

SCOTTISH PILGRIMAGE
IN THE LAND
OF LOST CONTENT

RATCLIFFE BARNETT

*** A Distributed Proofreaders Canada eBook ***

This eBook is made available at no cost and with very few restrictions. These restrictions apply only if (1) you make a change in the eBook (other than alteration for different display devices), or (2) you are making commercial use of the eBook. If either of these conditions applies, please contact a <https://www.fadedpage.com> administrator before proceeding. Thousands more FREE eBooks are available at <https://www.fadedpage.com>.

This work is in the Canadian public domain, but may be under copyright in some countries. If you live outside Canada, check your country's copyright laws. IF THE BOOK IS UNDER COPYRIGHT IN YOUR COUNTRY, DO NOT DOWNLOAD OR REDISTRIBUTE THIS FILE.

Title: Scottish Pilgrimage in the Land of Lost Content

Date of first publication: 1942

Author: Thomas Ratcliffe Barnett (1868-1946)

Date first posted: May 27, 2022

Date last updated: May 27, 2022

Faded Page eBook #20220558

This eBook was produced by: Al Haines, Howard Ross & the online Distributed Proofreaders Canada team at <https://www.pgdpCanada.net>

By the Same Author

The Dame of the Fine Green Kirtle.
The Finest Baby in the World.
The Blessed Ministry of Childhood.
Fairshiels—Memories of a Lammermuir Parish.
Reminiscences of Old Scots Folk.
The Winds of Dawn—Parables from Nature.
The Makers of the Kirk.
The Road to Rannoch, and the Summer Isles.
Border Byways and Lothian Lore.
Margaret of Scotland, Queen and Saint.
The Land of Lochiel, and the Magic West.
The Story of the Covenant—Fifty Years of Fighting Faith.
Autumns in Skye, Ross and Sutherland.
The Land of Lorne, and the Isles of Rest.
The Cradle of Christianity—A Pilgrimage to the Holy Places.
Highland Harvest.

SCOTTISH PILGRIMAGE



SUNSET OVER LOCH LINNHE

SCOTTISH PILGRIMAGE
IN THE
LAND OF LOST CONTENT

T. RATCLIFFE BARNETT

JOHN GRANT BOOKSELLERS LTD.

EDINBURGH : : : 31 GEORGE IV. BRIDGE

LONDON: 98 GREAT RUSSELL STREET, W.C.

1944

FIRST EDITION	1942
REPRINTED	1944

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY
OLIVER AND BOYD LTD., EDINBURGH

Into my heart an air that kills
From yon far country blows:
What are those blue remembered hills,
What spires, what farms are those?

That is the land of lost content,
I see it shining plain,
The happy highways where I went
And cannot come again.

A. E. HOUSMAN

CONTENTS

FELLOW PILGRIMS

PAGE

- I. THE FRIENDLY ROAD. Some Vagabonds and an Angel [3](#)
- II. THE BROKEN BUTTERFLY. Chopin in Scotland [11](#)
- III. A TEA-CUP AND A ROCKING-HORSE. Boyhood of Sir Walter Scott [21](#)

STEPPING WESTWARD

- IV. THE COLOUR OF APRIL. In Perthshire [29](#)
- V. INNERPEFFRAY. The Story of an Ancient Library [36](#)
- VI. LEGENDS OF THE WEST HIGHLANDS. A Calm Day in the Sound of Mull [44](#)
- VII. THE ROAD TO ARGYLL. Land of the Gael [51](#)

THROUGH GALLOWAY

- VIII. GLIMPSES OF GALLOWAY. A Land of Colour [61](#)
- IX. LOCH TROOL. Hills and Hillmen [70](#)
- X. TWO TRAGIC TALES. Bladnoch and Baldoon [77](#)
- XI. THE HIDDEN SANCTUARY. With the Ever-open Door [85](#)

HERE AND THERE

- XII. CULROSS. The Story of an Old Scots Burgh [91](#)
- XIII. THE HARVEST OF A QUIET EYE. The Beauty of Common Things [100](#)
- XIV. PENKILL CASTLE. The Story of a Fresco [106](#)
- XV. "HIDIE HOLES." Of Priests, Presbyters and Jacobites [113](#)
- XVI. THE LAST VOYAGE. Christmas at Sea [121](#)

THE COVENANTERS

- XVII. DARK DARMEAD. A Covenanting Wilderness [129](#)
- XVIII. THE CROSS OF DALGARNOC. And the Nithsdale Martyrs [136](#)

NORTH AND SOUTH

- XIX. THE MONARCH OF THE GLEN. Red Deer at Home [147](#)

XX. THE BLACK ISLE. Cromarty and the Firths	<u>153</u>
XXI. BY PENTLAND SEAS. Sutherland and Caithness Coasts	<u>160</u>
XXII. HOME OF MY HEART. Lammermuir Memories	<u>168</u>
XXIII. BRAVE BORDERLAND. The Tragedy of Flodden	<u>178</u>
XXIV. HAPPY VALLEY. The Place where I was Born	<u>186</u>
XXV. LISMORE. The Home of St Moluag	<u>195</u>
XXVI. A CAMPBELL LAIRD. Black Duncan of the Seven Castles	<u>203</u>

ILLUSTRATIONS

	FACE PAGE
SUNSET OVER LOCH LINNHE <i>Frontispiece</i>	
THE NARROWS OF ARDLUI, LOCH LOMOND	<u>10</u>
LOCH ETIVE, LOOKING TO BEN STARAV	<u>20</u>
THE DOOR OF DUNDARAVE “DOOM” CASTLE	<u>29</u>
THE SOUND OF KERRERA	<u>36</u>
CARVED STONES AT KILMORY (KNAP) CHAPEL	<u>45</u>
SUNSET BEHIND THE HILLS OF MULL	<u>50</u>
LOCH AWE—INNIS-SHEARRAICH	<u>56</u>
MULDONACH, LOCH TROOL	<u>63</u>
KIRKCUDBRIGHT	<u>70</u>
OLD PACK HORSE BRIDGE OVER THE BLADNOCH	<u>75</u>
ISLE OF WHITHORN	<u>84</u>
ON THE MINNOCH, GALLOWAY	<u>93</u>
A CULROSS CAUSEY	<u>100</u>
THE BLACKMOUNT FOREST AND LOCH TULLA	<u>109</u>
KILCHURN CASTLE, LOCH AWE	<u>117</u>
SOUTH SHIAN FERRY, LOCH CRERAN	<u>124</u>
KILCHERAN HOUSE, LISMORE	<u>134</u>
THE HILLS OF DURISDEER	<u>139</u>
ON THE NITH, DUMFRIES	<u>156</u>
SANDSIDE HARBOUR, REAY	<u>160</u>
OLD MILL OF FORSS	<u>186</u>
BETTYHILL AND THE RIVER NAVER	<u>194</u>
AT PORT KILCHERAN—LISMORE	<u>207</u>

FELLOW PILGRIMS

I

THE FRIENDLY ROAD

SOME VAGABONDS AND AN ANGEL

He who has been a life-long wanderer on the roads, the hills, and the islands of Scotland has naturally laid up a storehouse of memories about the men and women he has met. To have an inveterate curiosity about the ins and outs of humanity, and an incurable love for human nature in the raw, is to carry a perpetual introduction to any passer-by. To be approachable is to gain an easy entrance to the finest club in the world.

An Oxford scholar, who was once setting out rather fearfully on a solitary tramp, expressed his surprise to the storekeeper at Bridge of Orchy that I should have shared some delicious trout (tickled and toasted) with a tramp at Ba Bridge. But why not? To share and share alike—whether it be tobacco, matches, bread and cheese, or experience—is the best introduction in the world. Then the stranger will become your friend. Moreover, he has stores of knowledge about things of which you may be woefully ignorant, so you gain a knowledge which you can never pick up in your own narrow circle. After fifty years of wandering up and down the length and breadth of Scotland I have nothing but the happiest recollections of those independent travellers whom we call the Gentlemen of the Road. I at least have found it a very friendly road.

I have, however, great faith in Carlyle's philosophy of clothes. Clothes can be an intolerable barrier between you and your fellow-men. So many people judge us by our clothes, whether we be kings or cadgers. Even a collar can separate you from the wayfaring man, especially if it buttons at the back of your neck as many of mine do. You have only to wear one of these, and the wily tramp will immediately accost you for help on the pure assumption that you belong to one of the soft brotherhood. But turn the same collar round, button it in front, add an old tie, and you may with safety approach the King of the Gypsies himself.

