat
Drove rudely on a rock,
And by an eddying tide engulfed
Heeled over in the shock.

The music still was in our ears
Of that entrancing burst,
When we were struggling for our lives
In chillest waves immersed,
And madly grasping at the clothes
Of her who sank the first.

'Twas but a second, swimmers strong
We both the deep could brave,
And near us lay the sheltering land;
But she was in the wave;
And Willie Bhane sank hopelessly
With her he died to save.

My senses fled in agony
  Amid the water's roar;
Nor knew I of the friendly bark
  That hurried from the shore,
Nor felt the hands that rescued me
  To live and suffer more.

They drew me quickly to the strand,
  I wakened from my swoon
Beside the calmly glistening loch,
  Beneath the amber moon,
And all thy shadowed battlements,
  Old Castle of Duntroon.

No furrow rippled on the deep,
  No ruffle marred the sky.
Was it a dream of misery?
  Could I have seen them die,
And yet unchanged around me smile
  The tranquil earth and sky?

But hear the waters murmuring
  That low and mournful tune
Of her who passed away in song
  Beneath the amber moon,
Who sleeps o'ershadowed by thy walls,
  Old Castle of Duntroon!

LORD MURRAY.

The very curious superstition on which this poem is grounded was kindly communicated by a lady, who had heard it frequently referred to by the Highland peasantry in the neighbourhood of Loch Long, and the grand mountain scenery that lies inland through Argyle.

It is simply this, that women who die in childbed are carried straight to heaven, whatever may have been their sins during life; such a death being an indemnity in full for all offences or omissions.

The only allusion to this superstition that the writer can find is, not in any Gaelic tradition, but in one of the border ballads, that of Clerk Saunders. It is given both by Scott and Motherwell, in their collections of Border Minstrelsy, without any comment from either editor on the verses in question.

Clerk Saunders having been slain by the brothers of his love, May Margaret, his ghost comes by night to claim from the lady the restitution of his plighted troth, without which he could not sleep quietly in his grave.

May Margaret, unable to resist the impulse of curiosity, and anxious

to obtain some equivalent for the troth-plight she was required to give up, offers the following very fair bargain:—

"Thy faith and troth thou sall never get,
And our true love sall never twin,
Until you tell what comes of women,
I wot, who die in strong travailling."

The ghost, though he has left the body but twenty-four hours, seems to have made good use of his faculties in the interval, for he promptly replies,—

"Their beds are made in the heavens so high,
Down at the foot of our good Lord's knee,
Weel set about wi' gilly flowers,
I wot, sweet company for to see."

This information, if not very explicit, at least implies that sufferers by that peculiar mode of dying were repaid by an honourable resting-place in the heavenly mansions. It is probable this idea was derived from the Roman Catholic religion, and that the Virgin was supposed to have some influence in the exemption from earthly penalties bestowed on the dead mother. The poem has, therefore, represented this as the feeling which dictated a superstition too full of tenderness to excite the sneer of the most sceptical despiser of the faith of old.

LORD MURRAY.

At break of day to hunt the deer
Lord Murray rides with hunting gear;
Glen Tilt his boding step shall know,
The minished herd his prowess show;
And savoury haunch and antlers tall
Shall grace to-morrow's banquet-hall.

Lord Murray leapeth on his horse,
A little hand arrests his course;
Two loving eyes upon him burn,
And mutely plead for swift return,—
His lady stands to see him go,
Yet standing makes departure slow.

"Go back, my dame," Lord Murray said,
"The wind blows chilly on thy head;
Go back into thy bower and rest,
Too sharp the morning for thy breast;
Go tend thy health, I charge on thee,
For sake of him thou'st promised me."

Lord Murray gallops by the brae,
His huntsmen follow up the Tay,
Where Tummel, like a hoyden girl,
Leaps o'er the croy with giddy whirl,
Falls in Tay's arms a silenced wife,
And sinks her maiden name for life.

Lord Murray rides through Garry's den,
Where beetling hills the torrent pen;
And as he lasheth bridge and rock
The caves reverberate the shock,

Far as the cones of Ben-y-Glo,
That o'er Glen Tilt their shadows throw.

Great sport was his, and worthy gain,
The noblest of the herd were slain;
Till, worn with chase, the hunter sank
At evening on a mossy bank;
And as his strength revived with food
His spirit blessed the solitude.

A silvery mist the distance hid,
And up the valley gently slid;
While, softened, through its curtain white
The lakes and rivers flashed their light,
And crimson mountains of the west
Cushioned the sun upon their breast.

Hushed was the twilight, birds were dumb,
The midges ceased their vexing hum,
And floated homewards in their sleep;
All silent browsed the straggling sheep;
E'en Tilt, sole tattler of the glen,
Ran voiceless in Lord Murray's ken.

An infant's cry! such hails at birth
The first-pained feeble breath of earth;

Lord Murray starteth to explore,
But there is stillness as before;
Nothing he sees but fading skies,
The cold blue peaks, the stars' dim eyes,
The heather nodding wearily,
The wind that riseth drearily:
It was a fancy, thinketh he,
But it hath broke his reverie.

In closing night he rideth back,
His heart is darker than his track;
It is not conscience, dread, or shame,
His soul is stainless as his name,
But shapeless horrors vaguely crowd
Around him, black as thunder-cloud.

He spurs his horse until he reach
His castle's belt of aged beech;
His lady sped him forth at morn,
But silence hails his late return;
The little dog that on her waits,
Why runs he whining at the gates?

Lord Murray wonders at the gloom,
His halls deserted as the tomb,

And all along the corridors
Against the windows swing the firs;
Closed is his lady's door,—he stands,
Too weak to ope it with his hands,
Yet bursteth in he knows not how,
And looks upon his lady's brow.

She lay upon their bridal bed,
Her golden tresses round her shed,
Her eyelids dropped, her lips apart,
As if still sighing forth her heart,
But cold and white, as life looked never,
For life had left that face for ever.

On her bosom lay a child,
Flushed with sleep wherein it smiled,—
Sleep of birth and sleep of death,
Icy cheek and warm young breath,
Rosy babe and clay-white mother
Stilly laid by one another.

The nurse, a woman bowed with years,
Knelt by the bed with bursting tears,
And wailed o'er her whose early bloom
She thus had nurtured for the tomb;

A piteous sight it was in sooth,—
The living age, the perished youth.

" The way is long," at last she said,
" Oh, sorrowing Lord, the way is dread,
Through marsh and pitfall, to the rest
God keeps for those who serve Him best;
And unto man it ne'er was given
To win with ease the joys of heaven.

But Mary, Queen beside her Son,
Such grace for woman's soul hath won
(Remembering the manger rude,
Her pangs of virgin motherhood),
That blessèd most of mortals they
Whose life life-giving flows away.

No pains of purgatory knows
The sleeper in that deep repose,
No harsh delays in upper air
The mother, birth released, must bear;
For angels near her waiting stand
And lift her straight to God's right hand.

No masses need ye for her soul,
Round whom the heavenly censers roll;

Pure as the babe she bore this day,
Her sins in death were washed away;
To win him life 'twas hers to die,
And she shall live in heaven for aye;
Pale in our sight her body lies,
Her soul is bless'd in Paradise!"
Lord Murray's voice took up the word,
"Her soul is blessèd, praise the Lord!"

THE SPINNING OF THE SHROUD.

"It was the practice among the Highland women for a newly-made bride, immediately on her instalment in her new position, to set about spinning the yarn for her shroud."—Logan's *Scottish Gael*, vol. ii. page 363.

Captain Burt also mentions that this custom was general in his day, adding that the husband would indeed be considered a profligate and dead to all sense of shame who should sell or pledge his wife's "dead claiths."

It must have been a strong impression of the fallacy of earthly hopes which assigned such a task to such a season.

The associations of the tomb would chill with more than ordinary severity the young heart which was beginning to expand in the warmth of mutual affection, and in the pleasant prospects of a new mode of existence.

Was it to sober her girlish levity that her first duty was to make ready for the grave, that her first care on entering the home which seemed to promise a long and happy life of domestic peace, was to prepare the solemn garments of the tomb? How eloquently this custom speaks

of the familiarity with which the Highlanders encouraged the idea of another life beyond the present! The remembrance of it entered into all their joys and griefs. Their weddings were darkened by its shadow, their burials brightened by its ray; for the thought of death must ever be chequered with sunshine and cloud. The spirit welcomes the bliss that is to follow in the promised heaven; the flesh shrinks from the revolting corruption and cold oblivion of the grave.

The Highland maiden, on entering the wedded state, unbound from her luxuriant locks the fillet or snood, which till then had formed their only covering, and veiled them thenceforward in the modesty of a matron toy or curch. This was a simple cap of linen or cotton cloth, bound plainly across the forehead with a band of riband.

It could not have been so becoming as the natural adornment of flowing hair, and doubtless was inconvenient to the inexperienced wearer, but the honorary distinction it implied would soon reconcile the novice to its disadvantages.

The frozen tarn alluded to is Loch Wain in Inverness-shire, lying among lofty mountains about forty miles westward from Beauly. "It is constantly, both in summer and winter, covered with ice; but in the middle of June, when the sun is most nearly vertical, a very little of the ice in the centre of the lake is dissolved by day, but nightly frozen over again as before."—*Beauties of Scotland*, vol. v., *Inverness-shire*.

THE SPINNING OF THE SHROUD.

WHERE wind-swept Wyvis, cumbrous and o'ergrown,
His massive shoulder to the morn doth rear
In snowy splendour, like that great white throne
Whence heaven and earth shall flee away for fear,
As Holy Writings tell, there, sternly grand,
The traveller sees that hill o'ertop this mountain land.

Beneath his shadow lovely valleys lie,
And lucid firths stretch winding to the main,
So hid, the sunbeams of the dawning sky
Must often seek their shady haunts in vain.
On a green bank of one most calm and still
A little cottage leaned against a hill.

Its slender walls of turfy clods were heaped,
Its lowly roof was thatched with heath and broom,
In curling wreaths of smoke for ever steeped
Lay the blue twilight of its single room;
Hushed as a churchyard was the lonely hut,
As if from that fair glen all worldly cares were shut.

Some narrow strips of cultivated field
Chequered the braes with oats and clover green,
By careful hands that scanty glebe was tilled,
And on the highest peaks the flock was seen;
While lower down, along the water's brink,
The thriving cattle browsed, or stooped to drink.

Upon a withered plane's dismembered stock
A woman sat, and as she span she sung,
While from her simple, antiquated rock,
Her nimble hands the ravelled threads unstrung;
And her quick eyes now watched some truant cow,
Now sought her husband dear, who paced behind his plough.

She was full fair, for she was young in years,
And gently nurtured as an only child;
Less used to labour than her peasant peers,
Her bearing scarce beseemed those mountains wild;
Her glossy locks, her cheeks untanned, unworn,
Told she had spent in ease her pleasant maiden morn.

Across those shining braids the matron toy
With inexperienced hands was loosely hung;
For scarcely yet had merged the virgin coy
Into the wife sedate, she was so freshly young;
And scarcely yet that playful brow was bent,
Though in its joy mixed care's new element.

And while her fingers, deft at household art,
Drew out the threads, she mixed her work with song,—
Pouring the thoughts of her untutored heart
In strains as guileless the wild hills along;
And all the echoes o'er the waters wide
Gave answer deep and sad to that young peasant bride.

THE SONG OF THE BRIDE.

Slowly ravel, threads of doom;
Slowly lengthen, fatal yarn;
Death's inexorable gloom
Stretches like the frozen tarn,

Never thawed by sunbeams kind,
Ruffled ne'er by wave or wind.
Man beholds it, and is still,
Daunted by its mortal chill;
Thither haste my helpless feet
While I spin my winding-sheet!

Summer's breath, divinely warm,
  Kindles every pulse to glee;
Fled are traces of the storm,
  Wintry frost and leafless tree:
Shakes the birch its foliage light,
In the sun the mists are bright;
Heaven and earth their hues confound,
Scattering rainbows on the ground;
Life with rapture is replete
While I spin my winding-sheet!

Summer's voice is loud and clear,
  Lowing kine and rippling swell;
Yet, beneath it all I hear
  Something of a funeral knell.
Sings the linnet on the bough,
Sings my bridegroom at the plough,
Whirrs the grouse along the brake,
Plash the trout within the lake,

Soft the merry lambkins bleat
While I spin my winding-sheet!

Thatched with mosses green and red,
  Blooming as a fairy hill,
Lifts my home its cheerful head
  By the ever-leaping rill.
Lo! its future inmates rise,
Gathering round with loving eyes;
Some my Dugald's features wear,
Some have mine, but far more fair;
Prattling lips my name repeat
While I spin my winding-sheet?

Youth is bright above my track,
  Health is strong within my breast;
Wherefore must this shadow black
  On my bridal gladness rest?
On my happy solitude
Must the vision still intrude?
Must the icy touch of Death
Freeze my song's impassioned breath?
I am young, and youth is sweet,
Why then spin my winding-sheet?

