THE MACFARLANE COUNTRY

The shores of Loch Lomond north of Luss are made specially interesting by certain heroic memories of the two greatest of our early kings. Geoffrey of Monmouth, the monkish chronicler who died in 1154, in his fantastic account of King Arthur, describes how that king pursued his enemies up Loch Lomond, besieged, and all but exterminated them on the islands, and overthrew an Irish army which came to their relief. The earlier historian, Nennius, from whom Geoffrey seems to have got his facts, merely states that Arthur fought certain of his battles in Glen Douglas, and this Glen Douglas is identified by Skene in his *Celtic Scotland* with the high pass which comes over from Loch Long, and descends at the little inn of Inverbeg between Luss and Tarbet.

The other incident is recorded by Archdeacon Barbour in his life of Robert the Bruce. It was during the king's flight after his early defeat by John of Lorn at Dalrigh, near Tyndrum. With his little host he came down on the eastern side of the loch, probably above Inversnaid. Tradition says he sheltered in the

fastness there known as Rob Roy's Cave. The enemy was behind, and the loch lay deep in front. No means of escape appeared till James of Douglas discovered "ane litil boat that wad but thresome flit". In that little boat the king was ferried across, and all his host after him. While the passage was being made, Bruce entertained and heartened his men by reciting to them one of the romances which were the chief literature of that time, "Sir Fierabras". One may picture the scene on the shore at Inveruglas, where a ferry still plies across the loch from Inversnaid. Shortly afterwards Bruce met the Earl of Lennox hunting in the hills, and the whole party took boat at Rosneath to spend the winter at Rachryn Isle on the Irish coast.

For a century and a half before the days of Bruce, Inveruglas had been the head-quarters of the Macfarlane chiefs. The ruins of their stronghold are still to be seen on the islet in the little bay. These Macfarlanes were descended from Gilchrist, fourth son of Alwyn, second of the early Earls of Lennox, and took their name from Gilchrist's grandson, Bartholomew or Pharlan. They were famous for their feuds and turbulence. From their gathering-place, a little loch in the hills above Inveruglas, they took their slogan, "Loch Sloy", and by reason of their raiding propensities the moon came to be known through a wide district as "Macfarlane's lantern". On one occasion they

came near extinction. Their cattle had been lifted by some Lochaber men, and on following them up, they found the raiders asleep in a bothie. This they promptly set on fire, and not a man escaped. But a gale was blowing, the fire caught the forest, and the Macfarlanes would themselves have been consumed had they not crowded into a small loch at the bottom of a valley. On another occasion, hearing that certain enemies were marching to attack the clan, the Macfarlanes, under Duncan Dhu, set an ambush at a ford, on the Falloch, and exposed at the spot an effigy of one of themselves. On the hostile party coming in sight, they spent most of their arrows in shooting at the dummy figure, and the Macfarlanes, securing these, returned them with overwhelming effect. The attack of the clan on Boturich Castle in the boyhood of James V has already been mentioned.

The Macfarlane chiefs, however, were no mere caterans. They married into the best families in the west country. One of them, knighted by James IV, fell at Flodden, and another was slain at Pinkie. The next chief played an effective part at the Battle of Langside. According to Hollinshed, he had been condemned to die for some outrage, but had been pardoned at the entreaty of the Countess of Moray, and it was by way of return for this clemency that he brought his clan to the battle. Coming up with two hundred

of his men at the critical stage of the conflict, he fell fiercely on the flank of Queen Mary's men, and was a chief cause of their overthrow. As if to redeem that act, the son of this chief is said to have founded a hospice for travellers at Bruitfort, opposite Eilean Vou, and his son again took the Royalist side in the wars of Charles I, and consequently was fined 3000 merks and had his castle at Inveruglas destroyed by Cromwell's men. After that time, the Macfarlane chiefs had their seat partly at Tarbet and partly on Eilean Vou, but they were designated as "of Arrochar" from the neighbouring property at the head of Loch Long which had been acquired in the latter part of the fourteenth century. In more recent days, Walter Macfarlane of Arrochar was one of the most exact and industrious antiquaries of his time. His brother, Alexander, a merchant and judge in Jamaica, was founder of Glasgow Observatory, originally called the Macfarlane Observatory. John, son of the third brother, was the last Macfarlane laird of Arrochar. In 1785 his estates were brought to a judicial sale and purchased by Ferguson of Raith. They afterwards became the property of the Colquhouns.