I used to carry in my rucksack a box of old bagpipe reeds—both drone and chanter—for that will admit you to almost any tinker's camp in the Highlands. Good reeds are not easily picked up by wandering pipers in out-of-the-way places, but a travelling tinker very soon gets to know if a fellow-piper is in the neighbourhood. Once the bagpipe is heard, one listener will

tell another as he passes on the road; and many a ragged piper has knocked at my door and asked for bagpipe reeds.

A tinker's tent looks very comfortless from without, but when there is a real stove with a fire in it, the chimney going through the canvas roof of the tent, fine fresh bracken on the floor, tobacco smoke, and a hearty welcome, it is anything but cold inside. Yonder it stands by a burn-side or on the edge of a wood—the burn for trout, and the wood for other ploys—with its canvas tightly stretched across the bent hazel poles, and the blue reek rising in the still air. I have more than once spent a happy hour in such a tent, in perfect comfort, enjoying the best of company and a good colloque, while the rain fell in sheets outside. After a strong cup of black tea, with bread and butter, I have left with regret and the remark, “I only wish I could get my baker at home to wrap the loaf bread in cellophane paper as cleanly as you have it in Skye here.”

The secret of the Friendly Road is to take every man as you find him, lay aside all convention and rank, look for the best in people and not the worst, and get over the false idea that every tramp is a rogue. Then you will find that these wandering men belong to a very human brotherhood.

I remember so many of them!

The tall, blind old gangrel with the two dogs, the second sight, the many coats, and the fiddle-case slung over his shoulder, who once played before Queen Victoria.

The poor old woman with the rat-bitten face who slept in barns, and sold needles and thread, tapes, and all sorts of cheap gee-gaws to the girls at farm towns, carrying everything in the big basket, which she was glad to be relieved of for a mile.

The dusky Indian who was selling lace and cheap linen on one of the Outer Isles, shivering through the wet and blustery gales which blew in from the wild Atlantic.

But I shall only describe one of them, and then reprint a remarkable letter which I afterwards received from a master in a well-known public school. This letter gave me the clue to the identity of the brainy tramp. As both master and tramp are now dead, I am in no danger of offending the sensibility of either.

I always remember him as the Mathematical Tramp. I can see him at this moment sitting by the side of the heathery path on the south side of Loch Rannoch. It was a very hot day, and I was swinging along the narrow track when I saw the tramp sitting with his very shabby boots sticking out across the path. He was terribly down and out, but he was working on a bit of paper with the stub of a pencil held in his dirty hands. In the ordinary course I would have stopped and spoken, sat down, offered him a smoke, and

enjoyed a talk. But he never looked up, and I had the instinctive feeling that here was a man who did not wish to be spoken to. That was the sad thing about him—he was that most pathetic of all objects on the road, a gentleman gone astray. However, I glanced down at the paper as I passed and saw that he was working out a mathematical problem, which was illustrated by the figure of a double triangle. I can draw the figure still.

So I passed on in silence, respecting his sensibilities. He never looked up. When after a time I looked back, he was still absorbed in his problem.

But the sequel was interesting. I must have made some slight reference to the Mathematical Tramp in a *Scotsman* article, for I received the following letter from the master in the public school, who was himself a mathematician:

12th January 1924.

Dear Sir,—The man you mention in to-day's "Scotsman" as engaged on a mathematical problem was probably S—— W——. My old colleague Dr J. S. M—— told me of him, but I never met W——. He was, I believe, the last of the Diarists, that is, the people who used to solve mathematical problems published yearly in "The Ladies and Gentlemen's Diary." I gave a copy of these with J. G. Wagstaffe's notes to St John's College, Cambridge.

S—— W—— was, I believe, headmaster of a school in the North of England. He was improved out of it in 1870 or so. He used to wander up and down the country solving problems for parish schoolmasters who had pupils a little too clever for them. He was in Edinburgh as a tramp in 1892 to my knowledge. His passport papers were some notes on trigonometry. I hope you will be able to unearth more about the old man and then give us it in the "Scotsman."—Yours sincerely,

A. J. P.

Alas, after repeated inquiries, I came across only one lady who had met the Mathematical Tramp. She used to give him food, but what she told me of him was enough to identify him. I am glad now that I did not make any assault on his privacy by forcing him to talk. Every man must be at liberty to keep his own secrets. Poor S—— W——! He has solved the greatest of all problems long ago.

Ben Lawers is one of the highest mountains in Scotland. Indeed, in the old days, when the cairn was intact, as the Government sappers built it, the topmost stone touched the 4000-feet level. Climbers are fortunate when they

get a fine visibility from Ben Lawers, for then they will enjoy one of the widest views in Scotland.

A climber has to know his hills in all weathers. On this occasion at the end of August there was a gale blowing, and the driving rain was mixed with hail that stung the cheeks like a whip. Only climbers know what the strength of the wind can be like on a mountain top. When we were walking up the well-known ridge, the corrie of Lochan na Chat on the right hand was like a boiling cauldron with mist. When we reached the top the mist was dense. The wind had increased to a gale, and we found it impossible to stand without some risk of being blown down. So we took to our hands and knees for a bit, like cautious Scots, and reached the lee-side of the cairn.

But while crawling through the mist on the top we came upon another man. He also was down on his knees, and his back was turned to us. I pointed out his dim figure to the friend who was with me, and for a while we paused in the storm to see what this ghost was doing in the mist. He was grubbing among the small stones, picking up one occasionally and wrapping it in a little bit of newspaper, which he then put in his pocket. He never saw us. So absorbed in his collecting was he that it might have been a calm summer day instead of one of terrible storm. He could not possibly have heard us, for the wind was shrieking like a fiend. So we left the cairn and the man of the mist, still on his knees and quite oblivious to the fact that he must have been soaked to the skin.

Our only conclusion was that he must have been a scientist collecting some kind of specimens. Sometimes now I lie abed wondering if after all he was a ghost of the hills, and I could almost wish to climb the Ben again in a storm to see if the Man of the Mist is still there.

I recollect another scene on a mountain top—this time on Schiehallion. Those were the days when the first thermos flasks were just coming into the market. A lady friend came to stay with us near Glenlyon, and on her arrival she said to me, “Have you got a thermos flask?” “Yes,” I replied, “I’ve got a very nice one,” and I produced a lemonade bottle with a screw top. The lady was greatly relieved, for she produced a beautiful, oval-shaped, leather-covered flask with a sling, the whole thing costing at that time a couple of pounds.

My first climb next day with this flask was to the top of Schiehallion. As all mountaineers know, the top of Schiehallion is not exactly a billiard-table, but one mass of huge rocks and stones. I sat down to have my lunch behind a boulder, for it was bitterly cold.

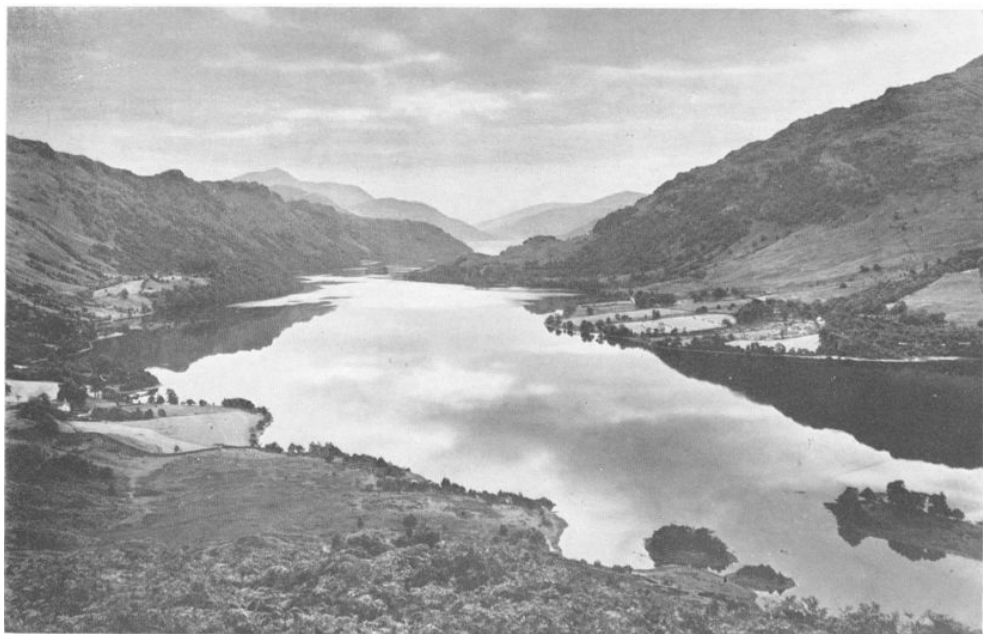
Just then I saw two typical English tourists coming on to the top from Kinloch Rannoch. They had no coats of any kind. The man was miserable

with cold. The lady was in worse plight, for her shoes, which were little more than slippers, were all to pieces and soaking wet. They crouched behind another boulder and did not seem to have any lunch. They had simply set out for a walk, and here they were. So I strolled across to them timidly and said, "Madam, can I offer you a piping hot cup of coffee, for you seem a bit cold?" She stared at me as if I had insulted her, and replied, "As if any such thing was possible here!" "Well, here you are."