Hark! the solemn winds reply,
"Woman, thou art born to woe;
Long ere 'tis thine hour to die
Thou shalt be well pleased to go.
Though the sunshine of to-day
Blind thine eyeballs with its ray,
Grief shall swathe thee in its pall,
Life's beloved before thee fall.
Bride, the grave hath comfort meet,
Thankful spin thy winding-sheet!"

THE VIGIL OF THE DEAD.

THE Highlanders believed that when a burial took place in their mountain churchyard the spirit of the deceased was compelled by some mysterious law to keep watch there by night until relieved by another interment, when the ghost of the newly-arrived corpse assumed his unwelcome duties, and the weary wraith passed to its ultimate destination whether of happiness or woe.

It must have been an irksome duty to be thus excluded from earth's interests without being admitted to participate in the joys of heaven.

The successor was obliged in his turn to await another interment, and the advent of another ghost to give him liberty.

If we can fancy this bodiless watcher to preserve any consciousness of the doings on that earthly scene, in which he could no longer take an active part, we may picture the irritation and eagerness which would impel him to wish that all sickness among his old companions might end in death, that all accidents among the dangerous crags and morasses might prove fatal to life as well as limb.

Far from an improving preparation for the holiness of heaven was this detention below, when the unhappy ghost, shivering in the frosty

moonlight, counted over the chances of mortality among his former friends, no doubt complaining fretfully of a delay which retarded his own release and prolonged his own discomfort.

Yet to those who felt themselves by the verdict of their consciences to be destined for eternal retribution, how awful must have been this breathing-time between the sins and the avengement! How dreadful the retrospect! how far, far more dreadful the anticipation! In the awful solitude of the desolate graveyard how active would memory be, how mighty remorse! The mind turns shuddering from an idea of so much horror.

The "Dreeng," or meteor, on which the souls of the blessed arose to heaven, was a remnant of the ancient Druidical faith.

It was probably derived from the aurora borealis, seen most resplendently in the clear nights of a Highland autumn or winter.

Its dazzling coruscations and rapidly changing evolutions, wheeling and darting among the thickly-sown stars of the northern firmament, might readily suggest to the imaginative the ecstatic raptures of the freed spirits of the redeemed.

THE VIGIL OF THE DEAD.

When the night-mist is swathing the mountain's gray head,
When the night-dews are bathing the graves of the dead,
When the soft breath of slumber ascendeth from men,
And the torch of the watcher burns low in the glen,
When the peace of forgetting, sole peace of this life,
Hath deadened each sorrow and silenced each strife,
A bodiless spirit out-thrust from my corse,
Excluded from heaven and dogged by remorse,
I stand here and shiver, so bloodless and thin,
Recalling past pleasure, bewailing past sin;
By the cold dyke that circles the mounds of the dead,
I wait for another to watch in my stead.
But clear is the winter and healthful the frost;
Since the last night of summer no life has been lost:

That last night of summer! long, long shall they tell
How Allan, the herdsman, was killed on the fell.
'Twixt the hill and the precipice scant was the road,
The eagles flew near him as heedless he trode;
He slipped on the wet moss, the rock-face was bare,
The heather-roots crumbled—he clutched in despair;
And at morn when the shepherds went by with the flock
Dead Allan lay crushed at the foot of the rock!
'Twas the last night of summer, now Yule is at hand,
Yet still by the grave-stones alone I must stand
And watch the blue doors of the adamant sky
That ope not to shelter when humbly I cry;
'Tis my doom to keep sentinel over the dead
Till the soul of another shall come in my stead,
Till the corse of another be laid in the sod,
And I float on the meteor to heaven and God.

But hale are the clansmen; the patriarch of all,
No staff doth support him, so sturdy and tall;
Each Sabbath I've marked him stride under the trees,
His white hairs flow freely to welcome the breeze;
His children attend him with reverence and pride,
And the wife of his youth moveth slow at his side:
Yes, long have I marked him my soul to release,
But long shall he linger when I am at peace.

It is not the oldest who first are laid low,
It is not the ripest who drop from the bough;
For Death will be dainty when choosing his prey,
And the best and the choicest he sweepeth away;
A younger, and dearer, and lovelier sprite
Shall replace in this churchyard my watching by night.

Oh fair was the maiden I wedded in spring,
And fondly my Morag around me would cling;
The balm of her kisses, the warmth of her breath,—
Dear wife of my bosom!—they cheer me in death.
Now widowed is Morag, in sadness she sits
While the wind through her hovel goes howling by fits,
Till the babe in his cradle is wakened to hear.
To her bosom she strains him, all sobbing with fear;
His forehead is burning, and red with disease,
His breathing comes broken in gusts like the breeze.
Ah! hush him to slumber, ah! soothe him with song;
Ah! call him thine Allan, not thine is he long,
For there's death in his gasping, there's death in his eye;
Pale widow, pale mother, too soon shall he die!
The fatherless infant is drooping his head,
To lie in the churchyard, to watch in my stead:
Unborn at my dying, his death sets me free,
And his soul in departing opes heaven for me!

The meteor approacheth, it burns on my sight,
It quickens the dawn with its tremulous light;
The dawn that revealeth the baby's damp cheek,
Which the dark hues of dying so fearfully streak.
Sore weepeth my Morag, she thinks not of me,
As she bends o'er that fast changing face on her knee;
Her heart with her nursling goes down to the tomb,
While the sire he hath ransomed is freed from his doom.

That fair little stranger! they'll bring him at morn,
By the dust will they lay him from which he was born—
His face white and tranquil close nestled beside,
With the smile still upon it he smiled as he died.
And his spirit at evening shall come to our grave
As the dews are thick falling, and loud the winds rave.
When the meteor down-shooting shall bear me on high,
Shall the baby-soul speed me with farewell and sigh;
For then shall he know me, and then will he love,
As I float on that flickering radiance above.
Haste, Death! take another, nor long leave the child
To watch by the graves in the midnight so wild;
No evil hath stained him such penance to need,
For the soul of the infant hath love for its creed;
Give his charge to another, and lift him with me,
That the babe and the father in bliss may be free.

THE FAIRY LAMENT.

It is long since the "Daoine Shi," or fairies, disappeared from the society of mortals. The Gael clung to them for many years after all other nations had abandoned them as fictitious delusions. He had invested them with all the accompaniments of his own rude habits, so that the Highland fairy was as truly national as the Highlander himself. He believed them to be the veritable angels who rebelled and were cast from heaven. Unlike the elves of "merrie England," they had no sovereign, and disdained to owe fealty to any power inferior to that of the arch-fiend himself. We hear of a fairy queen on the borders, but she does not appear to have crossed the Grampians.

On their expulsion from the celestial regions the "Daoine Shi" were condemned to dwell on the earth, and they fixed their abodes under its sod and under its seas. The inhabitants of the sea-shore believed them to be disguised in the shape of seals, animals which are common on all the northern coasts.

In the interior of the country they were supposed to live in conical mounds, which often occur among the inequalities of a hilly district, and are in Celtic language called "Tomhauns."

Mrs. Grant of Laggan, to whose invaluable descriptions we cannot too frequently return, paints with vivid touch a lovely scene in Strathspey, which is famous for its enchanted hillocks. They rise in a narrow pass, at the mouth of a small lake called Lochan Uvie, close under the tall perpendicular cliff of Craig Our, on whose summit the last gosshawk known in Scotland built its unapproachable nest. The mounds are thickly overgrown with birchwood, whose light waving boughs have a fantastic effect in the moonlight, when, according to rumour, unearthly figures are to be seen flitting underneath them.

The Celtic fairies seem to have been a morose and malicious race, not unlike the German gnomes or earth spirits. Their supposed origin accounted for this, and their chance of salvation being very remote, they hated with unremitting jealousy the human beings in whose eternal weal the Almighty had deigned to take an interest. Their power over mankind was limited, and depended not a little on human faith and obedience. Transgression of duty, presumption, or neglect of the prescribed ordinances of religion, threw mortals within reach of their malignity.

As they were unhappy so they were capricious, and variable. Sometimes they would benefit men, sometimes they would injure; and the uncertainty of their dispositions rendered the Highlanders cautious in adverting to them.

They were called men of peace, though notoriously quarrelsome, and "the gude friends," though too frequently they proved themselves enemies.

Their inveterate habit of kidnapping children might be excused on the plea that they were yearly obliged to pay teinds or tithes to hell, and therefore preferred to substitute mortal infants in the place of their own offspring. See the curious confession of Isabel Gowdie in Pitcairn's "Criminal Trials."

There was marrying and giving in marriage among the Highland elves, in which respect they had lapsed from the spirituality of their angelic nature. Agreeably to the changeful humours which swayed them, the object of their choice was now one of their own race, now a mortal woman, forcibly abducted from her earthly kindred. The mother, after her delivery, was in a perilous state of exposure to their devices. Till both she and her infant had been formally admitted into the visible church, the first by public thanksgiving, the latter by baptism, they were not considered in safety by their relatives. It was thus imperative on those around the invalid to watch with unremitting assiduity, more especially by night. A moment's forgetfulness might ruin all; but if the attendants were on their guard no ill could happen, as the fairies never came unseen, and a single adjuration in the Holy Name was sufficient to disappoint their malice.

The stratagems they had recourse to were endless. Either a charmed sleep weighed down the vainly resisting eyelids of the watchers, or a false alarm from without summoned the household from the sick room, and, on their hasty return, they would find the bed empty, and a green bough left in the place of the stolen female. Such a misfortune happened very lately to a peasant of Argyle, who assured a friend of ours that his wife had been carried off by the elves and a green billet of wood left in her stead!

Remedies there were for these troubles, spells to bring back the lost and loved; but at best they were of doubtful efficacy, and, when they failed, drew the bonds of thraldom more tightly than ever round the elfin captive.

Infants were more easily recovered, probably because their sinless purity gave them somewhat of an advantage over the fallen spirits who had seized them.

It was a popular belief that the elves, having chosen green for their own especial use, were highly offended at any one who presumed to wear that colour—an indignity which was sure to fix their malicious observation on the unlucky transgressor, and the first opportunity was embraced to avenge themselves for the insult.

One cannot but remark the difference in temperament between the Highland and English elves. Shakspeare's fairies are gay, airy, harmless creatures, sporting in the moonbeams, and as ethereal and innocuous as the rays which lit their gambols. They had little power, and that little they exercised oftener to assist than to annoy.

But the Celtic fairy was a being of more strength, more energy of purpose and depth of feeling. It could hate, and envy, and oppress with all the malignity of the worst of Cain's descendants. Shakspeare imbued his Mab and Titania with the graceful playfulness of his own fancy; the Gael clothed his "Daoine Shi" in all the savage ruggedness of a wilder nature.

THE FAIRY LAMENT.

HEAR ye not the infant's cries?
Faint they fall, and feebly rise;
Pale the mother's youthful head
Sinks beside him on the bed:
'Ware ye of the fairy green.

Feebly wails the newly born,
Pierced with being's entrance-thorn;
Soundly sleeps the mother mild,
One arm pressed beneath her child:
Fonder lady ne'er was seen.

Still in peril must they lie,
Evil sprites are hovering nigh,
Till by holy rite they stand
In the fold's protected band:
'Ware ye of the fairy green.

Husband! nurses! watch and pray,
Let not night your charge betray;
They have will who now have power,
Heed ye 'gainst the careless hour:
Worthier lady ne'er was seen.

Keep the portals of your eyes
From an elfin foe's surprise;
Crying but the sacred Name,
He must flee in awe and shame:
'Ware ye of the fairy green.

Night is long and night is dreary,
Watching makes the eyelids weary;

All at last, forgetful found,
See not sight and hear not sound:
Lonelier lady ne'er was seen.

Hark! the crowing of the cock!
Hark! the striking of the clock!
Hark! the babe that cries for food!
Up they started—up they stood!
'Ware ye of the fairy green.

"Heard ye aught? 'tis morning light;
Heard ye whispers through the night?"
"They have come, and she is gone;
Lies the babe in bed alone:"
Sweeter lady ne'er was seen.

"Lo we slumbered, and they passed;
In her place a bough is cast,
Green with leaves and wet with dew,
Freshly cut—her flight is new:"
'Ware ye of the fairy green.

Motherless her babe she leaves,
Husband of all hope bereaves;

Vain their searching, vain their tears,—
She is lost for life-long years:
Dearer lady ne'er was seen.

Now the fay's unwilling thrall
Bound in subterranean hall;
Now an elfin chieftain's bride
Through the wood with him must ride:
'Ware ye of the fairy green.

Time can heal the gaping cleft,
Hope in every heart is left;
Newly wived the husband smiles,
Youthful sport the boy beguiles:
Sadder lady ne'er was seen.

Home once lighted by her face
Bears of her no tender trace;
Constant as of old is she
In her forced captivity:
'Ware ye of the fairy green.

She is decked with magic gem,
Moonshine's dewy diadem,

Yet she keeps her earthly vows,
Shrinketh from her elfin spouse:
Truer lady ne'er was seen.

Nought her human kinsmen know
Of that lost one's weal or woe;
O'er her fate mysterious spread
Darkness such as veils the dead:
'Ware ye of the fairy green.

But to her, in fairy land,
Comes the power to understand
All they feel and all they do,
Barbing every grief anew:
Sadder lady ne'er was seen.