Among the countless admirers of this ancient country of the Macfarlanes, was the famous judge and literary critic, Lord Jeffrey. In the early part of last century, he was a frequent guest at Stuckgown House,

which, with its lancet windows, rises among the trees on the steep hill-side a mile or so to the south of Tarbet.

A memory of a different sort belongs to a huge boulder which lies in a hollow by the roadside half-way between Tarbet and Ardlui. Many years ago, a cavern was scooped in its lofty face, and from this the minister of Arrochar preached to his parishioners in the grassy amphitheatre around. It has been called, probably with truth, "the heaviest pulpit in the world".

GLENFALLOCH

From the head of Loch Lomond at Ardlui a coach used to run up the beautiful eight-mile valley of the River Falloch to Crianlarich on the Dochart, in the wild Breadalbane country. In the eighties of last century the building of the West Highland Railway up Loch Long and Loch Lomond sides, and through Glenfalloch to Glenorchy and beyond, superseded the coach. But to-day the road is populous again. It is part of the favourite route for motor-cars making for Oban and the West Highlands. Its pleasant hotels at Ardlui and Inverarnan are also, like those at Balloch, Luss, Rowardennan, Tarbet, and Inversnaid, favourite holiday resorts, and pilgrims make their way in considerable numbers to the noble Falls of Falloch, some four miles up the gorge, and the Garabal Falls in Strath Dubh.

Here it is that the possessions of the Clan Campbell touch the loch. Glenfalloch has been the property of the Campbells of Glenorchy since the time of James VI, when Colin Campbell of Glenorchy secured a feu of the lands of Breadalbane, which he had

previously held as a tenant of the Carthusian monastery at Perth. Many of the fine trees in Glenfalloch were probably planted by Colin's son, Black Duncan of the Cowl, the first baronet, who was the first of the Highland lairds to devote attention to rural improvement.

But a more curious interest and romance belongs to the old mansion of Glenfalloch House, some three miles up the Glen. In consequence of the action of Sir John Campbell, the fifth baronet of Glenorchy, and first Earl of Breadalbane, who seized the earldom of Caithness and engineered the massacre of Glencoe, a curse was popularly believed to haunt his descendants. His line, at any rate, came to an end with his grandson, the third earl. The title and estates then passed to General John Campbell of Mochaster, representative of the third son of the third baronet. He was a distinguished soldier and F.R.S., and was made a Marquess, but according to the popular tradition he also was tainted with the "curse of Glencoe", his father's mother having been a daughter of Robert Campbell of Glenlyon, the officer who commanded the Government troops on that occasion. Accordingly, when his only son, the second Marquess, died childless in 1862, the curse was popularly believed to have once more taken effect.

The succession was then claimed by John Campbell

of Glenfalloch, as representative of the fifth son of the third baronet. He was opposed by Campbell of Borland, his second cousin and next representative of the same third baronet, on the plea that there was a flaw in the Glenfalloch pedigree. A hundred years previously, it appeared, a gay young captain of Fencibles, a younger son of Glenfalloch, had run away with a lady of Bath. The inheritance hinged on the question as to whether they had ever been legally married. At the trial of the case, however, it was shown that the captain and the lady had been duly received and entertained at Glenfalloch by his father and mother, and as the old laird was known to be of strict principles, which would not countenance any moral obliquity, the court held that Captain Campbell and the lady had been by Scots law husband and wife. The laird of Glenfalloch, grandson of this pair, accordingly became sixth Earl of Breadalbane.