The metal cups in those days had no handles to isolate them from the heat. So with a twinkle in my eye, which she did not see, I handed to her the first cup of coffee. She took the cup, burned her fingers, cried out, and nearly dropped it. But the situation was saved, and she drank nearly all the coffee.

I only once met an angel on the hills. It was a glorious September day on Corryarrick. I came over alone, from the Laggan side, and was making my way down to Fort Augustus. It was very hot, and at four o'clock the thought of tea was overpowering. So I debated whether I should stop, boil the billy and make a cup. But I wished to be at Fort Augustus at a particular time, so I determined to swallow my thirst and carry on. When crossing the stream called Allt Lagan a' Bhainne, where the broken bridge is, I was thinking a great deal about the Ghost of Corryarrick. A suspension bridge now spans that dangerous stream, thanks to the Scottish Rights of Way Society. At this very spot, when the mist is down, it is not always easy to find the crossing place, and it is said that just then a stately Highlander appears, with two great dogs, and directs the traveller with these words: "That way lies your road!" I know a lady who, with her husband, actually encountered this apparition. But as the Highlander only appears in misty weather, there was no chance of meeting him on such a glorious September day. I plugged down the path after that, and wished with all my heart that an angel would appear and give me a cup of tea.

With that remark I rounded a rocky bluff and was struck dumb with astonishment. There she was. An angel, sitting by the path, and looking up at me with a smile on her face. A kettle on the boil. Two cups set out, with the daintiest of teas all ready to be eaten. How she must have wondered who this hot and grubby man was with the tousled hair, and all the grime of the day's exertion upon him. She asked no question, but only said: "Won't you sit down and have a cup of tea?" I sat down and was refreshed, not only with the tea but with a delicious conversation. Then she seemed to fade away, and I reached Fort Augustus an hour late. But the angel had no wings!



THE NARROWS OF ARDLUI, LOCH LOMOND

II

THE BROKEN BUTTERFLY

CHOPIN IN SCOTLAND

It was his friend Liszt who called Chopin a broken butterfly, when referring to Chopin's ten years of peculiar intimacy with George Sand, Madame Dudevant. Liszt, who introduced them, said, "She gave her butterfly the *congé*, vivisected it, and stuffed it, and added it to her collection of heroes for novels."

The story of Chopin's visit to Scotland, although rather a sad one, every lover of his music ought to know.

The Revolution of 1848 convulsed France, and threw Germany, Hungary and Italy into a state of great unrest. Frederick Chopin was born in Poland, but had strong French affinities through his father, who was born in Lorraine. Finding it impossible any longer to make a living in Paris, his thoughts naturally turned to England for rest and peace. He had been here once before, and when doubtful as to a second visit he was persuaded to cross the Channel by one of his pupils in Paris, a Scots gentlewoman, Jane Wilhelmina Stirling, of the well-known family of Keir. Some years older than Chopin, who was at this time thirty-nine years of age, Miss Stirling made all the arrangements for the journey. Indeed, she was his presiding angel during the whole of his visit to England and Scotland. He arrived in London on 20th April, and she engaged rooms for him at 28 Bentinck Street. But a few days later he moved to 48 Dover Street.

He was never really happy, for he was never well, and he only enjoyed playing to sympathetic listeners. On 1st May he wrote from Dover Street: "At last I have a large and fine room in which I can breathe and play, and where to-day for the first time the sun has paid me a visit. This morning I am breathing a little better, but the whole of last week I have not felt too well."

That was really the beginning of the end, and all during his stay in this country the great musician's health was broken. He never knew what the joy of living meant.

He had three pianos in his room—an Erard, a Pleyel and a Broadwood. "But what is the use when I have never time to play them!" He was dragged from one social function to another. He heard Jenny Lind in *Sonnambula*:

“She sings with extreme purity and certainty, and her piano notes are steady and as even as a hair.”

But Chopin grudged the price of his lodging. No wonder. His landlord charged him twenty-six guineas per month, and then doubled the price.

The Duchess of Sutherland promised to present him to the Queen, and he played before Royalty at her house. Society women lionized him, but were very mean in the matter of paying him for his recitals. Of this he bitterly complained. “The Duke of Westminster is close-fisted. So they don’t pay. . . . Old Lady Rothschild asked me how much I *charge*. . . . As Lady Sutherland had given me twenty guineas, and as Broadwood on whose piano I play had suggested the price, I answered twenty guineas. The good lady, obviously kind, thereupon told me that it is true I play very well, but that she advises me to take less, as moderation is necessary this season!”

Poor Chopin! At this time he wrote in a letter: “If I could have a few days without blood-spitting, if I were younger, if I were not prostrate under my afflictions, I might be able to start life again.” But, his “kind Scottish ladies” were all the time exhausting him with dinner engagements, and he found their “jigging about round London with visiting cards” too much for his frail body. He was at this time earning a little money by taking pupils at a guinea a lesson.

On 7th July he wrote: “I may go to Scotland. My Scottish ladies are kind and lovable, but sometimes they bore me horribly. . . . Often in the morning it seems as if I must cough my life out.” The Scots ladies were Jane Stirling and her sister Mrs Erskine. But he never forgot George Sand. As one has truly said, George Sand made copy out of all her lovers.

When at last he left London for Scotland, Chopin had scraped together about two hundred guineas. He was worried about his finances. Lord Torphichen, a brother-in-law of Jane Stirling, invited him to stay at Calder House, about twelve miles from Edinburgh. Even then, his one thought was about his health: “If only I could be sure of not being laid up here in winter by illness!”

It is worth remembering that Jane Carlyle—that clever little mocking-bird wife of the great Scot—wrote a letter to Miss Stirling enclosing some verses which a friend had written about Chopin. She added that she preferred his music to all other.

On 6th August he wrote a letter from Edinburgh which he finished on the 11th at Calder House. In his state of health, this bringing of him to Scotland was a tragic mistake: “I am weaker all the time and still unable to bear this climate.” His kind Scots women friends were well-intentioned. But Chopin was really dying, and he knew it. Indeed, had he not departed from Scotland before the winter set in he would certainly have died in Scotland.

There can be little doubt that Jane Stirling was in love with him. She was six years older than Chopin, and would doubtless have married him and cared for him most tenderly to the end had he given her any real encouragement.

“They have married me to Miss Stirling, but,” he added, “she might as well marry death.”

So this lover of sunshine endured as best he could the bitter winds of the east of Scotland. He could not compose, even to please those kind Scots ladies, Jane Stirling and Mrs Erskine, for he had no heart for it, and he still missed the inspiring influence of George Sand, whose treatment of him he at the same time bitterly resented.

He called Edinburgh “exquisite,” but adds this wise remark: “People who constantly have beautiful things in front of their noses always admire what is less fine, but unfamiliar, because they are not used to it.” He heard with pleasure a blind man playing one of his mazurkas in an Edinburgh music shop. He speaks of a ghost, “a certain red cowl,” in Calder House. In the evening he played Scots songs to the old laird.

Henry Broadwood was one of his best friends. In London he not only provided Chopin with a grand piano, but sent the invalid a new spring mattress and pillows. When the journey to Edinburgh was decided upon, Henry Broadwood bought an extra seat in the carriage that Chopin might not be overcrowded. Nevertheless, Chopin hated the English, and of the Scots he said that they were ugly but good-natured.

“They want me to stay and go dragging round the Scottish palaces. . . . They are kind, but so boring that the Lord preserve them!”

Miss Stirling was a kind-hearted gentlewoman, and her portrait by Dervia shows a refined pleasant face, with a long curl falling down each cheek, but she does not seem to have attracted Chopin unless through her extraordinary devotion.

From Calder House Chopin went to Manchester for a recital, and after returning to Edinburgh he paid a visit to Johnstone Castle in Renfrewshire, the seat of the Ludovic Houston family, who were relations of the Stirlings of Keir.

“The castle is very fine and luxurious,” he writes, “kept up on a grand scale. I shall stay here for a week, and then go to Lady Murray, to a still more beautiful district where I shall spend another week.” Lord Murray stayed at Strachur on Loch Fyne, and his wife was a fine pianist. Chopin seems to have been afraid of this journey, and a little out of his true reckoning as to where exactly Strachur was—“One has to cross Loch Long and go round the east coast of Scotland.” Of course he meant the west.