Where the enchanted Tomhaun heaves
Underneath the birchen leaves,
In a grass-green robe she stands,
Seems to moan, and wrings her hands:
'Ware ye of the fairy green.

All the fay's ethereal gleaming
Blends she with a woman's seeming;

Every eye is sad to view,
Every heart the sight must rue:
Lovelier lady ne'er was seen.

Where the shades of tall Craig Our
Dark on Lochan Uvie lower,
Spelled from home to stand aloof,
Points she to her husband's roof:
'Ware ye of the fairy green.

Never speaks she,—'tis forbidden,
Only weepeth sore when chidden;
Yearneth on her child to look,—
Absence ill can mother brook:
Tenderer lady ne'er was seen.

She must mourn, and stand afar,
Flickering like a falling star,
Till the latter days befall
Which shall burst each elfin thrall:
'Ware ye of the fairy green.

Till each soul redeemed of man
Drops the elves' accursed ban;
Loosed by Mercy's priceless pardon,
Then shall she receive her guerdon:
Holier lady ne'er was seen.

THE SPIRIT TRYST.

It followed, from the respectful credence given by the Highlanders to tales of ghostly appearances, that in the minds of their children these fancies became impressed with all the exaggerations to which the youthful imagination is prone. Knowing from our own recollection the almost perilous interest which the marvellous excites in childhood, we are not surprised to learn that the young Highlanders were often possessed by the belief that to them also had come visitors from the unknown world.

Many anecdotes are told of the seeds sown by superstition in so fruitful a soil. One in particular, from which the poem is partly imitated, is not unworthy of narration, though it must be much abridged from the details given by Mrs. Grant of Laggan :—

A little girl declared to her friends that she had seen her dead father the preceding night, while tending the sheep on the hill, and that he had appointed another meeting on the ensuing evening. The friends, disturbed by her restless and agitated appearance, had her watched by two young women, who sat up with her, and used every effort to divert her

attention. At the hour she had named she disappeared, by what means the two watchers could not tell. They pursued, and brought her back, before she had reached her destination; and she appeared in great agony of mind at the non-fulfilment of her purpose. The next night, at the same hour, she again escaped; and the effect on her spirits made it necessary to remove her entirely from the neighbourhood.

These spiritual interviews were not considered to be inevitably productive of fatal consequences; but the mind of the self-deluded ghost-seer being previously unhinged, the shock to the nerves, and mental excitement caused by the supposed meeting, were too often the forerunners of illness and death,—a consummation which threw a deeper gloom over similarly affected visionaries, and multiplied the victims of their own disordered senses.

The influence of spiritual contact with mortal flesh is noticed by more than one writer. Walter Scott, in his powerful ballad, "The Eve of St. John," makes the apparition of Sir Richard of Coldinghame grasp the guilty Lady of Smaylholme by the wrist, on which the impression of his fingers remained burned for ever.

In another of Mrs. Grant's anecdotes, the lady's wrist being clasped, though in all affection, by the spectre of her husband, becomes blue and mortified in appearance, and she herself survives the fatal touch but a few days.

Previously to a death, a light, like the flame of a taper, was seen moving in the direction of the churchyard, indicating by its course the exact path which should afterwards be trodden by the funeral train.

If, as frequently happened, the dying person had a relative buried in that place, a light would rise out of the grave, and proceeding to the house of the expiring sufferer, be there joined by a similar flame; both would then move to the churchyard and disappear at the mound where

the dead relative already lay, and where the dying would soon be stretched beside.

These lights were the corpse-candles carried by the invisible spirits, and the flame waxed dim and brightened alternately, as the breath went and came in the body of the departing. The flame that represented a person already dead was fixed and steady.

The water-wraith, so beautifully introduced by Campbell in "Lord Ullin's Daughter," is even now believed in by many of the Highlanders, and a sullen roar or scream of the river is supposed to portend a storm.

The ancient Highlanders worshipped a water-god, who was especially regarded by the Lewis islanders. In Strathspey there is a haunted lake called Loch nan Spiridan, "the Lake of Spirits," from the water-wraiths who frequented it. And the Gael had also his God of Thunder and his Rider of the Storm. But these belong to a much earlier period than that of the poem, by which time the august and terrible deities had all died away, and left their diminished kingdom to the more insignificant water-wraith.

THE SPIRIT TRYST.

"HAUD off, haud off your hands, Jeanie,
I canna bide at hame;
And wha wad miss me frae the warld—
The last o' Tulloch's name?

I haena kith nor friend, Jeanie,
Except it be yoursel';
I canna win the bread I eat,
I am sae sma' and frail.

My hand is weak to shear, Jeanie,
My foot is weak to fauld,
A sickly bairn, and motherless,
And barely twelve year auld.

Ye maunna haud me back, Jeanie,
Frae ganging out the nicht,
Ye dinna ken wha cam' to me
Yestreen at gloamin' licht.

A wee bit lamb had fa'an, Jeanie,
And slippit i' the burn,
Sae in my breast I carried it,
A' shiverin' through Glen Dearn;

When by the Drumlie Linn, Jeanie,
My mother stopp'd my way,
I dropp'd the lammie to my feet,
I clean forgot to pray.

Wi' grand and solemn look, Jeanie,
She waved her arm to me,
I kenned it was my mother's sel'
By the love was in her e'e.

She waved her arm to me, Jeanie,
Syne faded into air;
Gin ye suld chain me to the hearth,
I must and shall be there.

Then dinna haud me back, Jeanie,
Ye canna thwart my fate,
The spirit that appoints wi' man
Will find him sune or late."

Young Jeanie sighed to hear her speak,
But sought her mood to turn,
And aye she daffed and dawted her
To keep her frae Glen Dearn;

And aye she tauld her blythest tale
And sang her blythest sang,
To wile awa' the midnicht hours—
The midnicht hours sae lang.

But she has closed her weary e'e,
For fast the lassie's fled,
Her coats up-kilted to her knee,
Her plaid about her head.

And fast did Jeanie follow her,
But a' pursuit was vain;
The lassie to the spirit tryst
Alang the burn has gane.

Sair feared was Jeanie for the tryst,
Sair feared was she to turn,
She waited on a lichtsome field,
Abune the dark Glen Dearn.

A lichtsome field of fragrant hay,
  Fresh heaped beneath the moon,
Where she had lilted a' the day,
  The lang, bricht day o' June.

The burnie, like a petted bairn,
  Lay whimperin' in its bed;
A' hapt about wi' sloes and fern,
  Wi' rowans arched o'erhead.

It was an eerie place by day,
  An eerier place by nicht;
The Drumlie Linn, sae chilly gray,
  Had never glint o' licht.

Now while she look'd, and while she list,
  On yon hayfield abune,
A cauld wind took her ere she wist,
  A cloud o'erlap the moon.

And frae the burn a sound arose,
  O' waefu' water wraith,
Like widow mournin' in her woes,
  Or captive in his death.

Puir Jeanie signed the holy cross,
That waefu' sound to hear;
And a' the trees began to toss
Their shiverin' arms for fear.

Then moving in the black ravine,
Appear'd twa yellow lichts,
Sic as on marshes cheat the een,
And scare the herd o' nichts.

The yellow lichts gaed ower the burn,
And up the rowan brae,
They didna miss a single turn
Of a' the trodden way.

By mony a siller-footed birk,
O'er tufts o' heather sward,
They flitted past the solemn kirk,
Intill the green kirkyard.

They stopped beside a mossy mound
That heaved o'er Una's mother,
And then within the damp cold ground
They vanished, one and other.

And loudly did the burnie shriek,
And loudly roared the blast;
And upon Jeanie's pallid cheek
The blinding rain fell fast.

Oh, fearfullie she turned her hame,
Sae drookit, cauld, and wae,
Nor sleep upon her eyelids came
Until the break o' day!

Nor lang she slept when by her bed
A voice o' sadness cried;
And when she raised her aching head,
Pale Una stood beside.

"I hae kept the spirit tryst, Jeanie,
I hae seen my mother's face;
She met me at the haunted hour,
And at the haunted place.

I wasna feared to look, Jeanie,
She seemed sae new frae heaven;
Her words o' mournfu' tenderness,
For ill were never given.

She said, 'This life is vain, Una,
And griefs await my child;
And gin ye were as snow is pure,
As snow ye'd be defiled.

Oh, sleep wi' me at rest, Una!'—
Wi' that she took my hand;—
'Ye shanna see the levin-cloud
Shoot death upon the land.

Ye shanna see the tears, Una,
And bluid fa' doon thegither;
Ye shanna hear the coronach
Upon the blasted heather.'

Wi' that she let me gae, Jeanie,
I fell in deepest swound,
And when I waked the sun was high,
And weet wi' rain the ground.

The wrist she held is black, Jeanie,
As wi' an iron grasp;
I didna feel she hurted me,
It was a mother's clasp.

Ye see she ca's me hame, Jeanie,
I am content to gang;
A thing sae feckless i' the warld,
Was never sent for lang.

I hae na walth o' gear, Jeanie,
To will for love o' thee,
I hae na but my mother's cross,
O' carvèd ebonie.

Oh, wear that carvèd cross, Jeanie!
Ill spirits aye 't will chase,
'Twill join your kindly thochts o' me
To thochts o' heavenlie grace.

And cover me in the mools, Jeanie,
Frae the cauld, and frae the care."
The lassie sighed, and laid her doon,
" And word spake never mair."

The bonnie bairn sae early ta'en,
Was dear to a' the lave;
There never went a sadder train,
Than bore her to her grave.

Slow, slow they went across the burn,
And up the rowan brae,
They didna miss a single turn
Of a' the trodden way.

By mony a sillerfooted birk,
O'er tufts of heather sward,
They bore her past the solemn kirk,
Intill the green kirkyard.

They stopped beside a mossy mound
That heaved o'er Una's mother,
They laid the lassie in the ground,
To sleep, the one wi' other.

But Jeanie lived to see the strife
Of the Stewart's dying blow,
A childless and a widowed wife
To weep Culloden's woe.

THE SPELL OF CASTLE CADBOLL.

"THE parish of Fearn" (in Cromarty) "boasts several antiquities of very distant date. The Abbey of Loch Lin, said to have been first built of mud; the castle of the same name situated at some distance on the Loch of Eye, which is supposed to have remained standing five hundred years; and, lastly, Castle Cadboll, equally old, if not more so than either of the former, but now in almost undistinguishable ruins. These shattered relics deserve notice on account of a singular tradition once implicitly credited by the vulgar, namely, that, although inhabited for ages, no person ever died in this castle. Its magical quality did not, however, prevent its dwellers from the sufferings of disease, or the still more grievous evils attending debility and old age. Hence many of the denizens of this castle became weary of life, particularly a Lady May, who lived here about two centuries ago, and who, being long sick, and longing for death, requested to be carried out of the building.

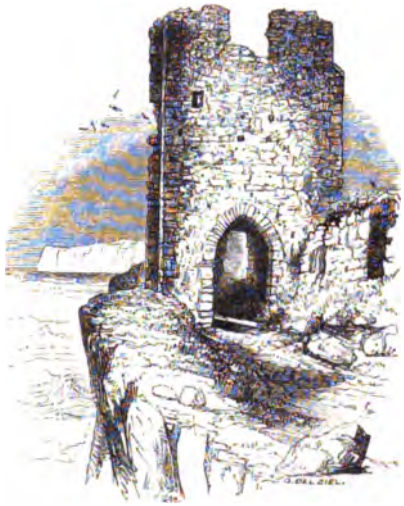
"Her importunity at length prevailed; and, according to the tradition, no sooner did she leave it than she expired."—*Beauties of Scotland, Ross-shire.*

Castle Cadboll is situated on the sea-shore, looking over the broad ocean towards Norway. From that country, in the early ages of Scot-

tish history, came many a powerful Jarl, or daring Vikinger, to the coasts, which in comparison with their own land would seem fertile and wealthy. There is a tradition of a Highland clan having sprung from one of those adventurers. He and his brother had agreed, that whoever should first reach the land should claim it by right. The first was the ultimate ancestor of the tribe; his boat was almost on shore, when the other, by a vigorous stroke, shot a-head of him; but, ere he could disembark, the disappointed individual, with an exclamation of rage, cut off his left hand with his hatchet, and, flinging the bloody trophy on the rocks, became, by thus "first touching the Scottish ground," the owner of the country and founder of a clan. As this story is detailed from oral narrative, its perfect accuracy cannot be vouched for; but it is an undeniable fact, that the clan of Mac Leod have successfully traced their origin to a Norwegian source.

The present possessor of Castle Cadboll is a Mac Leod; but to what race the Lady May of the legend belonged it would be difficult to decide, so many changes having occurred among Highland proprietors in the last two hundred years.

The cliffs of this part of Ross-shire are wild and precipitous, sinking with a sheer descent of two hundred feet to the ocean. The scenery is more rugged than beautiful,—little verdure, and less foliage. Trees are stunted by the bitter eastern blast, and the soil is poor and badly cultivated. Alders are, however, plentiful, and from them the parish has derived its name of *Fearn*. There are a number of caves in the cliffs along the shore towards Tarbat, where the promontory is bold, and crowned with a lighthouse, whose flickering rays are now the only substitute for the wonderful gem which was said of yore to sparkle on the brow of one of these eastern cliffs,—a bountiful provision of nature for the succour of the wave-tossed mariner.