"Green Glenfalloch" has sometimes been stated to be the scene of the well-known song, "Roy's Wife of Aldivalloch". But Aldivalloch lies within the grounds of Taymouth Castle, at the eastern end of Loch Tay, and as Taymouth itself was formerly known as Balloch, the song clearly belongs to the Braes o' Balloch of that district.

Greater mystery, however, attends the song of "The Bonnie, Bonnie Banks o' Loch Lomond". The late

ingenious Andrew Lang, in his causerie "At the Sign of the Ship" in *Longman's Magazine*, discussed the question, and even furnished from his own pen an improved version of the song. The accepted idea is that the song represents the farewell of a Jacobite prisoner, about to be executed at Carlisle in 1746, to his sweetheart who had attended his trial there and must travel home alone. While she took the ordinary "high road", his spirit, by the "low road" of the grave, would be on Loch Lomondside before her. There is reason to believe, however, that the song is really a version of the well-known ballad, "The Bonnie, Bonnie Braes o' Binnorie". As a matter of fact, there is a striking resemblance between the airs of the two compositions.

LOCH KATRINE AND THE TROSSACHS

If the bold Rob Roy were permitted to place his foot again upon his native heath at Inversnaid, he would find a few things to interest him. It would not only be the steamers with their cosmopolitan tourists on Loch Lomond, or the handsome modern hotel at the pier head, or the coaches climbing the steep winding road through the ravine behind. In place of the Garrison fort which he himself seized once, and his nephew Glune Dhu stormed again later, he would find a peaceful farmhouse; and if he looked for that other house from which in his youth, after the heroic fashion of his time, he carried off his wife Helen, he would find it covered by the waters of Loch Arklet, banked up behind their great stone dam. Glasgow and its merchants, whom he scorned, have stretched out a long arm, and shackled and led away the very waters that once sparkled, a symbol of freedom itself, in this last fastness of Clan Gregor. To-day a well-made road runs down the pass behind Ben Lomond, by the sylvan shores of Loch Chon and Loch Ard, to the clachan of Aberfoyle, and to Stronachlachar on Loch Katrine side where the pilgrim

looks out upon waters that are twelve or fifteen feet higher than they were in Rob Roy's time. The last word of conquest surely was said when in 1916 the City of Glasgow purchased Glengyle itself, at the head of Loch Katrine, the actual patrimony of Rob Roy's ancestors. In the remote heart of the hills there the little old ivy-covered mansion is now a summer retreat of the Glasgow bailies, and in the little high-walled burying-ground among the woods at hand, the ashes of Dugald Ciar Mhor, as a matter of fact, sleep in civic soil.

Dugald, who was the ancestor of the Glengyle family, Rob Roy's race, was the warrior left to guard the students at the battle of Glenfruin, who "made siccar" of his charge in the ghastly fashion already narrated. Many later members of his house lie around him, including a noted Indian general whose body was brought home in the eighties of last century, and rowed hither up the loch, with tartans trailing from the barge and the pipes playing the last lament. Wordsworth wrote his spirited verses here "sitting on Rob Roy's grave". The verses with more or less truth describe the cateran—

> The eagle he was lord above,
> And Rob was lord below;

but whatever grave the poet was sitting on when he wrote them, it was certainly not the grave of Rob Roy, for that individual, with his wife Helen, sleeps in

the little kirkyard of Balquhidder, at the foot of Loch Voil, a dozen miles away.