But before this visit to Johnstone Castle, Chopin went to Edinburgh to see a Polish doctor called Lyszczyński, who lived at 10 Warriston Crescent (only, Chopin writes the name Lishinski). Here he was well looked after by the good doctor and his wife. Indeed, he told the doctor that he could not do without him. The nursery was cleared out for him, the children being sent to a neighbour. Chopin had a faithful Irish-French valet called Daniel, who brought him soup in the morning, curled his hair, kept him immaculate, and carried his frail master up to bed.

From Strachur Chopin returned to the Ludovic Houstons at Johnstone Castle, and then paid another visit to Edinburgh to the Prince and Princess Czartoryski. They had met the great musician at Johnstone Castle along with Lord and Lady Murray and old Lord Torphichen. The conversation at the Castle seems to have bored him: "Here, it's nothing but cousins of great families and great names that no one on the Continent has ever heard of. . . . Conversation is always genealogical, like the Gospels; Who begat whom, and he begat, and he begat, and he begat."

Here should be related the story of the carriage accident while Chopin was staying at Johnstone Castle. It nearly cost him his life. "We were driving in the neighbourhood above the sea. The carriage we were in was a coupé, with two very fine, thoroughbred, English horses. One horse began to prance, caught its leg and started to kick; the other did the same; they bolted on a slope in the park, the reins dragged, and the coachman fell from the box. The carriage was smashed with banging from tree to tree; we were just tumbling over the precipice when a tree stopped the carriage. One horse broke loose and bolted frantically, the other fell under the carriage. The windows were broken by branches. Luckily nothing happened to me except a few bruises on my legs from the jolting. . . . I confess to you that I contemplated my last hour with composure; but the thought of broken arms and legs disconcerts me. To be crippled would be the last straw."

Then he stayed at Keir with an uncle of Jane Stirling, William Maxwell, afterwards Sir William Stirling Maxwell, a rich bachelor, who kept open house and had a fine collection of pictures. Sir William wrote several books on Spanish Art, and Chopin paid the scholarly laird this compliment: "He has travelled everywhere, and in the east. He has brains. . . . He keeps open house, usually 30 people to dinner."

But here, too, poor Chopin was disappointed with the weather. Keir is beautifully situated, but a thick fog prevented him from seeing the fine view of Stirling Castle, and although Keir seems so accessible to-day, Chopin wrote of it: "No post, no railway, no carriage (even for a drive), not a boat, not even a dog to be seen. All desolate, desolate!"

Then came the two famous recitals, one in Glasgow and the other in Edinburgh.

The Glasgow recital was held in the Merchant's Hall on 27th September at 2.30 in the afternoon. The tickets were half-a-guinea, but the net profits were only £60. Yet there never were seen so many carriages at any concert in Glasgow, and the audience was almost entirely made up of county people with a few of the Glasgow élite. Half-a-guinea was too dear for the citizens, their wives and daughters. As Frederick Niecks says in his *Life of Chopin*, "Scotland as regards music had at that period not yet emerged from its state of primitive savagery." Yet there were real Chopin enthusiasts in Glasgow even then, as a letter in the *Courier* of 30th September shows.

Chopin's Edinburgh recital followed in about a week, on 4th October. It was held in the Hopetoun Rooms, Queen Street, at 8.30 in the evening. Again the tickets were priced at half-a-guinea, but so poor was the demand for them that Jane Stirling bought up a hundred and distributed them among friends. The concert was largely attended by the nobility. Of the recital Chopin said, "I have played in Edinburgh: all the distinguished folk of the region assembled. They say it went off well. There was a little success and a little money." The piano on which Chopin played both in Glasgow and in Edinburgh was sold afterwards for £30 above its real price. It was sent by Broadwood from London. So the story goes.

But perhaps the most unique visit he paid was to the Duke of Hamilton at Hamilton Palace. There was some word of a projected visit to the Duke of Argyll at Inverary Castle, and to Lady Belhaven at Wishaw, also to the Duke of Hamilton's Castle at Brodick in the Isle of Arran. But so far as I can find out, these visits were not paid.

His description of the musical guests at Hamilton Palace is both amusing and sarcastic. Little wonder.

"Art here means painting, sculpture and architecture. Music is not art, and is not called art. . . . These queer folk play for the sake of beauty, but to teach them decent things is a joke. . . . One day after my piano playing, and after various songs by other Scottish ladies, they brought a kind of accordion, and his hostess (who was regarded locally as a great musician) began with the utmost gravity to play on it the most atrocious tunes."

This picture of the Duchess roaring out raucous music on an accordion after Chopin had played the piano is surely enough to make the gods laugh. No wonder Chopin added, "What will you have? Every creature here seems to me to have a screw loose." Another lady at the Palace whistled to a guitar accompaniment. They all made the same remark about Chopin's music—"It is like water!" Or, *leik water*, as he puts it. "I have not played to any Englishwoman without her saying to me—'*leik water!*' They all look at

their hands and play the wrong notes with much feeling. Eccentric folk. God help them!"

But the end was drawing near. On the last day of October he left Scotland for London, utterly exhausted, but resigned to his fate. In London he consented to play at the Polish Ball and Concert in November. There is a bitter irony in the fact that the London papers when reporting this brilliant function had not a single word to say about Chopin playing at it. No wonder it was said afterwards that his consenting to play there was "a well-intentioned mistake."

Then came Paris, poverty and death. "Chopin was often reported to have died," says Stephen Heller, "so often, indeed, that people would not believe the news when he was really dead."

It is useless to say now that his visit to Scotland was a mistake, in view of the state of his health. Rather is it a kindness now to say that the views he expressed about the people and climate were largely due to his perpetual illness. It is unreasonable to expect that a delicate butterfly should find happiness in Edinburgh when a bitterly cold east wind is blowing. We who thrill to his music to-day will always remember with gratitude the loving care which Jane Stirling took of him. But this over-sensitive genius of a man never forgot the neglect of George Sand who, in plain language, threw him over when she grew tired of him.

Alfred Noyes, in his poem, "The Death of Chopin," likens his music to moonlight falling on roses, and with his words it is fitting to bring to a close this account of Chopin's visit to Scotland:

“Sing to me! Ah, remember how
Poor Heine here in Paris leant
Watching me play at fall of day,
And following where the music went
Till that old cloud upon his brow
Was almost smoothed away.

“Do roses in the moonlight flame
Like this and this?” he said, and smiled.

.

What music, what harmonious
Glad triumphs of the world’s desire,
Where passion yearns to God and burns
Earth’s dross out, with its own pure fire,
Or tolls like some sweet angelus
Through death’s divine nocturnes.

.

“Do roses in the moonlight glow
Like this, and this?” What did she think
Of him whose hands at Love’s command
Made life as honey o’er the brink
Of death drip slow and sweet and slow?
Ah, did she understand?

She studied every sob she heard,
She watched each dying hope she found;
And yet, she understood not one
Poor sorrow there, that like a wound
Gaped bleeding, pleading—for one word—
No? And the dream was done.

.

No roses in Majorca glow
Like this and this—so, death may prove
Best—ah, how sweet life is!



LOCH ETIVE, LOOKING TO BEN STARAV

III

A TEA-CUP AND A ROCKING-HORSE

BOYHOOD OF SIR WALTER SCOTT

Everybody knows that Sir Walter Scott spent his boyhood in No. 25 George Square.

I never pass the house at night but I hear the window thrown up and a tea-cup being smashed to smithereens on the causey outside. And this is the story of the tea-cup.

One autumn, at a certain hour every evening, Mrs Scott noticed a Sedan chair arriving at the door, and a certain person muffled in a long cloak stepping out. He was immediately ushered into her husband's private room, where he remained long after the usual hour for the family to retire to bed. Mr Scott always answered her inquiries about the mysterious visitor in the vaguest terms. When she could bear it no longer she determined to investigate for herself. So one evening when the bell was rung for the Sedan chair to carry off the cloaked figure she walked boldly into the room with a salver in her hand, remarking that as the gentleman had sat so long they would be the better of a dish of tea. The distinguished-looking stranger, who was finely dressed, bowed and accepted the tea-cup. But Mr Scott, with a frown, refused to have any. At last, when the visitor had gone, the dignified old lawyer threw up the window, took the cup out of which the stranger had drunk, and threw it on to the street. Mrs Scott was horrified to see one of her best cups broken, but she was immediately silenced by her husband's remark:

"I can forgive your little curiosity, madam, but you must pay the penalty. I may admit into my house on a piece of business persons wholly unworthy to be treated as guests by my wife. But neither lip of me nor mine comes after Mr Murray of Broughton."