THE SPELL OF CASTLE CADBOLL.

On Cadboll's wreck the brackens grow,
  On Cadboll's site the rabbits sport,
And thickly drifts the winter snow
  Through broken vault and roofless court.

In shrilly murmurs ocean's blast
  Sweeps o'er the heights by Cadboll crowned,
Yet stirs no image of the past,
  Yet wakes no lingering echo's sound.

Their name is lost, each former lord
  Of treeless muir and cloudy hill;
Rusted the vassal's ready sword,
  Silent the chief's resistless will.

The branching stagmoss clasps the wall
  Where arras hung and sconces gleamed;
The mole is burrowing in the hall
  Where the red cup of banquet streamed.

Yet, stranger, who on shapeless stone
  By twining creepers chained to earth,
Art seated, musing thus alone
  O'er buried pride and mouldered mirth,—

Not such his theme, the last who sung
  Of magic spells in Cadboll gray,
Ere prophet's eye and poet's tongue
  From Albyn's children passed away;

Not such his song whose strain recalls
  The frowning gates, the ramparts high,
The proud dominion of those halls
  Where many flourished, none could die!

THE HARPER'S LEGEND.

Castle Cadboll standeth free,
Looking o'er the eastern sea;
At its feet the breakers roar
Beaten back along the shore,
Where the precipices fall
Sheer beneath the bastion wall;
From its brow the banner flies
Soaring in the murky skies;
Through its gates the vassals crowd,
Shouting, " Honour to Mac Leod !"
Aged are thy towers, Loch Lin!
Deafened by the ocean's din;
Lithgow! proud thy palace swelled
Where the kings of Scotland dwelled:
Older, prouder than ye twain,
Cadboll frowns upon the main.

Here have ruled in lordship brief
Norway's jarl and Albyn's chief;
Thane, and knight, and mitred priest
Here have met in friendly feast;
Rovers of the northern sea
Here to safe retreat would flee;

Many a plan of vengeful raid
In these walls securely laid,
Whence to battle sallied forth
Mightiest champions of the north;
Of the scenes that there befell
Wondrous tales could Cadboll tell.

Care and grief have had their sway
O'er the lords of Cadboll gray;
Sickness on its couch hath flung
Weak and sturdy, old and young;
Hearts have felt thy gnawing sore,
Disappointment, at their core;
Trust hath been by treachery fooled,
War hath wounded, friends have cooled:
Every suffering, every woe
Which this mournful life can shew,
Here have raged in rabble rout;
Death alone was barred without;
Scared beyond these portals grim,
Too appalling e'en for him.

Death, the rider of the breeze,
Death, the swimmer of the seas,
At whose touch the fragile flower
Gives the poison-cup its power,

By whose 'hest the downy bed
Turns to coffin for the dead,
And the firmest human vow
Snappeth like a charrèd bough:
He, the king of earth and air,
Found his reign disputed there;
So from Cadboll's gate he fled,
Powerless and discomfited.

Dwellers in that castle high,
All might suffer, none might die;
Through its windows ne'er by night
Flew the disembodied sprite;
Witnessed ne'er its chambers vast
That dread scene of life, the last;
Never wake beside the corse,
Midnight roused with murmurs hoarse;
Funeral never passed its gate,
Awful with sepulchral state;
All that unto death pertains,
Banished from those proud domains.

Soft! I hear youth's voice of glee,
Saying, "Oh, that such might be!
Happy Cadboll's race to brave
The dark terrors of the grave!

Happy with the loved to dwell,
Whom no sudden doom befell!
Beautiful life shines o'erhead,
But the flowery path we tread
Soundeth, as we onward go,
Hollow from the tombs below.
Dearest faces by our side
Down unseen abysses slide;
Sweetest voices die away,
Closest ties of love decay;
Death is man's remorseless foe.
Ah! to Cadboll might we go,
Dwelling there in bliss secure,
Knowing life must still endure,
Meeting each beloved eye
With the thought, 'They cannot die!'
Happy Cadboll's race to brave
All the terrors of the grave!"

"Dreamer! who, as yet untried,
Loit'rest by the river side,
By the singing waters lulled,
Lapped by flowerets yet unculled,
Tempting fruitage yet untasted,
Eddying currents yet unbreasted,

Hope's illusive show before thee,
Cloudless sunshine spreading o'er thee,
List the moral of my lay,
Speaking through the Lady May."

In the castle of Mac Leod
Music rose and mirth was loud;
'Twas a hundred years ago
When a chieftain of Munro,
From the dark Ben Wyvis side
Hither came to seek a bride.
Here he saw the Lady May
Bending o'er her harp to play
With a simple maiden mien,
Charming him as soon as seen.
Nor the less he thought her fair,
Castle Cadboll's only heir;
Fitted for a chieftain proud
Was the dowry of Mac Leod.

Wooing brief was needed then,
Life had sterner work for men.
Plighted were those lovers twain,
Joy was in that wide domain,
When the suitor homeward hied
To make ready for his bride.

As he rode there crossed his way
A wild son of wild Mac Crae;
One who loved his lady bright,
But, rejected, burned with spite.
Evil was the hour they met,
For on thoughts of vengeance set,
In the daring young Munro
Soon the rival saw a foe.
Rash the boy, and stern the man,
Soon a desperate fight began.
Soon 'twas o'er—the bridegroom dead—
To the hills the murderer fled.
Then the vassals, full of grief,
Took the body of their chief,
Laid it in his fathers' tomb,
Spread abroad the tale of doom.
And the lovely Lady May
Pined and sickened from that day.

Fifty years have passed away,
Old and bent is Lady May,
Living in her feudal tower
Like the everlasting flower,
Which, though sapless, hard, and dry,
Liveth on—it cannot die.

By the lattice she reclines,
While the sunset redly shines,
Clothing shore and boundless sea
With a gorgeous blazonry;
Brighter scene ne'er cheered the eye,—
Wherefore doth the lady sigh?
Wherefore to her handmaids call,
Spinning near within the hall?
"Maidens, lay the distaff by,
Lift me forth that I may die!
Weary is my endless fate,
Lift me past the warder's gate;
Bear me to the cliffs that sink
Rugged to the water's brink;
Leave me on that narrow ledge
At the precipice's edge,
Where the spell shall lose its force,
Where the soul may take its course—
Springing from the body worn,
As a lark ascends at morn."
But her maidens answered none,
Looked askance and silent spun;
Or in whisper low did say,
"Hark! she raveth—Lady May."

"Glorious sun!" the lady said,
"Sinking to thine ocean bed,
Thou, like me, each day must climb
Painfully the arch of Time,
Treading in thy old routine,
Each the same as it hath been,
Falling back at close of night
From that slowly mounted height,
Ceaselessly at morning blue,
Once again to climb anew.
So my life goes circling round,
Like a timepiece in its bound;
Every hour familiar grown,
Every minute's beating known!
Lift me forth, my maidens dear,
I am tired of lingering here;
If my soul can ever rise
To the fair inviting skies,
Such a wind as curls the sea
Now would give me liberty:
Haste ye, maidens, as I bid!"
But in vain she urged and chid;
For the maidens answered none,
Spinning silent in the sun,

Only, trembling, low did say,
" Raving is the Lady May."

" Ocean calm and golden-eyed,"
Once again the lady sighed,
" I had plunged beneath thy wave,
Certain there to find a grave,
Had not limbs been stiff and dead,
Palsied on my helpless bed;
Had they worked my soul's intent,
Cadboll's charm had long been spent.
Oh, for dagger or for brand,
Naked in mine eager hand!
Yet 'twere vain, the sharpest steel
In this hall I could not feel;
Death, abhorring Cadboll's gate,
Leaves me here, forgot by fate.
Maidens dear, again I call,
Loves me none among you all?
Rich the spoil I leave behind,
Yours it is, my maidens kind,
If to me ye now are true,
This last grace of love to do;
Take me from this magic roof!"
But the maidens stood aloof:

"Hark! she doth delirious grow,
She is crazed by pain and woe;
Heed not what the doting say,
She is mad—the Lady May!"

"Come, Munro," the lady said,
"Come, my husband, though unwed;
Mortal strength avails me none,
Come, thou grave-corrupted one!
Spirit, from thy cloudy home,
Borne across the wild sea foam,
Haste to help me from this life;
Thou wilt listen to thy wife.
Wert thou here beside my bed,
Living, I would ne'er be dead;
Age and palsy eath to bear,
If with thee I life might share.
Take me from this solitude,
Bridegroom of my womanhood!"

Shuddering terrors quickly ran
Through the maidens as they span;
Close they huddled in their dread,—
"She is talking with the dead!
Is her bridegroom's ghost in hall?—
Let us hearken to her call;

For the sun is well-nigh set,
Faintly twilight lingers yet.
Better stand on open coast
Than with maniac and with ghost
Linger in this haunted tower
At the evening's fateful hour."

So together linked they went,
Trembling at their bold intent,
And bespake them willing there
Her beyond the gate to bear.
" Maidens true, I bless the deed,
God will help you in your need,
Hearing you in dying day,
As ye heard the Lady May."

Forth they move, a fearful band,
On the threshold now they stand;
O'er the moated bridge they go
With their burden, sad and slow.
Upward to the darkening sky
Turns the sufferer's patient eye;
Hope upon her pale, meek face,
Brightens as they mend their pace;
From her lips a grateful word
Faint at intervals is heard;

On her long bewildered soul
Heaven's unnumbered glories roll.

Now the maidens pass the gate,
Heavier grows their feeble weight;
Broken sounds she utters still
As they wind along the hill.
When the ocean's broad expanse
Burst upon the lady's glance,
O'er her face a rapture flashed,
Into sudden darkness dashed;
From her mouth a joyous cry
Left her hushed eternally;
In the maidens' trembling hold
Lay a corse serene and cold.
Cadboll's spell had passed away,—
She was dead—the Lady May!

THE HUT ON LOCH FYNE.

"At Stronchullin, on the coast of Loch Fyne, not far from the church of Inverneill, there is a thatched cottage still standing, and in perfect preservation, which is at least two hundred years old. The walls are thick and substantial; the cupples are of oak, very massive, and still perfectly sound.

"It is said, that when Alastar Macdonald, son of Coll Ciòtach (or the left-handed Coll), was ravaging Argyleshire, in 1643, on his way to Kintyre, he came to this house, faint with hunger; and that, wearied with his journey, he demanded something to eat, when the poor woman of the house gave him a drink of milk, the only thing which she could afford. Alastar received the draught very thankfully, and, in token of his gratitude, ordered his men to spare the house where he had been so kindly entertained."—*Statistical Account of Scotland, County of Argyle.*

Alastar Macdonald was major-general of Montrose's army, and gained from that renowned leader the honour of knighthood. A year after the incident narrated above his prowess greatly contributed to gain for Montrose the victory of Inverlochy. Sir W. Scott, in describing that battle, confounds Alastar with his father, Coll Macdonald, whose designation of

Coll Ciòtach has been corrupted into Colkitto, and applied indiscriminately to father and son. Coll Macdonald was said by some to be an illegitimate son of the Earl of Antrim. Be that as it may, the Irish noble liberally furnished him with troops to prosecute his invasion of Argyle, ostensibly in aid of the royal cause, but secretly from a bitter quarrel with the Earl of Argyle. With this force Macdonald, aided by his son, ravaged Kintyre, and then proceeding northwards, spread ruin around him as far as Loch-awe. To complete the misfortunes which overwhelmed Kintyre, a fearful pestilence broke out not many months after, to which almost the whole of the remaining inhabitants fell victims. The preservation of this little thatched cottage appears thus still more extraordinary.

Coll Ciòtach was taken prisoner at the siege of his own castle of Dunniveg in Islay, and was hanged at Dunstaffnage. His son, Sir Alexander, met a fate more worthy of a warrior. Having joined the royal forces in Ireland, he was slain in a battle fought against the Earl of Carlingford. Neither father nor son left any descendants, and Argyle was no longer kept in terror of the turbulent invasions of the Macdonalds of Islay.

The hill of Lliabh Gaoil extends from Inverneill to Barnellan, a distance of twelve miles. The view from its summit is varied and striking, commanding, on one side, Loch Fyne, the mouth of the Clyde, Bute, Arran, and the whole peninsula of Kintyre; on the other, Jura, Isla, Scarba, Ireland, with the isle of Rathlin, Mull, and many objects of inferior grandeur and interest.

THE HUT ON LOCH FYNE.

THERE is a thatched and lowly roof
On Fyne's umbrageous shore;
'Gainst man and time it hath been proof
Two hundred years and more.

Two hundred years it hath heard the brawl
Of winds and billows' din,
And yet no rent in its unhewn wall
Hath let the spoiler in.

The oaken cupples are full as strong
As when first in copse they grew,
The lintie singing their boughs among,
And the daylight peeping through.