In character Loch Katrine is somewhat like the upper end of Loch Lomond, but is lonelier and wilder. There is no road along its southern shore, and that along the north is but little frequented. Some of the names of places along that shore are formidable enough. Among them, Strongalvaltrie, Edraleachdach, and Brenachoil offer something like dislocation to Sassenach jaws, and are only matched by the Gaelic spelling of the mountain which appears on the map and in poetry as Ben Venue, which is Beinnmheadhonaidh, and by the old Gaelic name of the Trossachs Hotel—Ard-cheanochrochan. The loch has an islet at each end, Eilean Dhu near Glengyle, and Eilean Molach, or Ellen's Isle, near the Trossachs. Both of these were doubtless used by the Macgregor clansmen as places of refuge for their women and children in times of extreme danger, though the loch shores were altogether so inaccessible in bygone times that they offered a very secure retreat. So steep are the mountain-sides at Glengyle, for instance, that a deer shot far up on the sky-line has been brought down to the door of the house almost entirely by its own weight; and the scores of streams that leap and foam down the wild corries are many of them indeed "white as the snowy charger's tail".

The Lowland spelling of the loch's name, stereotyped by Sir Walter Scott, is generally taken to mean the "loch of the caterans"; but the local pronunciation is more like Loch Ketturn, and there is some reason to believe that the derivation of the name is more like that of Loch Hourn, the Loch of Hell, in Inverness-shire, and Glen Urrin, Hell's Glen, in Cowal.

Of historic events which have taken place upon these shores two remain outstanding. Here in 1752, six years after the overthrow of the Jacobite cause at Culloden, was arrested Dr. Archibald Cameron, the brother of Lochiel. In a last hope of raising the country for Prince Charles Edward he had made his way to Scotland, while in the south an attempt was to be made by the Honourable Alexander Murray to seize St. James's Palace and the person of George II. Both attempts failed, and Cameron, carried to London, was executed at Tyburn.

A century later, in 1859, an event of very different significance took place here. In this case it was the crystal flood of Loch Katrine itself that was taken captive and led away to satisfy the demands of the great and growing city of Glasgow. Amid much ceremony, attended by many notables, and guarded by a body of the new Volunteers, Queen Victoria opened the sluice-gates, and saw the waters begin to flow away on their errand of incalculable beneficence.

Rivalling the aqueducts of ancient Rome, this was the first modern aqueduct in Britain. It had, however, a predecessor—the aqueduct known as the King's Mill Lade, which dates at any rate from the days of Alexander II, perhaps from Roman times, and brings the water of the Almond to Perth.

Tradition also recounts another incident as having taken place on Loch Katrine side. During Cromwell's occupation of the country, it is said, a party of his troops made their way to this fastness. As usual in times of danger, the clansmen had placed their women and children on the islet at the eastern end of the loch, and had also conveyed all their boats thither. To seize one of these a soldier swam across, and he had actually laid his hand on the gunwale when a knife in a woman's hand flashed out of the greenery, and with a gasp the ravisher sank dead. His grave is still pointed out in one of the hollows of the Trossachs at hand.

It was possibly that tradition which suggested to Scott the whole circumstance and machinery of his greatest romantic poem, *The Lady of the Lake.* Whether or not this was the case, the action and characters of the poem almost entirely from his day till ours have occupied and dominated the scene. No one can stand by the loch-side opposite the caterans' isle without picturing to himself the gallant Fitzjames breaking through the rough woodland from which the

Trossachs takes its name. There was, of course, no smooth winding road through a level defile at that time. Through the tumbled confusion of rocky copse-clad hills the clansmen had to make their way by a track known as "the ladders", steps cut in the precipitous bank, with ropes hung from the trees, so that the hand might help the foot of the climber. As Scott puts it—"The broom's tough roots his ladder made." As he broke his way through by that "Old Pass," which may still be followed, north of the present road, Fitzjames came upon the exquisite scene of wood and water, still lovely as ever, at the eastern end of the loch—

> A narrow inlet, still and deep,
> Affording scarce such breadth of brim
> As served the wild duck's brood to swim.

Thence he made his way along the north shore for some mile and a half, past the Silver Strand, which has now disappeared under the raised waters of the loch, and, climbing to the summit of the Druim Beag, which at that point barred his path, beheld the noble scene in which Loch Katrine

> In all her length far winding lay,
> With promontory, creek, and bay,
> And islands that, empurpled bright,
> Floated amid the livelier light,
> And mountains that like giants stand
> To sentinel enchanted land.