The visitor was that notorious John Murray of Broughton, who had been secretary to Prince Charles Edward Stuart. After serving his gallant master he turned traitor at last, giving king's evidence against Lord Lovat, and also against the leading Jacobites. He was never brought to trial, but was frequently under examination by the Crown lawyers. As a reward for his treachery he was pardoned, and it is said—although this is doubtful—that he was given a pension of £200. The letter of pardon bears date 7th of June

1748. In 1770 he assumed the baronetcy of his nephew, Sir David Murray. In 1771 he was placed in an asylum, and died in 1777.

Sir John Douglas of Kelhead—the ancestor of the Marquess of Queensferry—before the Privy Council in St James’s, was asked, “Do you know this witness?” “Not I,” answered Douglas; “I once knew a person who bore the designation of Murray of Broughton, but that was a gentleman and a man of honour, and one that could hold up his head.”

Hence the action of Sir Walter’s father when he threw the tea-cup out of the window after a client whose treachery made him sick with disgust.

The saucer belonging to the broken tea-cup was seized upon by young Walter, who added it doubtless to the collection of curios which he was already making in the famous “den” in the basement.

So much for the tea-cup.

I often wonder how many things of interest are still hidden away in the attics and cellars and lumber rooms of the old houses in Edinburgh. Among the lumber in the attic room of at least one very ancient Border house I can recollect seeing an old spinnet, a sweet-looking ancient viol, a red leather medieval saddle, some old cavalier armour, spinning-wheels, candle moulds, and even some seventeenth-century painting and lettering on the wall. To this particular Border house Sir Walter often came as a family friend. That hobby begun in the “den” of his father’s house in George Square was carried on all his life, until Abbotsford became a perfect museum of old armour and historical curiosities. And now that a hundred years have passed, we in turn are searching out every item and article which was part of his life.

This naturally brings me to the rocking-horse.

Not so very long ago, when some roof repairs were being made at 25 George Square, it came to the knowledge of my friend the owner that there were a great many papers and documents lying concealed between the attic roof and the slated roof. On examining these it was found that they were largely business papers which had belonged to Mr Walter Scott, W.S., Sir Walter’s father. On being carefully gone over none of them was found to be of great value, nor did they throw any light on the life of the Wizard of the North.

But—there was found lying near them the quaintest home-made wooden rocking-horse. In order to get this primitive plaything down from its hiding-place, where it had stood concealed for about a hundred years, one or two planks had to be removed, for it was too large to pass through the ordinary trap-door. The problem of how it got stranded in such an inaccessible place is a puzzle. But the only solution seems to be that it was “built in” when the more modern attics were made.

There is no definite proof that it *was* Scott's rocking-horse. Being found among his father's old papers makes it difficult to doubt that it was his rocking-horse. The present exit from the attic roof required to be enlarged to get it down. All these facts surround the rocking-horse with that combination of mystery and certainty which go to make a most intriguing historical problem.

The rocking-horse is a very primitive example of horse anatomy. A long curving bit of wood takes the place of neck and head. There is an ancient, stuffed, flat saddle, from which the leather is now breaking away, with a little upright wooden pommel. There seems to have been accommodation for a tail. There are no legs, only two solid wooden rockers with curving ends in imitation of the extended legs of a horse when galloping. Instead of stirrups, there are two flat wooden rests for the child's feet. I thought if I found the one foot-rest a little higher than the other I would have got proof positive that the rocking-horse belonged to the little fellow who limped. But, from saddle to foot-rest each measured fifteen inches. The whole length of the rockers is forty-three and a half inches, and the distance from the top of the pommel to the foot of the rockers is twenty-eight and a half inches. The horse may have been painted, but the wood is now quite bare. To an imaginative child it would be more than enough to give him all the sensations of a ride on a thoroughbred.

It adds interest to the discovery of this rocking-horse to know that Charles I, when a child, had a rocking-horse almost identical in shape and form to this one. It came from the Old Palace in Theobalds Grove, and was transferred to the Great House, Cheshunt. It is figured in Green's *Short History of the English People* (Illustrated Edition, vol. iii., p. 1013).

We know that Sir Walter from his earliest days loved horseflesh. That love was inherited from Border-reiving ancestors. At Sandyknowe he rode a little Shetland mare called Marion when he was only seven years of age. From that time on he was never without a horse. He delighted to prance on his white thoroughbred when drilling his men on Portobello sands. Indeed his whole imagination was fired with the romantics of chivalry and the panoply of war when he sat his charger. And the child is father of the man. So we can imagine the little fellow in the house at George Square sitting on his rocking-horse which some joiner in the Old Town of Edinburgh had knocked together for him. What romantic dreams and visions he must have had when he cracked his little whip and swung furiously to and fro on this ancient plaything. The very touch of it to-day brings us very near the Great Romancer.

STEPPING WESTWARD



THE DOOR OF DUNDARAVE "DOOM" CASTLE

IV

THE COLOUR OF APRIL

IN PERTSHIRE

April is like no other month in the year. For town-dwellers who have a real love of nature in the heart—and there are tens of thousands of them—this is the month when the restless desire to wander away into country places becomes an intolerable urge. The whole earth is renewing its life. It is by no means a chance that we associate resurrection with April. That is why we speak of the colour of April, for, whether it be the blue-white skies, green brairds in the fields, bursting buds in the woodlands and on the hedgerows, the snowy blossom of the blackthorn or the wild cherry, the carpeting of the woods with anemones, or the brilliant plumage of happy birds darting from tree to tree, April has a freshness and a renewal of life in plant and tree, in man and beast, which fills the heart with hope and makes the oldest of us feel young again.

Almost any country place will show you the colour of spring. But my painter's palette is in the very heart of Perthshire, where, for the best part of a lifetime, I have looked on the colour of the world and listened to the music of nature. On the hilltops and in the valleys, by lochs and rivers, wandering through ancient woodlands and in green pastures: all that makes the whole district an unspoiled bit of Scots scenery at its best.

A little town creeps up the slopes of a hill on which grow bracken and pine trees and heather. From the top of the hill the view every way is superb. It sweeps in the whole country, from the Lomonds in Fife to Ben Vorlich in the west. Whether you come here in winter, when the hills are dazzling white and the woods deep in snow; or in summer, when the leafage is prodigal and the whole earth lies asleep in sunshine; or in autumn, when the hills are purple with heather; or in October, when the trees literally blaze with fiery colours—the eye can detect no spoiling of this earthly paradise. And when the sun sets behind the purple hills, and the valleys are dark with shadows, the western world is so beautiful that one can only stand on the hilltop and gaze in silence in that golden hour when

The holy time is quiet as a nun
Breathless with adoration.

So for three days at the beginning of April I walked and wandered. Ruskin used to say that one of the greatest things any man can do is to see something and then tell exactly what he has seen. To do this, one must wander "lonely as a cloud." But the only drawback to solitary walking is that, when one looks and listens and is pulled up by sheer ignorance about some bird or beast or flower which may be absorbing the attention, there is no wise friend present to supply the necessary information.

I always make my way first to the Shaggy Burn. Here you can watch the birds darting up and down the waterway. The water is always clean and sparkling. To-day it is glittering in the April sunshine, taking its colours of gold, amber, blue and brown from the stones. Here I saw the first snowy sprays of the blackthorn, and the banks of the burn starred with white anemones. In the house behind the high hedges, between the Shaggy Burn and the River Turret, lives the laird at the very gate of his own estate. I never pass this way but I remember a passage in a letter written from Vailima by Robert Louis Stevenson to Sir Herbert Maxwell:

I cannot conceive anything more grateful to me, or more amusing, or more picturesque, than to live in a cottage outside your own park walls.

A step further and you come to a cottage at the gusset of two roads. On the wall is the well-known local legend, "P.K.M.—1875," and in this garden every spring there are daffodils. Also, in this early April I counted fifty-five clumps of heliotrope primulas in full bloom. The road to the left is to me a veritable gateway of happiness, because this road has oftener brought me happy days on the hills, by the streams and in the woodlands than any other in Scotland. Here, between road and river, there is a swift-running lade which comes from the pink power-house. I have always had an ambition to come here early in the morning and swim quietly down that fascinating lade. But, alas, greater ambitions than that have remained unfulfilled. At this little power-house there has been for many years a black collie dog that comes out to meet me with a welcome wag of the tail. A little pat on the head, a friendly talk, and the old dog goes quietly to the house, having done his duty. Two tiny antlers stand on two garden poles, firing the imagination with thoughts of happy days spent on the hills after the deer. This road leads right up the riverside to the open moors, and to the distant loch which lies under the shadow of Ben Chonzie. On the right are the graceful falls of Barwick, in a thickly wooded gorge. But striking the road to the left, my way lies through old woodlands up the right bank of the stream.