Where the whitewashed kirk of Inverneill
Juts out into the brine,
Weekly sounding its Sabbath peal
Across the broad Loch Fyne,

On wild Stronchullin's pebbled shore,
At the foot of Lliabh Gaoil,
Have dwelt, two hundred years and more,
The sons of want and toil.

The chieftain proud might scorn their lot,
Might scorn their humble shed,
Rearing in this secluded spot
Its undefended head;

Yet buttressed tower and vaulted dome
Are cropped like weeds by time,
While the broomy thatch of the peasant's home
Hath still renewed its prime.

In bygone day at the bothy small
A widow milked her cow,
When a weary man at evening's fall
Approached with drooping brow.

"Woman, dear woman! your looks are mild,
I see your heart is good;
If ever you had a wandering child,
Oh give me rest and food!

If ever you loved a distant son
As only a mother can,
For his dear sake this grace be done
To succour a fainting man!"

"My son is gone with Mac Callin More
Against the fierce Montrose;
He little dreamed that our quiet shore
Would ring with armèd foes.

My son is gone 'gainst the rebel host
A weary way and long;
We never feared that to Knapdale's coast
The Irish kerne would throng.

My daughter and I are left alone
To brave the threatened raid;
There's none would hearken our dying moan,
There's none would bring us aid.

And scant is our fare for strangers' use,
The milk that froths the can
Must last us long as the widow's cruse,
Yet drink, thou fainting man;

For if there's little when day is done,
Still less there'll be at morn,
When Alastar comes, Coll Ciòtach's son,
To ravage the glens of Lorn!"

The sun was setting o'er Lliabh Gaoil
When the famished stranger drank,
But he checked his draught to list awhile,
With his ear against a bank.

He dashed the bicker upon the ground,—
Oh, but his face was stern;
"They are coming fast—I know the sound
Of my hasty Irish kerne!"

Loud the widow began to scream
For her home and for her child,
"Alastar's self ye surely seem,
With brows so fierce and wild?"

"Alastar's self in truth am I,
And yonder I hear my men,
And Inverneill shall light the sky,
And ruin shall strew the glen.

Yet fear not thou! Against Montrose
Although thy son may fight,
Although we had been deadliest foes
Had he been here to-night,

The draught of milk thy bounty spared
Shall hold thee free from blame,
The roof whose shelter Macdonald shared
Must never burst in flame!"

So forth he strode along the beach,
And waved his arm on high,
While still they were too far for speech,
Yet for her fear too nigh.

The widow clasped her child in dread,
And watched that noisy band,
She saw their faces with passion red,
And the bended bow and brand.

And the pine-tree torches glaring bright,—
Was e'er such glad release,
When the foremost turned to climb the height,
And her hut was left in peace?

Her hut was spared, while far and near
The smoke of burning rose,
And shrieks of sufferers they could hear,
And the clamour of angry foes.

For Alastar's foot-prints streamed with fire,
And heavily fell his hand,
And ruin it was to rouse the ire
Of his rude, tumultuous band.

Sad was the havoc on fair Loch Fyne
When morning light arose,
Of each hundred Campbells ninety-nine
Might curse thy name, Montrose!

Castle, and kirk, and fertile farm,
  Desolate all they lay,
But the widow's hut had found no harm
  In lone Stronchullin's bay.

Two hundred years since then have swept
  Thy banks, capricious Fyne,
And still that roof its place hath kept
  Beside the surging brine.

And still the gudewife turns her wheel,
  And the hardy fishers toil,
By the white-washed kirk of Inverneill,
  At the foot of Lliabh Gaoil.

LOCHAN A CORP.

On a western shoulder of Ben Ledi, where the mountain ascends from Glenfinlas, there is a small loch called Lochan a Corp, or the loch of dead bodies, from the following melancholy occurrence:—

A funeral party, crossing over from Glenfinlas to the chapel of St. Bride, in Strath Ire, at the head of Loch Lubnaig, were misled by a slight crust of ice on which snow had fallen; they thus mistook the surface of the water for the snow-covered muir which they were traversing, and the thin coating of ice cracking beneath their weight, the whole train were buried in the deep lake, to the number of two hundred.

Loch Lubnaig and St. Bride owe to Scott a general fame of which their romantic scenery would alone make them worthy.

Ben Ledi, the Hill of God, was of old sacred to Baal, the Assyrian deity, who was worshipped by the ancient Caledonians under that name, as well as his Gallic designation of Grannus. From him May-day received its title of *Bel-tane*, or *Beltein*, a day kept with sanguinary ceremonies.

The Druids on that morning extinguished all fires, which were

relighted a few hours after at the sacred flame kept burning unceasingly by appointed attendants.

A large cake was then prepared, a portion of which was dipped in the blood of a goat. Being fired, and ready for eating, it was broken in pieces, and distributed among the multitude. He to whose lot fell the blood-stained fragment was accounted the fate-assigned victim. He was made to pass through a huge fire, and, having undergone this ordeal, was allowed to flee for his life, closely pursued by the infatuated crowd. As the Beltane fire was heaped on the very summit of Ben Ledi, the unhappy creature on whom flames had refused to do their office, rushed naturally to the side of the mountain which promised the nearest shelter from his enemies. There the precipices sink with dreadful abruptness towards Loch Lubnaig. So dark and confused are the crags, piled on each other, that it was a common event that the flying and the pursuers alike mistook their way, and fell headlong to the gullies and ravines below. Baal was fully satiated in his Beltane feast. His victims were often numerous, for the mists of a Highland spring were fearful deceivers in a chase of such appalling danger.

In more modern days Baal has been obliged to content himself with a less deadly commemoration of his festival, and his ceremonies have sunk nearly to a level with the chimney-sweepers' frolics on a London May-day. However, "if a' tales be true," he will be avenged at the last, when, according to veracious Highland chronicle, the world is to be burned to ashes by a spark from a Beltane fire.

The Lyke wake was the vigil held beside the corse from the night of death till that of interment. It was a horrible mixture of sorrow and festivity. The silence of night, the hush of death's petrifying atmosphere, were rudely broken by cries, songs, dances, and lamentations. In the poorer cabins, where there was but one room, all were confused together

in an unseemly medley. The women, with heads covered and hands clasped, moaned and wailed over the body, while the bard chanted with monotonous intonation the valour of the deceased and the glory of his ancestors. And, strangest sight of all, the chief mourner, with stately step, contradicting the anguish of his swollen eye, led off the mournful dance in the very presence of the dead. The grave-minded Highlanders viewed death in a very different light from that in which it is regarded by the more mercurial natives of the south. To them it was more the solemn end to which every one's thoughts habitually turned, than a rude and sudden severance of human affections and enjoyments. They loved to speak of the departed as if still among them, they loaded the dying with messages to those dear ones who had gone before, and it was considered a polite compliment to drink the toast of "a happy and becoming death" to any member of a social company.

It was not till frequent intercourse with the Lowlanders had cooled the fervour of the Gael's heart and lowered the dignity of his self-reliance, that he sought the intoxicating pleasures of excess. Then, indeed, the funeral meetings degenerated into disgraceful orgies, the sight of the pale remains no longer awed the gazer into propriety, and the riot and inebriety which ensued made the Highlander a byword among his Saxon countrymen.

He, like the American Indian, gained for a long time no benefit from collision with more civilised nations. So true it is that the vices of a high state of luxury and refinement are far more contagious than its virtues.

LOCHAN A CORP.

Ohone, oh rie! ohone, oh rie!
My love is dead and lost to me!
As soon the northern lights on high,
That flare and flicker through the sky,
Shall kindle in this lowly room
A steadfast lamp for winter's gloom—

As soon the snow on moorland dun
Retain its shape beneath the sun—
As soon the vague and hazy wreaths
That curl along the twilight heaths
Shall take my Hector's manly form,
And clasp me with embraces warm,
As he return whose body lies
Under the Lochan's sheeted ice.
Ohone, oh rie! ohone, oh rie!
My love is lost for aye to me!

Ohone, oh rie! ohone, oh rie!
Brother and love are lost to me!
Son of my sire, his spirit fled
While kinsmen gathered round his bed,
With solemn dance, with chantings drear,
We kept the Lyke wake by his bier;
No clamorous grief might Colin claim
Who left such glory with his name;
His cup was full, his race was run,
Glenfinlas had no worthier son,
No bolder front for battle fray,
No franker cheer for festal day;
No son more pious, husband true,
Than thou, my brother, Colin Dhu!

So fair a life, so calm an end,
Doth Heaven to favourite children send.
With woe resigned each mourner's heart
Beheld thy funeral train depart;
But now Glenfinlas pours her wail
In swollen torrents down the gale;
Now every bosom heaveth sighs,
Now every hearth re-echoes cries.
Ohone, oh rie! ohone, oh rie!
Glenfinlas joins its tears with me!

In pent Strath Ire, when morning dawned
An open grave impatient yawned;
In lone St. Bridget's hallowed cell
All doleful pealed the passing bell;
And long the priest, with book in hand
Awaited Colin's funeral band;
But longer did he strain his sight
Across Loch Lubnaig's bosom white;
For never was the ritual read,
And never grave received the dead.
A wider couch Black Colin found
Than chapel's consecrated mound:
For dirge of monk in far St. Bride,
The winds that lash Ben Ledi's side;

For thymy ridge to mark his rest,
The wild duck on the billow's crest:
So unto death he went in state,
And swept his kindred in his fate.

Along Ben Ledi's rocky side
The drifting snows were scattered wide;
Moorland and Lochan heaped so high,
Nought was discerned but snow and sky.
Well might December's twilight day
To erring track their steps betray;
And well might sorrow's eye confound
The whitened loch and whitened ground,
Till wandering on the hidden ice
They fell, stern winter's sacrifice!
And never yet St. Bridget's fane
Received that long-lost burial train,
And never home their steps returned
Where the bright fires expectant burned,—
Where the fond friends were gathering round,
Hearing their steps in every sound.
Alas for parent, child, and maid!
No tidings broke death's awful shade;
No sad-eyed seer their fate foretold
Who perished in those waters cold;

So long as stars above us sweep,
Lochan a Corp its dead shall keep.

Ohone, oh rie! ohone, oh rie!
None have been left so sad as me!
My brother had a tender wife,
But Hector loved me more than life.
My brother leaves a fair young boy,
But I was Hector's only joy.
My brother's shrift was duly told,
But Hector's sins can none unfold;
Whate'er he held to stain his breast,
The death-swoop found him unconfessed.
My brother's course was nearly run,
But Hector's youth had scarce begun;
Quenched in his death his hearthstone's fire,
No gallant boy shall call him sire,
No duteous girl shall tend his age,—
A stranger hath his heritage.
Last of his line and last of name,
Glenfinlas will forget his fame;
His favourite hound, his plighted wife,
Alone shall mourn that perished life.
Ohone, oh rie! ohone, oh rie!
My love is lost to fame and me!

From lone St. Bride the swelling choir
Rolls solemn anthems through Strath Ire,
Across Loch Lubnaig's waters stern,
And grim Ben Ledi's braes of fern,—
Ben Ledi grim, whose forehead high
With Beltane torches fired the sky,
When yearly in the genial May
A human life was flung away,
And reeked the threshold of the spring
With blood's unhallowed offering;
Ben Ledi grim, whose coverts rude
Perplexed pursuer and pursued,
When, flying from his flaming tomb,
The victim found a speedier doom,
And tumbling headlong to the plain,
Oft with his hasty foes was slain,
While flocked the eagles with their brood,
Rejoicing at the Beltane food!
Hill of the demon! on thy brow
No yearly blaze ascendeth now,—
Such as 't was said, in vengeance hurled,
With thy red brands should fire the world!
Coldly thou leanest from thy throne,
High among clouds and mists alone,

Stooping thy shadow o'er their sleep
Who lie among those waters deep;
As chiding thus our hopeless woe,—
" No human eye their place shall know,
No hand shall lift the frozen drowned,
To stretch in green and hallowed ground;
Slow parting at the fisher's oar,
The waves shall close their bed once more,
Nor drouth, nor flood, nor blast reveal
The secret which those waves conceal;
While sun and stars sweep overhead,
Lochan a Corp shall hold its dead."

THE HERDSMAN'S DAUGHTER.

The county of Angus, or Forfar, bordered on one side by the Grampians and on the other by the ocean, and inhabited by feudal barons and their vassals, combined many of the peculiarities of the Lowlands and the Highlands. The marches or boundaries might be distinctly laid down between the land of the Saxon and the Gael, running, as the lines did, along the ridges of the hills; but they were continually transgressed by the Highland caterans in their creaghs on the fertile valleys diverging from Strathmore, and by the Lowland leaders in their forays of retaliation.

The two principal tribes in Forfarshire were the Lyndsays and the Ogilvies, between whom in 1445 there arose a bitter feud. We read of the battle of Arbroath, in which the Ogilvies, under the leadership of Ogilvy of Inverquharity, were entirely routed, with the loss of five hundred men of the name, including many nobles and barons, and of the assault and burning of the ancient castle of Inverquharity by the victorious Lyndsays.