The spot where he stood was exactly suited to the purpose he suggested:

> On this bold brow, a lordly tower;
> In that soft vale, a lady's bower;
> On yonder meadow, far away,
> The turrets of a cloister grey.

Behind him, on the north side of the Trossachs, rose Ben A'an, and to the south, above the narrow eastern end of the loch, the rugged mountain which dominates the scene:

> High on the south, huge Ben Venue
> Down on the lake in masses threw
> Crags, knolls, and mounds, confusedly hurled,
> The fragments of an earlier world.

There, on the side of Ben Venue, lies the Bealach-nam-bo, or "Pass of the Cattle" by which the Macgregors drove their stolen herds into this fastness, and, below it, the Coire-nan-Uruisgain, or "Goblins' Corrie", in which these herds could be securely concealed.

Having satisfied himself as to the geography of the spot Fitzjames returned to the Silver Strand, winded his horn, and forthwith saw the shallop start from the islet shore, with the fair Ellen Douglas herself as its guide, to involve the gallant huntsman in all the romantic complications of the tale.

The original name of the islet was Eilean Molach, the "Shaggy Island". The name by which it is now best known, Ellen's Isle, may commemorate the dame, Helen Stewart, who slew the daring raider of Cromwell's time, but is more likely to be the result of Scott's

mistaking the word "Eilean" on the lips of his Highland boatman.

No doubt some of the romantic character of the neighbourhood has disappeared since the time of Scott. When the early admirers of *The Lady of the Lake* visited the scene they were rowed up Loch Katrine in a barge manned by a crew of stalwart clansmen. In 1843 this picturesque method of transport was done away with, a small iron steamer being substituted for the galley and rowers. Naturally the change was resented by the oarsmen themselves, and one night the steamer was taken from its moorings, towed to a deep part of the loch, and sunk. But the deed was done in vain by those stalwart defenders of the picturesque. Another steamer soon took the place of the foundered vessel, and as it lies waiting for its freight on a summer afternoon at the rustic straw-thatched pier that clings to the hill-side, it somehow, to modern eyes, forms quite a charming feature of the soene.

The real effect and enjoyment of this singularly beautiful region, rendered so humanly interesting by the genius of Sir Walter Scott, are merely tasted by the tourist who hurries over the ground in a single day. To gain a full and lasting impression of its loveliness one should stay for some time in the neighbourhood. The Trossachs Hotel, a mile or so to the east of Loch Katrine, has been called "the greatest monument to Sir

Walter Scott". Either as a guest within its walls, or in more rustic quarters at Brig o' Turk, no great distance away, one may establish one's headquarters for an indefinite period.

Glen Finglas here, it should be remembered, was the scene of a legend enshrined in another of the poems of the great romancer. Two young men, hunting in the glen, had retired for the night to their sheiling when they were surprised by a visit from two fair girls. Lured by the fascination of these visitors one of the hunters was tempted to stroll up the glen with them in the moonlight. The other, suspecting that all was not right, remained indoors, and spent the night in playing hymns to the Virgin on his jew's-harp. His companion did not return, and next day the more cautious hunter found his remains in a hollow not far away, torn and devoured by the harpies.

When one has explored the many sylvan beauties of Glen Finglas to the north, and the mountain road to Aberfoyle to the south, has wandered round the shores of "the lovely Loch Achray", and up the Achray Water to the sluices at the foot of Ben Venue, has followed the route of the fiery cross eastward from Duncraggan, by the Macgregors' gathering-place on Lanrick Mead and the shore of Loch Vennachar, to Coilantogle ford, where Fitzjames and Roderick Dhu fought their tremendous duel, and, beyond "Bochastle's heath" and the Pass of

Leny and Callander, has traced the immortal route of the chase backwards up the Kelty Water under Uam-Var to "Glenartney's hazel shade", one will have become imbued with something of that love for the magnificent country of his birth which is and always has been one of the strongest features in the character of the Scottish Highlander.