While I was speaking to the shepherd at the lodge gate about the lambs, there was a splash of vermilion on the glen road across the river. It was the mail van, now, alas, taking the place of posty on his feet or wheeling a bike. New times change all things. So no longer is it possible to have a leisurely talk with Sandy McKenzie, whose slow progress I have so often watched through my glasses from the top of a hill, as he made his way up the steep road. Then good-bye to the shepherd, with the soft Gaelic voice and his reminiscences of far Strontian in Argyll. How true it is that, on a day's stravaig, talk taigles the tramper! But it is the wayfarer's company that makes any road delightful.

The riverside here is again white with anemones sprayed below the trees, and at the top of the gorge, where the seat is, the roar of the river grows louder. The falls of Turret are far down, and the path is very steep as you slither down the beech leaves, russet rugs laid by Nature on her winter floors. From this seat there is a fascinating view down the tree-filled gorge. In winter it is a valley of purple mist, made by millions of bare twigs; but in springtime the purple is turned to grey; and the grey will soon be green, for the buds are bursting on every tree. Behind the seat, in a damp hollow of the wood, there is a brake of osiers whose slender stems in winter make a mist of red; but now the osiers also are showing green buds.

The birds have been singing all morning. Most tranquil of all our bird songs in this country is that of the blackbird—full-throated, flute-like, mellow, neither rising to great heights nor falling very much in its cadence, but like the song of a love that has grown old in happiness. Neither the glossy black of the male bird nor the dark brown of his mate can compete with the beautiful olive-brown and spotted breast of the thrush, whose song is so full of rapturous delight. But the music of each has its own delicious charm.

There are two birds that have been singing all day, and each makes a flash of exquisite colour when in flight, or sitting on a tree, if only your glasses are strong enough to observe them. The one is the willow-warbler, and the other is the great tit. The willow-warbler with its back of brown, its breast of olive-yellow, and its feathers so delicately touched with green; the great tit, with its white ear coverts, its yellow breast and olive-green mantle, its blue-grey tail, and its tiny bars of white on the wings. The great tit began singing this year in my garden on the 19th of January—that strange, rather squeaky double note, which has earned for it the nickname of “the musical saw sharpener.” To-day its love-call is tireless. What garden would be complete without its tits!

As I sit I hear a curlew calling on the hill—that king of the moorland, with his long, curved bill, his brown-speckled body, and wild, gurlly cry. The

mossy woodland path ends at a gate that takes you out on to the open moors, and you can return by the hill road, or go on for some miles to the lonely loch which lies in a cul-de-sac of the steep hills.

The next day I took my way down the grassy path which leads through the pine woods of another estate, in the middle of which by a running stream stands a grey castle. Here the larches are at their best—just far enough out to make a green mist, diaphanous and delicate, through which every branch could yet be seen. I had in my pocket a little book with a tattered back—*The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*, by George Gissing. Here I chanced on this passage:

Morning after morning of late I have taken my walk in the same direction, my purpose being to look at a plantation of young larches. There is no lovelier colour on earth than that in which they are now clad; it seems to refresh as well as gladden my eyes, and its influence sinks deep into my heart. . . . The larch has its moment of unmatched beauty—and well for him whose chance permits him to enjoy it, spring after spring.

The larch was first introduced into this country at Dunkeld, at Meggernie Castle, at Monzie Castle, and, if I remember aright, at Dawyck. Yonder by the castle gardens I can see to-day one or two of those ancient larches greening in the sun. It is said that when the Duke of Atholl introduced them at Dunkeld, he tended his first rare plants in a greenhouse, where they withered away. So they were thrown out on the open rubbish heap, and there they grew and flourished in a climate more congenial.

Another of the beautiful things in the April world is an old wall covered with all manner of green moss and grey lichen. A mile or two from this spot a concrete wall was built about a generation ago to enclose a bit of woodland, and in the wall there was erected a corrugated iron gate, which closes with a terrific bang. Both wall and gate are as colourless, and bare, as the day they were put up.

Having traversed the policies I then crossed the main road, forded a stream, and climbed up a long hill track, which leads at last to the falls of Kelty. There used to be a fine woodland here, and the road was bordered by glorious old beech trees. All, alas, cut down now. By the side of the stream, and near the road, the brown tents of the wandering folk were often seen, and here I received hospitality long ago in one of the tents. The place is now bare and forlorn. But habit is strong; and I found the remains of a camp on the same spot.

Near the falls I saw through the trees what seemed to me a great many patches of snow. But when I drew nearer, it was a mass of wild cherry-blossom, glistening in the sunlight. So, making myself a lair among the brown bracken, I lay in the sun, ate a frugal lunch, and thanked God once more for all the colour I had seen in the April world.

V

INNERPEFFRAY

THE STORY OF AN ANCIENT LIBRARY

Every day of the year has its own atmosphere. The February afternoon was drawing to its close, still and windless, with the calm that comes after a storm. In the very peace of it there was the sense of winter past and spring to come. The long green flats of Strathearn, the ploughed fields, the beauty of the bare trees, the blue horizons and the winding river at our feet running full and noiseless—everything in the lown day made for remembrance and hope.

We had just been to Foulis Wester Kirk, that fine restoration of an old parish church which had seen the upheaval of the Reformation. Standing in the open place of the tiny village, we had examined the great Celtic cross with the chain of the joughs hanging on it—a reminder of the days when the stark severity of Presbyterianism took the place of a lax Roman ritual. We had also seen the leper's squint, and the beautiful old stone cross, now set up within the church, which the restorers dug up when they were clearing the foundations—another sign that the reformers had buried or broken everything that reminded them of the Roman rites.



THE SOUND OF KERRERA

But, our real pilgrimage was to the ancient Library and Chapel of Innerpeffray, which stands among the trees a few miles to the south by the side of the River Earn. As the river swept round this calm retreat, the water gleamed like silver in the wan light of the February day. A school and schoolhouse, a grass-grown road to the Library and Chapel, a ruined castle not far away, and immemorial trees—there is nothing here for the crowd to make merry over to-day, but the whole place shouts of history. A turn of the road, and beauty surprises you as sheets of snowdrops flash on the eye from beneath the trees—life in all its mystery springing out of the loam of death. An old Roman road goes down to the riverside meadow which was once a busy commonity.

We visited the Library first—surely the most unique country library in Scotland! It was founded in 1694 by David Drummond, third Lord Madderty, for the benefit of students, and has a collection of modern books as well. It is a plain old building with one great room, in the middle of which stand glass cases for the display of the more precious old books. There are in all about three thousand volumes. Here, in the heat of a summer day or in the short-lived light of February, you may browse among the ancient tomes with an untroubled heart, content to dream of the days when the literary laird read his books in the little room above the west end of the adjoining Chapel, and did his best to commend a scholar's life to all who came to Innerpeffray.

Here are some of the treasures which lie in the glass cases:

THE GREAT BIBLE of Coverdale, commonly called the “Treacle Bible,” because the translator used the phrase “Is there no treacle in Gilead?” In the prologue there is an elaborate picture of Henry VIII handing over the Bible to Cranmer.

FIFTY PSALMS set to music by Clément Marot (1497-1544), the French poet who was a valet de chambre to Francis I. The interesting thing about this book is, that between the lines of music there is a tiny script of letters attached to the musical notes, a kind of sol-fa long before the sol-fa notation was invented. It is like the musical shorthand, or Canntaireachd, of the early pipe music used by the MacCrimmons, who articulated their tunes by sounds, and not by staff notation notes. It was Van Laun who characterised Marot as “at once a pedant and a vagabond, a scholar and a merry-andrew.”

Lady Madderty’s BIBLE BAG—a large bag of crimson cloth with tassels. Her Bible is over yonder in the corner—a large volume which was put into this bag when she went to church, the bag being carried with great ceremony by a boy who walked in front of her and was called her Bible Boy.

Close by is a quaint old LEATHERN CASE, somewhat like a tiny quiver for carrying arrows, only this case was used for keeping quill pens. Here, too, are a couple of red waxen seals from letters of the great Montrose, who was a relative of the Drummonds.

But, the gem of the collection is the POCKET BIBLE OF MONTROSE—a little book enclosed in a box-like cover with Montrose’s signature on the fly-leaf—one of the greatest soldiers Scotland ever produced, a scholar and a gentleman, to boot, who lost his head through loyalty to his king.

Here, too, is a first edition of that well-known account of Prince Charlie’s wanderings—ASCANIUS or The Young Pretender (1746). In this edition I found this intriguing sentence—“When a river came his way, Ascanius according to his wonted custom, without pulling off his shoes and stockings, generally forgot himself, and pulled up his petticoats so rudely that it was well none but friends were with him, or he had discovered himself to be an out-of-the-way sort of woman.” This refers to the occasion when the Prince had to masquerade as a woman, disguising himself as Betty Burke, the Irish serving-woman of Flora Macdonald.