But such exhausting feuds must have had intervals of repose, and the ballad therefore represents an heir of Lyndsay in the act of wooing a

daughter of the noble house of Airlie. As his father's castle of Finhaven was situated in the very centre of the county, and the Ogilvy fortresses of Cortachy and Airlie lay much nearer the Highland hills, it would follow that it was on his visits thither to court his lady-love that Lyndsay first saw the shealing and the herdsman's daughter. The story, though wholly imaginary, illustrates the dislike and contempt entertained by the Gael for his Lowland neighbours, as evidenced by the very kerne refusing even the proud alliance of the high-born Saxon. It also illustrates, in the conduct of the damsel, the inviolate respect paid by the mountaineers to that first of earthly duties—filial obedience. The young were reared in the most devoted love and reverential homage for their parents. Very rare were the instances where paternal authority was infringed; the mere wish of a parent was sacredly observed, and his dying injunctions fulfilled by his children often at the cost of their own lives.

Even in the hardened breast of that last Lord of Lovat, on whose infamous character we have previously dwelt, by whom conscience and principle were held at nought, the ties of filial duty never lost their grasp. He was a barbarous husband, a heartless father; and yet, strange was it to see, he was an exemplary son. His affectionate attentions to his father, Lord Thomas Fraser, never relaxed till death removed him from his solicitude. If, then, the worst characters among the Highlanders could not quench this last spark of a better spirit than the world's, how brightly must it have shone in those of a more generous and noble temperament, and particularly in the transparent and impressible heart of woman!

THE HERDSMAN'S DAUGHTER.

Oh, but the sun is bonny,
  Shining abune the cluds!
Oh, but the hyacinth 's bonny,
  Blooming amang the wuds!

Sae was the heir o' Lyndsay,
  First o' his haughtie kin;
Sae was the herdsman's daughter,
  Lowly, and pure frae sin.

He saw her ae summer morning
  Doon by her father's door;
He went to the Ladye Alice
  And the proud old Earl no more.

He followed her last at sunset,
  First when the lark is heard ;
And aye the answer she gied him
  Was, " Spier for my father's word !"

The Earl is a proud old noble,
  The herdsman is proud as he ;
He hath said that his winsome Jessie
  Shall wed in her ain degree.

The Earl hath baronies chartered,
  The carle has a wheen puir kye ;
But or ever he'll sell his daughter
  He'll see her lie doon and die !

The Lyndsay he raged and threatened,
  The herdsman he vowed and swore,
" Gae back to your Ladye Alice
  And sorrow my bairn no more."

Wroth was the heir o' Lyndsay,
  Sad was the bonny May ;
Her cheek it grew white as cannach,
  That waves on the mountain brae.

She didna greet at the milking,
  She didna girn at the fauld;
But she withered awa' wi' sorrow
  Till she looked baith bleared and auld.

The nicht it is mirk and misty,
  The moor it is wild and lone;
He stood by the herdsman's shealing,
  She span by the ingle stone.

"Open to me, my Jessie,
  Mickle have I to say;
The herdsman is out on the mountain,
  And canna be hame till day.

Open to me, my Jessie,
  Your shadow I see on the wall;
Dearer I lo'e that shadow
  Than the fairest lady in hall."

"I daurna see you, Lord Lyndsay,
  And I daurna let you in;
By Mary Mother I promised,
  And I daurna do this sin."

" Ye canna then lo'e me, Jessie,
If siccan an oath ye sware;
Your heart it has found anither,—
Your love it is light as air."

" Oh, bitter your words, Lord Lyndsay!
Oh, canna ye judge me richt?
I had rather been dead at morning
Than angered ye thus at nicht.

Spent is my life wi' sorrow;
I bend to my father's law:
I daurna see ye, Lord Lyndsay,
Though I lo'e ye best of a'!"

" Then fare ye weel, bonny Jessie,
Ye kenna true love nor me;
I 'll back to my Ladye Alice,
And wed in mine ain degree!"

Light he laughed as he left her,
Swift he sprang o'er the moor,
He sawna her tears doon drapping,
He sawna she opened the door.

But the waefu' sugh frae the mountain,
The sparkles o' frost on the ground,
Was a' the voice that she hearkened,
Was a' the sicht that she found.

Proud is the moon at midnicht,
Winding her siller horn,
Sae was the Ladye Alice
Lovely and lofty born.

Crossing or care she knew not
Till that her lover gay
Was wooed to the herdsman's shealing
By the smiles of the bonny May.

Scorned for a herdsman's daughter!
Oh! but her heart was sore,
Till that the heir o' Lyndsay
Knelt at her feet once more.

Saft were the fair excuses,
Bricht were the gems he brocht,
But aye as he praised her beauty
Jessie cam' ower his thocht.

But the word of a lord is given,
The word of a lady ta'en,—
He that wooeth in anger
Shall rue it for life in vain.

Dressed was the Ladye Alice
Wi' laces and pearlins rare,
And a score of the vassals' daughters
The train of her mantle bare.

Guests were gleg at the wedding,
Minstrels harped at the board,
And the Lyndsay clan were feasted
By the bounty of their lord.

And did nane remember Jessie,
And her love sae sorely tried?
Yes!—ane remembered Jessie,
As he stood beside the bride.

Tho' he held her dainty fingers
Wi' the jewelled rings sae braw,
One kindly clasp o' Jessie
Had weel been worth them a'.

Syne on the lip he kissed her,
Cauld was the kiss as clay,
Cauld as the heart o' Jessie,
Broken for love and wae!

Heard ye the cry o' mourning
In the hush of the lonesome moor?
Saw ye the virgin carried
Frae the childless herdsman's door?

Music of death and bridal
Met on the summer breeze,
Wedding and funeral mingled
Under the kirkyard trees.

On a grave they rested the coffin
Till the nuptial rites were said,
And the same auld priest did service
For the faithless and the dead!

Sad was the heir of Lyndsay
When he saw that burial-train,
Feared was the Ladye Alice
At his sudden start of pain.

Feared was the Ladye Alice
  For the auld man dour and gray,
Saying, " Lift ye back the coffin,—
  It stoppeth the bridegroom's way !

Health to you, Ladye Alice !
  Health to your loving lord !"
Sad was the heir o' Lyndsay,
  Pierced by that scoffing word.

Sune frae his home's remembrance
  Far to the wars he fled,
And he died for the love of Jessie
  On a Saracen battle-bed !

THE VOW OF IAN LOM.

It is strange that in the account of the battle of Inverlochy, with which Sir Walter Scott winds up his "Legend of Montrose," there is no mention of a personage whose energetic and soaring genius must have been congenial to that of the great Border Minstrel.

Ian Lom Macdonald, a bard of no mean muse, was present at the battle above alluded to, and has recorded its achievements in powerful Gaelic poetry. It is said, that when summoned by Alastar Macdonald to accompany him to the fight, he replied, "If I fall in the field to-day, who is to celebrate your prowess to-morrow?" He took his position on an eminence overlooking the scene of action, and his impassioned verse kept pace with the progress of the fray.

There is a spirited translation of his song on the occasion by Mark Napier, Esq., in that author's "Life of Montrose." It gives a high idea of the imaginative strength of the Gaelic original.

Ian must then have been a very young man, as he was born in the reign of James VI. of Scotland, and lived, it was alleged, till that of Queen Anne, a spectator and eloquent denouncer of the union of the two kingdoms. His poetical genius was of a high order, entirely devoted to the Jacobite cause, which he advanced as much, if not more, by his songs as others did by their claymores. He accompanied Montrose in most of his marches, and commemorated his victories. Charles II. created him Gaelic poet-laureate, a distinction of which he was justly proud, and

which beginning in his person, died in his death, never having been conferred on a successor. Ian Lom's last fight was the fatal victory of Killiecrankie, where he had gone with Dundee, whose hapless fall in the very heat of success he laments with even more than his accustomed fervour. The story of the poem is strictly true. The two young Macdonalds of Keppoch, chieftains of the tribe to which Ian Lom belonged, were murdered by a family of the same name, a father and six sons, who were tacksmen on the lands of Keppoch, and had some private quarrel with the youths. This family of Macdonalds were, however, usually called after their father the Sons of Dougal—a necessary mode of distinction among a clan bearing without exception one common surname.

The uncle of these unhappy brothers was present, but neither interfered to prevent the deed, nor took any subsequent steps to bring the criminals to justice. They continued to live unmolested on their farm.

But the devoted and intrepid Seannachie was bound to his chieftains by closer ties than those of relationship. Indignant at the kinsman's apathy, he went from house to house, and from castle to castle, calling for vengeance on the assassins. After many fruitless attempts, he at last obtained from government a commission to take the murderers, dead or alive, and from Sir James Macdonald of Sleat a body of men sufficient to execute this commission.

The seven guilty men defended themselves with unparalleled bravery, barricading their house and fighting till they fell dead beside their own hearthstone. Ian Lom had preserved the dirk with which they had slain their chieftains, and its edge was now turned against themselves.

Their heads were cut off, and the bodies were buried near the spot where they were killed. A short time since, the ground which tradition had marked as their grave was opened, when seven headless skeletons were found, triumphantly confirming the local legends. The seven heads were

washed at a well on the banks of Loch Lochy, called, in memory of the event, *Tober nan Cearn*. On the spot a monument has been erected, of which there is a view in the engraving at the head of the poem. The heads were then presented at the foot of the Chief of Glengarry, and finally carried to Skye, as a tribute to the Knight of Sleat, through whose assistance their owners had been brought to a deserved death.

Castle Tyrim, visited by Ian Lom in his wanderings, was an ancient stronghold of the Macdonalds of Clanranald. It stands on a neck of land stretching into Loch Moidart, and called Eilan Tyrim, or the "Dry Island," because the communication with the mainland is only overflowed at the height of the tide. It is a curious fortress, built in the form of a square court, with the windows towards the interior, and presenting an unbroken wall on all the three sides towards the sea. It was burned by Clanranald before he set forth to join the Earl of Mar in 1715, lest, during his absence, it should fall into the power of his hereditary enemies the Campbells.

Long after Ian Lom's death his Jacobite effusions exercised a powerful influence over his countrymen, counteracting in great measure the efforts of the legislature to extinguish the cause.

"Children were taught to lisp them. They were sung in the family circle on the winter nights, and at weddings, lykewakes, fairs, and in every company. They attributed to the Stewarts and their adherents the most exalted virtues, and represented their opponents as incarnate fiends. In 1745, Moidart and Kilmonwaig were called "The Cradle of the Rebellion," and they were the very districts where the songs of Ian Lom leavened the whole mass of society with Jacobite sentiments."—*New Statistical Account of Scotland — Inverness-shire.*

THE VOW OF IAN LOM.

THROUGH the beeches by the river,
In whose shade a man might lurk,
Who is he that wildly searcheth,
Brandishing a dripping dirk?
On the night air, gore bedabbled,
Streams the mantle at his back,—
Ian Lom, the Blood-Avenger,
Hurrying on the murderers' track!

Whither fled those caitiff brothers
When the assassin's work was o'er?
To the fastness of the mountain,
To the caverns on the shore?
Doth the kinsman's wrath pursue them,
In whose sight the deed befell?
Or at peace upon their homestead
Are the guilty left to dwell?
Now with screaming of the pibroch,
Now with coronach and cry,
Clansmen bear the sons of Keppoch
In their fathers' grave to lie.
Wherefore silent is the minstrel?
Chants he not their young renown,
Who went forth in manhood's glory
When the red hand struck them down?
Ere the rites are fully ended,
Ere the mourners hie them home,
In the midst, with head uncovered,
"Hear me vow!" quoth Ian Lom.
"Till my chieftains be avengèd
Song shall be forsworn by me,
Woman's heart and woman's beauty,
Minstrel's praise and minstrel's fee.

When I find those sons of Dougal,
  Let my hope of heaven be vain
If no heavier weird befall them
  Than was theirs whom they have slain!"
On his brows he thrust his bonnet,
  Turned and strode along the vale,
And the clansmen of Macdonald
  Answered with a thrilling wail.
Deep it swelled from manly bosom,
  Silvery sad from woman's tongue,
On the fresh-heaped grave of Keppoch
  Like a cloud of grief it hung.

Oh! the minstrel's words were mighty,
  And the minstrel's soul was strong,
With a more than mortal passion
  Writhing to avenge the wrong;
Journeying swift to hall and castle,
  Fearlessly he told his tale,
Crying, "Vengeance for the orphans
  Is the glory of the Gael!"
Some in broils were loath to mingle,
  Some indifferent heard his theme,
Passive to another's troubles
  As a listener in a dream.

Baffled thus and disappointed,
  Chafed his spirit stern and proud,
Yet relaxed he not his mission
  For the vow that he had vowed!
Weary-footed did he wander,
  Till, at length, by sunset's ray,
At his feet he saw the ocean
  Curving into Moidart's bay.
Every rocky hill was gladdened
  By the reflex from the deep,
And amid the glittering waters
  Lay an old embattled keep;
As a blind man unto music
  Turns his sad and rayless face,
Sightless turneth Eilan Tyrim
  To the billows at its base.
Through the gloomy walls no lattice
  To its chambers dull and blind
Shewed the sparkle of the waters,
  Bore the freshness of the wind;
Yet the mirth of Eilan Tyrim
  Deafened e'en the Atlantic's din,
For the Chieftain of Clanranald
  Held a festival within.