Here is another quotation from a kingly author, James VI and I, whose works are in the Library. The words are taken from the King’s COUNTERBLAST TO SMOKING: “Smoking is a custom loathesome to the eye, hateful to the nose, harmful to the braine, dangerous to the lungs, and in black stinking fumes thereof nearest resembling the horrible Stigian smoake of the pit that is bottomless.” Surely a most questionable dictum of the Wisest Fool in Christendom.

There is also a most gruesome picture plate in Holinshed's CHRONICLE OF SCOTTISH HISTORY, which explains the phrase "tearing a man limb for limb." The man's arms are yoked to one horse, and his legs to another; then, both horses are driven in opposite directions, until the man's arms and legs are torn from his body. What more proof need we have that the good old days were sometimes as bad as bad could be? It is, however, interesting to every Scot that this History of Holinshed provided Shakespeare with his plot for *Macbeth*. When he wrote this play about 1605, London was full of Scotsmen who had come south with James I. Many of the details of the play were doubtless gathered by the Immortal Bard from conversations which he had with the Scots who were attached to the Court.

The Chapel of Our Ladye adjoins the Library. It was founded and endowed in 1508 by Lord Drummond who owned the lands of Innerpeffray and built the old castle of Drummond. An older church stood on the site of the present one, for there is a record of deeds having been signed in it in 1283. This Drummond must have been a fiery soul as well as a religious enthusiast, for in 1515 he laid violent hands on the Lyon King of Arms while the latter was delivering a message to the Queen. At her Majesty's request his life was spared but his estates were forfeited, and he had to kick his heels as a prisoner in Blackness Castle for a whole year. James IV was very fond of Lord Drummond, so we read in an Act of Parliament that "the authority aforesaid has restored reintegrat and reponit And restores reintegrates and reponis the said John Lord Drummond to his honour, dignity, heritage, goods and all other things in the same state and such like as was before the said accusation of the said crime or committing the same."

This hot-headed lord built inside the church a family vault to serve as "a burial-place for the familie in all time coming." But, alas, there is no perpetual lease in mortality, and the last member of the Drummond family to be buried here was Lord Perth, the great-great-grandfather of the present Earl of Ancaster.

Step inside this long bleak building and you will see many interesting features—the original stone altar; the squint; the little aumrie; the holy water stoup; part of a painted ceiling; a loft at the west end, where a priest could retire to read his books; and two hatchments or escutcheons on the wall bearing the Ancaster and Madderty arms.

The church, which has been divided by walls into three parts, is seventy-six feet long by twenty-one feet wide. Seven feet from the west end there is a fine rounded arch with a splayed squint on one side of it. Probably there was a close timbered screen across the arch. This would explain the squint for looking into the church. The leper squint is generally on the south side of the altar where the leper could see the Sacrament, as at Stobo Parish Church

and others. A stair leads up from the vestibule to an upper floor. This upper room is later than the church, but the stair is part of the original building, and it may have led to a belfry. The room has a window in the west wall, and a fireplace.

The ceiling which cuts across the archway, and also the floor of the upper room, have partly fallen down, but there is enough of the ceiling left to show a painting of the sun with rolling clouds, and there used to be the painting of an angel on one side. There are also slight indications of painting on the east wall. But the finest example of Pre-Reformation painted work in any parish church in Scotland is the panel of the Crucifixion which still hangs on the wall of Foulis Easter Church near Dundee.

The original stone altar which still stands at the east end of Innerpeffray Church is, however, the most interesting feature of this old chapel. It has been rough cast, so the stone work beneath cannot be examined. It must be one of the very few stone altars remaining in Scotland. Another is in the Chapel of Stobhall, a delightfully preserved old Scots house on the left bank of the Tay between Stanley and Cargill. Both Innerpeffray and Stobhall belong to the Drummond family; both have stone altars; both have the remains of painted ceilings; and both have lofts or upper rooms. As the loft at Stobhall has a confessional made of wood, the loft at Innerpeffray may also have been used for secret confessions. We know that in the seventeenth century Roman Catholic services were forbidden in Scotland; but the strict adherence of the Earls of Perth to the Roman Faith may account for the survival of some of the Pre-Reformation fittings, and for the strange fact that these two stone altars were not cast down. A still more curious fact is, that while Roman Catholic services were forbidden throughout the land in the seventeenth century, they were still observed at Stobhall by special permission.

So the happy afternoon drew to its close. The light grew dim in the Chapel. The snowdrops gleamed with a new mystery in the dusk, and the old books in their ancient bindings were difficult to read. As we walked down the grassy pathway, the ghosts of priests and presbyters walked with us, like soul friends who have long since laid aside their controversies and found peace in paradise. Lady Madderty dressed in her long Sunday gown passed us on her way to worship, with her Bible Boy carrying the crimson bag with tassels.

But it was impossible to forget the little pocket Bible. It calls up a ghastly scene in that Via Dolorosa of Scots history—the Royal Mile of Edinburgh. Montrose, wasted with fever, his grey eyes burning, mounts the hangman's cart. He is tied to the seat, with cords across his breast and arms.

The street is lined with a rabble from the slums of Edinburgh, bitterly hostile to the prisoner. But, as if by a miracle, a sudden silence falls on the crowd the moment they see him. They had come to jeer, but are now awed by the dignity of that pale countenance on which there appeared a strange look of peace. Let *The Wigton Papers* tell the story: "In all the way there appeared in him such majesty, courage, modesty, and even somewhat more than natural, that these common women who had lost their husbands and children in his wars, and who were hired to stone him, were, upon the sight of him, so astonished and moved that their intended curses turned into tears and prayers."

Thus did the Great Marquis ride to his death, unaffrighted, and with such an aura of glory about his person, that we are still moved with pride upon our every remembrance of him.

VI

LEGENDS OF THE WEST HIGHLANDS

A CALM DAY IN THE SOUND OF MULL

It was a perfect summer day; but to a sailor it was a trial, despite all its beauty, for we were becalmed between Mull and Oban. Look any way you please, it is one of the fairest scenes in Scotland. Out in the west, Mull of the Mountains and the glamorous Sound which is the outgait to all the Hebridean Isles. To the north, up the Lynn of Lorne, by green Appin and Ben Nevis, which is the Hill of Heaven. To the east, Loch Etive and the triple crown of Cruachan, with the storied land of Benderloch which was Deirdre's home. To the south, the Garvelloch Isles, with Scarba and the Paps of Jura dominating the knobbly lands of Lorne. For those who have loved that circle of beauty, from youth to age, there is no need of reference maps; every ben and glen and island is a friend. Dim and blue with distance, they float on the rim of ocean and flood the soul with memories which nothing can ever efface. The old schooner had no auxiliary, and it required a sailor's skill to catch every pocket of wind. When the calms lasted a couple of days, it needed great patience to pace the white decks in the blazing sun, listening to the constant flapping of slack canvas, or the tap-tap-tap of the little reefing cords against the mainsail, as the ship rolled gently in the Atlantic swell. The heat was sometimes pitiless: the brasswork burned like fire; the sky was pale blue from horizon to horizon, with one or two little clouds floating away out in the west. The only way to keep cool was to plunge overboard for a swim; or to lie on deck in the shadow of the sails; or to look down over the gunwale into the blue-green depths which hold so many mysteries:

And we did speak only to break
The silence of the sea.

Day after day, day after day,
We stuck, nor breath nor motion;
As idle as a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean.

But there was one unfailing way of breaking the monotony of those deadly calms: the old seadog's way of spinning yarns. For it may be truly said that almost every hill and glen and castle in the Highlands has its own legends of love and war, and the tales of love are often drenched in tragedy.



CARVED STONES AT KILMORY (KNAP) CHAPEL

Here, lying off Lismore and Mull, we are within sight of the land of the MacLeans. But so far as legendry goes it might be the land of the Camerons, MacDougals, Macdonalds, or MacLeods: for, when it comes to a head struck off or the rough justice of the claymore, each clan in the old days was as cruel as the other. So the long hours of idleness were passed in telling stories of local history.

Yonder, for example, is the Lady Rock, which is black and bare at low tide, but is submerged under a welter of racing seas at high water. In the old days it was called Lersker, but it is now called the Lady Rock because of the following story:

MacLean of Duart had married Lady Elizabeth Campbell, daughter of the great Argyll. But he grew tired of her and determined to get rid of her. The tidal rock of Lersker is about a mile from Duart Castle, and you can see it from the windows. Here was the surest and the quickest way of getting rid of the lady. On the advice of his foster-brothers, Duart's men rowed the unwanted wife out to the rock in the Chief's galley, and left her there. With

terrified eyes she watched the tides creeping up the rock, but by the best of luck a boat hove in sight and rescued the poor lady from drowning. She was then restored to her relatives.