Ian Lom, all travel-sullied,
  Rushed unto the banquet-board,
There he told his tale of horror,
  There he waved the bloody sword:
"Vengeance, vengeance for the orphans!"
  "None to help thee here have power;
Leave the dead to heaven's avenging!"
  Quoth the chieftain of the tower.
"Live with me and be my minstrel,
  Mine was slain in battle fray;
Thou shalt have his lands and honours
  If amongst us thou wilt stay;
Thou shalt have his only daughter,
  Fairest maid of Moidart she,—
Gifted with her father's genius,
  Mavis-throated Marsali."
Ian Lom, with gaze averted,
  Shunned that maiden open-browed,
Daring not to look upon her,
  For the vow that he had vowed.
"I have said: the chiefs of Keppoch,
  Basely murdered, swell the sod;
I am sworn to their avenging,
  Unto man and unto God.

Till I find those sons of Dougal
  Song hath been forsworn by me,
Woman's heart and woman's beauty,
  Minstrel's praise and minstrel's fee;
Therefore here I must not linger,
  Therefore maid I must not see,
Plighted only to this vengeance,
  Mavis-throated Marsali!"
Gay the mirth arose behind him,
  Dark before him hung the cloud,
But he spurned at all temptation,
  For the vow that he had vowed.
Journeying swift by firth and ferry,
  Early starting, resting late,
Soon he reached the Knight Macdonald
  On the distant shores of Sleat.
Loud the minstrel's voice resounded
  Through the rugged halls of Knock,
And he shook the chief with passion
  As the earthquake shakes the rock.
"Faithful vassal, truthful minstrel,
  By the fell or by the flood,
I will find those sons of Dougal—
  Shedders of the guiltless blood!"

Forth he sent, that western chieftain,
  Clansmen armed in strong array,
Ian Lom, the Blood Avenger,
  Went to guide them on their way.
"Lo! the Isles arise against us!"
  Hotly pressed, the murderers cried;
"Sweep above us, friendly waters!
  Fall on us, ye rocks, and hide!"
Hunted home unto their dwelling,
  Strongly barred with stone and wood,
Pale of face, but firm of purpose,
  By the door those traitors stood.
Seven were they, sons and father,
  Stalwart men to wield the brand,—
'Twas a strife of desperation
  At the meeting hand to hand.
Broken down their vain defences,
  One by one they fell and died,
And the sire upon his hearthstone
  Sank at last his sons beside.
Through thy woody paths, Glengarry,
  Marched the victors of that fray,
In the waters of thy fountain
  Seven heads were laved that day.

Sternly parting from the corses,
Left to blacken on the ground,
Ian Lom returned rejoicing
For the vengeance he had found.
Bearing back his ghastly tribute
To the conquering Knight of Sleat,
Thus he sang upon the waters
Mingled strains of love and hate.

BOAT-SONG.

All is completed,
The wicked defeated,
Conquered and slain.
Gory heads seven
From traitor hearts riven
We bring o'er the main.
The murdered are quiet now,
Calm is each lifeless brow,
Tranquilly sleeping;
Over the grave at night
Hovers no more the sprite,
Watching and weeping!
All is fulfilled now,
Murmurs are stilled now;

Once more the bard sings,
Once more the heart springs;
Once more I'll look on thee,
Child of the Seannachie,—
Marsali! Marsali!

'Venger victorious,
Bard not inglorious,
Tuneful of tone;
Thus floateth far my name,
Over the hills my fame
Every where known.
Children beside the fire,
Matron and greybeard sire,—
All love my song;
Still shall it onward spread,
As streams from the river head
Rushing grow strong;
Strong to awaken hope,
Strong with despair to cope;
From spirit to spirit past,
Rousing like pibroch blast:
This fame I offer thee,
Child of the Seannachie,—
Marsali! Marsali!

Troubled must be thy life,
Ian Lom's worthy wife
If thou would'st be;
Lofty his mission,
From servile condition
His country to free.
Earnest to treasure
In song's mighty measure
Loyalty's breath;
Waiting a brighter day,
True to the faraway,—
True to the death!
Thus like a beacon flame
Song shall illume my name;
Many hearts with my lay
Stirring when I am clay;
Famous thou too shalt be,
Bride of the Seannachie,—
Marsali! Marsali!

Thus he sang, that Celtic poet,
Rude but fervent was his strain;
Thus he wooed the Moidart maiden,
Dweller by the western main.

Girt through life by war and tempest
He was great in his degree,
For he sang, Montrose, thy glory,
And he wailed thy fall, Dundee!
Kings arose and kings descended
Unlamented to the tomb,
Ere the coronach was pealing
For the death of Ian Lom.
Nor with life his greatness perished,
Left undying in his song
Words familiar by the fireside
When the winter nights were long;
Words familiar, ever chanted,
To the bride when she was wed,
To the babe when it was christened,
To the corse when it was dead;
By the shepherd in the shealing,
By the lady in her home,
Wheresoever men were gathered
Went the songs of Ian Lom.
And his voice again was breathing
From the grave a trust and power,
When the Stewart sailed for Scotland
In a dark and evil hour.

Mightier was the verse of Ian
  Hearts to nerve, to kindle eyes,
Than the claymore of the valiant,
  Than the counsel of the wise.
Still he singeth unforgotten
  In the echoes of his home;
Every burn and every mountain
  Tells thy glory, Ian Lom!

THE WOLF OF EDERACHILLIS.

The honour of having slain the last Scottish wolf is claimed by different distinguished families, and the scene of his death has been laid in various parts of the kingdom. By some authorities, the very last wolf in Scotland was killed in the seventeenth century by the famous Sir Evan Cameron of Lochiel. The same exploit is also said to have been achieved by an Ogilvy in the wild glen of Bach-na-gairn, where the Grampians descend in steep and abrupt gorges to the Lowland districts of Forfarshire. However or wherever the race may have become extinct, we are well pleased to remember that it is so — that shepherds are no longer in fear for their flocks, or mothers for their infants, as often happens in the severity of a Continental winter, when these ferocious animals come hunger-stimulated from the mountains.

In former times the "woulffs" were objects of deserved terror. We are told that the tract of country called Ederachillis, on the west coast of Sutherland, was so infested by them that they even rifled the corpses from the graves, and the inhabitants were obliged to convey their dead to the neighbouring island of Handa, as the only safe place of sepulture.

Handa is a barren and lofty rock of red sandstone, its cliffs on the north-west side rising six hundred feet in a perpendicular wall from the ocean. They are stratified horizontally, and present the appearance of the most regular and artistic masonry.

The spray from the stormy billows, which here seldom know repose, is dashed often to their summits, while, undaunted by the noisy roar and continual showers, the seafowl gather thickly on the inaccessible ledges of the rocks. These birds are of various kinds. The osprey or sea-eagle, the gannet or solan-goose, all sorts of gulls, puffins, fulmars, the kestril falcon or hawk, and many others of rarer species, make Handa's shelves their yearly home, coming always to lay their eggs and rear their young in the beginning of spring, and leaving the island in the end of summer, or later, according to the nature of the season.

They afford food to the inhabitants. The fulmar yields an oil, which cheers the dreariness of winter, by lighting their wretched hovels; and the feathers are received as rent by the proprietors of the island.

The grey-furred and green-eyed wolf, which was once a tenant of these districts, was the same as the common European wolf of the present day. The female suckles her young for six months, in a sort of nest heaped roughly together of twigs and grass. The wolf, from its extreme voracity, when flesh cannot be had, will eat refuse of any description.

The "*ware-wolf*," or witch disguised in the shape of a wolf, was at one time an universal superstition wherever these animals were found. Even now, the peasants of Russia and Poland hold a belief of the same nature. When the prejudice against witches was in full force during the dark ages of Christendom, the ravages of the wolves would furnish a death-warrant to many a helpless old crone. Many legends are extant in Germany of the deadly "war-wolf;" the reader will remember one at least, Monk Lewis' ballad of "The Little Gray Woman."

In the poem the author has ventured on the analogy of all delusions connected with witchcraft to give this particular one a Scottish locality, although she has not heard there is any distinct tradition of the ancient Highlanders having, like the English, attributed the ferocity of this formidable brute to the malevolence of an old woman in league with Satan. It is not at all improbable, when we recall the number of animals whom the more modern Highlanders endowed with supernatural qualities. Thus the goat was supposed to have more than human sagacity, and to be a secret ally of the fairies, to whom it betrayed the affairs of its master, and enabled the elf to take the mortal at advantage. The magpie was held to possess the gift of foreknowledge, the hare had its influence over events, and the cat was generally looked on as a witch in disguise. Here we have quite a similar superstition of more recent date, the mountain-cat being almost as fierce and dangerous as the wolf.

The "Diri Moir," or Reay forest, is a wild and desolate region extending over much of the western side of Sutherland, which has always been famous for deer, and a variety of birds and beasts of prey.

THE WOLF OF EDERACHILLIS.

" A BOAT and a ghastly freight,
A boat and a shuddering crew,—
Where are ye bound so late?
What is the work ye do?
And whose is that face so thin and pale
That lies betwixt ye two?

On Ederachillis' shore
Why do the women stand,
Beating the swan-white breast,
Wringing the farewell hand?
Why do their mingled cries and prayers
Echo along the strand?

Why does that old man sage,
In the name of the Holy Three,
Solemnly bless the bark
That now puts forth to sea?
And why do ye bind your fisher-coats
With a cross of the rowan-tree?"

"To Handa's isle we go
With our silent freight, the dead;
Uncoffined he lieth now,
And the sea-spray wets his head;
For the couch of fir where he should have lain
Would sink our boat like lead.

To Handa's isle we go,
Our graveyard in the deep,
Where the tombs stand all a-row,
Safe in that rocky keep;
And never a foot of man or brute
Disturbs our kinsmen's sleep.

The kestril's falcon eye
Shall watch by our brothers brave,
The gannet shall feed her young
Close to our children's grave,
And whiten the mound with a feathery pall
Like the foam of a breaking wave.

With every spring they come,
With every summer they go,
To what unheard-of climes
Heaven alone doth know;
But the birds of the sea ne'er harm the graves,
Or the sleepers that rest below.

On Ederachillis' shore
The grey wolf lies in wait,—
Woe to the broken door,
Woe to the loosened gate,
And the groping wretch whom sleety fogs
On the trackless moor belate.

The lean and hungry wolf,
With his fangs so sharp and white,
His starveling body pinched
By the frost of a northern night,
And his pitiless eyes that scare the dark
With their green and threatening light.

The savage and gaunt ware-wolf,
That never was nursed in nest,
That holds a witch's heart
Under a shaggy breast,
For human hurt and for human life
That nightly goes in quest.

He climbeth the guarding dyke,
He leapeth the hurdle bars,
He steals the sheep from the pen,
And the fish from the boat-house spars;
And he digs the dead from out the sod,
And gnaws them under the stars.

Last autumn by Loch Stac
There lived an aged crone,
She had nor mate nor child,
She dwelt by a cairn alone;
There never was heard a woman's voice
Of such harsh and growling tone.

She had nor mate nor child
To love in her lonely age;
The loves of younger folk
But stirred her envious rage,
And she scowled on the children from her door
Like a wild wolf from its cage.

In the gloomy Diri Moir
One aged man, 'twas said,
Knew all the former life
The Witch of Loch Stac had led,
And why so oft by the stony cairn
She made a sleepless bed.

At the rise of autumn's wind
The witch was seen no more,
And raging tempests beat
On Ederachillis' shore;
And the billows leapt o'er sinking boats
With fierce sepulchral roar.

In the churchyard on the hill
Was heard a growling loud;
By the shifting stormy moon
That panted through the cloud
Was the grey wolf seen at a rifled grave,
And it champed at a corpse's shroud.

Thus every grave we dug
The hungry wolf uptore,
And every morn the sod
Was strewn with bones and gore;
Our mother earth had denied us rest
On Ederachillis' shore.

To Handa's isle we go,
Encircled by the sea;
A swimmer stout and strong
The grey wolf need to be,
And a cragsman bold to scale the rocks
If he follow where we flee.

To Handa's isle we sail,
Whose blood-red cliffs arise
Six hundred feet above the deep,
And stain the lurid skies,
Where the mainland foliage never blooms,
And the sea-mist never dries.

Push off, push off the boat,
The crystal moon goes down;
And the sun on Handa's brow
Hath fastened a golden crown.
The priest hath blessed, the women have prayed,
And Heaven hath smoothed its frown.

Push off for the sea-dashed grave,
The wolf may lurk at home,
May prowl in the Diri Moir
Till nightfall bids him roam;
But the grave is void in the mountain kirk,
And the dead hath crossed the foam!"

THE PORTENTS OF THE NIGHT.

NIGHT to the devout Highlander was a time to rest within doors, and renew the strength by sleep. Evil spirits were abroad, the Prince of Darkness roamed over the hills: it was presumption to dare his presence, and drew upon itself the neglect of all angelic guardians. It is rather difficult to reconcile this timorous avoidance of danger with the thousand recorded facts of nightly creaghs, nightly robberies, nightly assassinations; but we must remember, that even in the most superstitious the overwhelming passion of the moment has silenced the voice of fear. The constantly recurring disasters of these evil undertakings was, of course, attributed by the neighbours to the contemptuous presumption which overlooked the peril. It was then held an established axiom, that evil spirits were to be shunned, not braved. Those whose necessary tasks detained them out of doors beyond nightfall were not so liable to harm as the daring loiterer, who was sure to suffer for his boldness by an encounter with the wicked demons let loose upon the earth during the dark hours.

The vision of armed horsemen riding along the face of an impassable precipice is taken from a narration of a similar appearance in the day-

time on the mountains of Cumberland. It is given in detail by Sir David Brewster, in his work on "Natural Magic." Scott likewise speaks, in his "Lady of the Lake," of a presage of coming death of a similar character:—

> "Sounds, too, had come in midnight blast
> Of charging steeds careering fast
> Along Benharrow's shingly side,
> Where mortal horseman ne'er might ride."

The birk scarred by the witch's ban recalls an idea entertained in many parts of the Highlands, that these ill-omened crones could wither a tree by their curses, so that the sap should dry up in the trunk, and the whole become blighted and unfruitful, as if scathed by lightning.

It was sometimes the custom to baptize an infant over a drawn sword, in the emergency of illness and distance from a priest. The rite of baptism was highly prized among the Highlanders; they regarded it as an unfailing passport to heaven for the child who died in earliest infancy. On the other hand, those unhappy ones whose parents, through accident or neglect, had omitted ensuring for them the entrance into happiness, were lost for ever and ever, as much as the most hardened sinner. Their voices were heard in the woods bewailing their wretched fate, and upbraiding their forgetful parents. To "win west" was a proverbial expression for reaching heaven. The Highlanders to this day suppose the realms of everlasting glory to be situate to the westward. This fancy has probably remained to them from an extinct Druidical superstition, which fixed the locality of the eternal mansions in the island of Hath Innis, among the more remote of the Hebridean archipelago.

The water of three streams at their confluence possessed, it was said, singular properties. Hither bereaved parents came with the elfin change-

ling, whom the fairies had substituted for their own fair mortal child. The infant being left all night at this gathering of the waters, was found in the morning the very one whom the "gude people" had stolen, the magic of the spot forcing the dishonest elves to restore their prize. The ford crossed on occasion of a burial by a funeral party, was called the Ford of the Dead and the Living. Its waters were of potent efficacy to counteract evil spells, witchcraft, and all delusions of the devil, but the ford itself was generally haunted, especially on the approach of a death among the neighbouring inhabitants. The spectre seen by the traveller had its face hidden — a circumstance usually held to portend evil to the spectator himself, who saw in the muffled form his shadowy likeness. The gazer, when such an appearance came before him, could, by reversing his plaid or any other part of his vestments, ascertain this fact to his satisfaction, as the spectre, if his own, would undergo a similar change. The "Legend of Montrose" illustrates this most dramatically in the dialogue between Ranald of the Mist and Allan Macaulay.

The compatibility of such a superstitious disposition with a religious and sincere faith has been before commented on; the effect of those visions would be to sink every serious Highlander on his knees. In his habitual reference of every occurrence, natural or extraordinary, to the watchful superintendence of an all-wise Deity, the Gael has left his posterity a lesson of true wisdom.

THE PORTENTS OF THE NIGHT.

" WHAT saw ye outbye in the gloamin', gudeman ?
Your teeth chatter sairly, your colour is wan !
Did ye venture the pass o' the mountain by night ?
Ye surely have witnessed some terrible sight ;
Was it aught o' this warld, or a kelpie, or sprite ?"

" I cam' by the pass o' the mountain, gudewife,
But I'll never return a' the days of my life ;
The calm caller moonlight was stirred on the crags
By the glinting of harness, the fluttering of flags ;

A troop of armed horsemen rode gallantly by
Where a goat couldna creep on the precipice high,
In a long single file, horse by horse, round the cliff;
The flash o' their weapons gaed past in a gliff.
Sure never was seen at sic hour, in sic place,
Or rider or steed of this earth's mortal race;
And I knelt there in fear wi' my plaid on my face."

"That troop boded naething but evil, gudeman;
The voice o' dissension is loud in the lan';
The horse o' the Saxon shall trample the vale,
And faggot and sword be the meed o' the Gael.
But saw ye nae sicht in the forest, gudeman,
Where the birks are all scaured by the dour witch's ban?
Your teeth chatter sairly, your colour is wan!"

"Nae sight have I seen in the forest, gudewife,
But I heard what I ne'er shall forget in my life,—
A moanin' and sobbin' of infant in pain,
A dreary cry over and over again.
It was na the wind, for the wind it was still;
It was na the burn, for there's frost on the hill;
'Twas the voice of a child, girning sadly and sair,
Sounding close at my footsteps and filling the air;
And I searched the dark wood, but no baby was there."

" 'Twas the voice o' your baby unchristened, gudeman;
Unblessed by the priest was her life's little span;
No waters of mercy were poured on her head,
And therefore she waileth so sair from the dead,
And haunteth the forest, and canna find rest;
Unsealed by redemption, she canna win west.
Oh! would I had crossed thee with naked claymore
Than barred thee from heaven, my babe that I bore!
Or would I had ta'en thee through corri and spate,
Through the drifts of the snow to the priest's very gate,
Or ever thou cam'st to such terrible fate!
But saw ye nae sicht by the water, gudeman?
Your teeth chatter sairly, your colour is wan!
Did ye come by the ford where the three rivers meet,
Where the widowed and childless gae aften to greet
By the graves that lie close at the kirk's holy feet?"

" I cam' by the kirk o' the rivers, gudewife,
'Tis the last time I ever shall pass it in life.
As the ford o' the Dead and the Living I crossed,
I saw a drooned man in the wild billows tossed;
The features were downward, no face could I see,
But closely he drifted, he brushed by my knee;
And still when the plaid or the hair I would grasp,
The wet spray alone did I find in my clasp,

Till the corse floated seaward with shrieks on the breeze,
With the roar of the river, the sigh of the trees,
And my heart 'gan to swim, and my pulses to freeze."

" Ohone for my Donald! ohone, my gudeman!
Was ever sic sorrow since life first began?
Not many may look on their ain ghastly wraith,
Not many like thee hae sic warnin' o' death;
For lo! as I sat here at evening's dark close,
And toasted your bannocks and thickened your brose,
The river seemed suddenly rushing beside,
And I saw a drooned man swept away by the tide,—
I saw 'twas your face as it hurled o'er the linn,
There was shrieking without and that vision within.
As swift as it came so it vanished away,
And nocht at my feet but the black poussie lay;
He shivered wi' terror, I greeted full sore,
Till your hand at the latch and your foot on the floor
Gar'd me rise up to meet you and clasp you once more."

" Your words are a warning of evil, gudewife!
Short, short is the thread o' my fast-dwindled life;
And mickle my sinnin' and hardened my soul,
And far is my heart frae the heavenly goal.
The path o' the just is a steep whinny brae,
And aft did I stumble, and aft did I stray:
Kneel down by the ingle, gudewife, and we'll pray!"

THE BLACK CHANTER OF CHATTAN.

On the antiquity and celebrity of the Highland bagpipe it is needless to dwell. The potent effect of its strains on the excitable temperament of the Gael, all who have ever been in the North will acknowledge. It must be confessed that an admiration for this sonorous instrument is rather an acquired taste, and that strangers are at first more stunned than enraptured; but to those whose dearest recollections lie among the blue hills and rushing torrents of the Celt there is something almost supernaturally stirring in this vehement music, when heard in after years, or in the exile of a distant land.

There were three principal kinds of pipe music,—the *pibroch*, or gathering,—the *failte*, or welcome,—and the *cumhadh*, or lament.

The Clan Mac Pherson possess a curious relic of the past in a Black Chanter (or *flute* part of the bagpipe), made of lignum vitæ, and endowed with magical properties, according to tradition. Its origin is described by Scott in the "Fair Maid of Perth."

Towards the end of the great conflict which took place on the North Inch of that city (sometimes called St. Johnstone, from its patron Saint John) between the two Celtic confederacies, the Clan Quhele and the

Clan Chattan, "there was seen an aërial minstrel over the heads of the latter, who, after playing a few wild strains on the instrument, let it drop from his hand. Being made of glass, it was broken by the fall, excepting only the chanter, which was, as usual, of wood." The Macpherson piper secured this enchanted pipe, and, even though mortally wounded, poured forth the pibroch of his clan till Death effectually silenced his music.

The Black Chanter was ever after held to ensure success to its owners, not only to the Macphersons but also to its temporary possessors, whenever lent to other clans by the generosity of its proprietor. Thus the Grants of Strathspey having received an affront through the cowardice of some unworthy members, and being dejected beyond measure, borrowed this magical instrument, whose bold war-notes soon roused their drooping energies, and stimulated them to such valour, that it was a proverb from that time, "No enemy ever saw the back of a Grant." The Grants of Glenmorriston afterwards received it, and it was only restored to the Mac Phersons a few years ago by the present Laird.

It seems, however, as if its virtues remained to the Mac Phersons during the troubles of 1745, for Cluny Mac Pherson, the chief, having been drawn into the Stuart cause, accompanied Charles Edward in all his victories, and by his own and his followers' bravery much assisted the precarious fortunes of the Adventurer.

A short while before the fight of Culloden the Mac Phersons were in Athole with Lord George Murray, where they were eminently successful.

But when the disastrous affair of "Drummossie Moor," as it was called by the Jacobites, took place, the Mac Phersons were absent, on their march from Badenoch, whither they had gone in the interim, and thus their assistance was lost to the most important of all the Stuart struggles.

It is said an old witch told the Duke of Cumberland that if he waited

till the green bratach, or banner, came up, he would inevitably be defeated. He did not wait; and whether in consequence of the Black Chanter being absent or not, it is too certain that he succeeded in ruining the rash and unfortunate Highlanders. The Mackintoshes, who claim the title for their chief of "Captain of Clan Chattan," were in the thickest of the fight; but they had no supernatural preservative, and shared the fate of that bloody and merciless defeat.

With Culloden ended the influence of the old faith, loyalty, and religion. The Gael, broken by the severity of the government and the rapid progress of innovation, has learned to forget his former self. With the reckless passions of the past he has also lost much of its rude chivalry. In some hidden nooks and corners some few associations and superstitions hang duskily round the hills; but the quick strides of society, now advancing on every side, will soon trample down these last remaining characteristics, and the Celt, assimilating more and more daily to the Saxon, will ere long wonder at the deeds of his ancestors, even as the English wonder at the naked Britons who fled before Cæsar. As with Culloden we began our volume, so we end it with the same eventful day which closed the page of history on the armed power of the clans. And what more congenial note can we sound for our Farewell than the heart-piercing wail of the fatal field of Drummossie?

THE BLACK CHANTER OF CHATTAN.

Black Chanter of Chattan, now hushed and exhausted,
Thy music was lost with the power of the Gael;
The dread inspiration Mac Pherson had boasted
For ever expired in Drummossie's sad wail.

Of old on St. Johnstone's dark meadow of slaughter
Thy cadences hurried the piper's last breath;
The vanquished escaped amid Tay's rolling water,
The conqueror's pibroch was silenced by death.

That piper is nameless, and lost in like manner
The tribes are forgotten of mighty Clan Quhele;
While Chattan, that bears the hill-cat on his banner,
No time can extinguish, no ruin assail.

From the hand of a cloud-cleaving bard thou wert given
To lips that embraced thee till moveless and dead;
Since then never idly Mac Pherson hath striven,
Nor trust in his fortune been shaken by dread.

O mouth-piece of conquest! who heard thee and trembled?
Who followed thy call, and despaired of the fight?
Availed not that foemen before thee dissembled,
For quenched was their ardour and nerveless their might.

The blast of thy pibroch, the flaunt of thy streamer,
Lent hope to each spirit and strength to each arm;
While the Saxon confronting was scared like the dreamer
Whose sleep is of peril, of grief, and alarm.

Led on by thy promise, what chieftain e'er sallied,
Nor proved in the venture how just was thy vaunt?
At the spell of thy summons exultingly rallied
The faltering pulse of dispirited Grant.

Forerunner of victory! why didst thou tarry?
Thy voice on Drummossie an empire had changed;
We then had not seen our last efforts miscarry,
The Stuart had triumphed, the Gael been avenged.

Ah, fatal Drummossie—sad field of the flying!
The Gathering sank in the hopeless Lament;
What pibroch could stanch the wide wounds of the dying?
What magic rekindle the fire that was spent?

Proud music! by shame or dishonour ne'er daunted,
By murmur of orphan, by widowed despair,
The fall of thy country thy spell disenchanted,
With the last of the Stuarts it vanished in air!

Yet rouse thee from slumber, Black Chanter of Chattan,
Send forth a strong blast of defiance once more;
On the flesh of thy children the vulture doth batten,
And sodden with blood are the sands of Lahore.

As fierce as the tiger that prowls in their forest,
Those sons of the Orient leap to the plain;
But the blade striketh vainly wherever thou warrest,—
Black Chanter of Chattan, bestir thee again!

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