But a Highlander has a long memory, and at some time or other after that Sir John Campbell of Calder, the lady's brother, was in Edinburgh and caught sight of MacLean of Duart. He followed him to his lodging, surprised him when in bed, and thrust his sword, sheath and all, through his body.

This is the story of Eoghann a Chinn Beag, or Ewan of the Little Head. The scene of it is the desolate Glenmore road, not far from Loch Buie and Loch Spelve over yonder. Along this road from time immemorial pilgrims have travelled from Grass Point through the glen to Iona. In the freshwater loch of Scuabain there is an artificial island on which there was once, in the long ago, a lake-dwelling; after that a castle was built on the site; and in this castle, now a ruin, lived Ewan of the Little Head, the son of old Loch Buie. Ewan's wife was a daughter of MacDougal of Lorne, a very proud lady who was always grumbling at the poorness of her abode. Indeed, she kept goading on her husband to wrest the estate from his father. There was a stormy interview between father and son, and Ewan left the family castle determined to gather his followers for the fight.

But old Loch Buie appealed to his brother, the Chief of Duart, who promised to come to his help. Meantime Ewan was brooding in Glenmore over the coming battle, when he saw a little woman dressed in green washing a bundle of blood-stained shirts by the stream. He knew at once that she was a Fairy Woman, so he approached her and said, "Whose shirts are these?" "They are the shirts of those who will fall in the battle." "Is mine among them?" he asked. "It is." "Are you sure I shall fall in the battle?" "I cannot see as far as that," she went on, "but if your wife offers you bread and cheese with her own hand, without you asking for it, in the morning, you will win the fight and not lose it."

Next morning Ewan's wife was in a bad temper, and would not get up. She offered him neither bread nor cheese, and he durst not ask for it. So he rode away to the battle in a sorry mood. The two armies met; Ewan fought desperately; but he and his men were cursed by the memory of what the Fairy Woman had said. At last, Ewan gave way. His head was clean cut from his body. His black horse galloped away with its headless rider still on its back. Nor is that the end. The headless horseman still rides down Glenmore to Loch Buie before a death in the family. The galloping of the black horse is heard, but no hoof-marks are ever found on the soft earth.

Yonder is the gigantic sea-wall of cliffs which stretches in an almost unbroken line along the southern coast of Mull. Rising sheer, this natural

bulwark is topped by little inland hills, one of which is called Binnean Ghoraidh, or Gorrie's Peak.

This legend is told in another form by Robert Louis Stevenson in his "Heather Ale." He lays the scene in Galloway, in the days of the little Picts. But Highlands or Lowlands, Picts or Scots, here is the tale of John Gorrie as it is told in Mull.

One day when MacLean of Loch Buie was stalking deer, he instructed a ghillie called John Gorrie to guard a certain pass. But a herd of deer in stampede is more than any man can stay. When, therefore, the deer came surging along like a winter torrent, John Gorrie did his best to round them up, and failed. Loch Buie was bursting with rage, and ordered John Gorrie to be bound with ropes and thrashed. After this shameful punishment the ghillie was not only quivering with pain, but the pride of his soul was insulted. Like a wounded tiger he sprang upon the only son of his Chief, ran with him over the hilltop which to-day bears his name, and jumped down to a ledge on the sea cliff with the boy still in his arms. Shaking now with fear, Loch Buie stood on the top of the cliff and demanded that his boy should be restored to him. But John Gorrie made one condition—that his cruel Chief should submit to be punished, before his eyes, exactly as he himself had been punished. There was nothing for it but to agree, and the Chief submitted to the awful indignity. John Gorrie was not satisfied. Taking the boy in his arms, with a yell of defiance he sprang from the ledge, and both went hurtling down the cliff and were drowned in the boiling seas. To-day John Gorrie's Peak is pointed out to tourists bound for Iona.

But the Mull legends are not all blood and cruelty. There is, for instance, the story of the Good Glaistig. A Glaistig was a fairy woman—that is, a woman who has received the fairy nature. She liked to be about human habitations, took part in domestic strokes, was always busiest at nightfall, kept watch over the cattle, milked the cows, and attended to the dairy. The Highland Glaistig was very like the Lowland Brownie. She had also the power of changing her shape and form. The little green woman could be a blessing or a curse to the household, so it was fatal to offend her. Having been a woman, she was very human; but, being now a fairy, she had strange powers which no woman ever possessed.

There was a certain man called Lamont who lived at the farm of Ardnadrochet, which is near Loch Don. The Lamonts were a Cowal clan, but this man had wandered north, and was now settled in Mull. There happened to be a Glaistig at Ardnadrochet, and one day a band of cattle-lifters came over the sea to raid the farm. When the Glaistig saw them she changed herself into the form of a sheep-dog and drove all the cattle up Glen Lirein. The cattle thieves followed hard after the lowing herd, so the Glaistig

changed the cattle into grey stones, which are still shown to strangers. At the same time she changed herself into a grey stone. Then were they all safe from the raiders. But when the angry men came up to the place where she was, one of them struck the stone so hard that it split in two. Then was her heart broken. And that was the end of the Good Glaistig.

It would be easy to continue this story-telling if we followed the coast of Mull right round. Then we could add the tales of Murdoch the Short, Cailleach Bheur, Allan of the Straw, the Golden Galleon, and many another. For the islands, the glens, and the sea lochs of the west are steeped in legendry. These four tales are about one corner of Mull only, and a corner which we were actually looking at while our ship lay becalmed.

At last the heat was tempered by a slight breeze. The sails began to flap. The tackling became taut. There was a cheery bustle aboard. The glassy water was ruffled into a deeper blue, as the wind came out of the west and filled the sails. The schooner gradually gathered way and slipped through the water with a gluck of little waves about her. Then the wind freshened and she lay over, until the lee gunwale was all awash with the racing seas. The Lady Rock was soon left far behind, and the forefoot of the Flying Scud was pointing right up the Sound of Mull.



SUNSET BEHIND THE HILLS OF MULL.

VII

THE ROAD TO ARGYLL

LAND OF THE GAEL

When the larches make a green mist along the hillsides, and April's sunshine blazes a trail of beauty by every loch, then it is time to seek those lands which face the sunset and are steeped in the glamour of old romance.

The winter with its withering weather seemed never to have an ending, and when at last it came to bundle and go, there was still no hint of sunshine. Then the miracle happened. The light broke through the clouds long ere we reached Flanders Moss, and the plains of beauty which roll away from Stirling Castle to Loch Lomond lay steeped in clear April radiance. The incomparable outgate from Kippen filled the soul with wonder and set the eyes wandering over long swaths of colour—the greens of fertile fields, the delicate greys and browns of ploughed lands, and the blues of sheer distance which ended in a rampart of Highland hills all streaked with the laggard snows of winter. Blessed is the man who can travel mapless through this land, content to remember highways and byways, hills and rivers, each one an old friend that cannot be forgotten. Long ere the evening light faded we had crossed the Rest, passed down the shores of Loch Fyne, by Inverary, Furnace and Crarae, and were housed in a haven of rest beside the sea, where we received the hundred thousand welcomes of Highland hearts and were in the best of company. For four days the sunshine blazed on Real Argyll, and every night the full moon made a silver pathway on the tranquil sea.

Every district we passed through conjured up the history of a different clan. The old Brig of Stirling was for long the key to the north, and here met fiery Celt, hardy Lowlander and invading Englishers in many a clash of arms.

But, when we came to Drymen and looked upon the Duke's castle, now transformed into a hostelry, we knew we were in the Graham country, and thought with pride of that gallant soldier, the Marquis of Montrose.

We were still thinking of Montrose when we swept through Balloch, and up Loch Lomond to the entrance of Glenfruin. Here is a tale of Colquhouns and MacGregors which will never fade from the page of history. To-day, Rosdhu is a paradise of peace, with ancient avenues of trees, and no hint of

keenings or shame. But the battle of Glenfruin, like the massacre of Glencoe, has left a wound in Highland hearts which is ill to heal.

The red MacGregors were constantly raiding their enemies. Tired of these raids, Sir Alexander Colquhoun obtained from James VI a licence to arm his clan. On the 7th day of February 1603 the two clans met in Glenfruin, where about 400 MacGregors attacked the Colquhouns. It was a fearsome fight, and the Colquhouns were defeated. The Colquhouns retreated to Rossthdu. But the MacGregors pursued them and killed 140 of them. A tradition tells us that 40 students and some burghers from Dumbarton came out to witness the fight. MacGregor had set a clansman, Dougald Ciar Mhor, to stand sentry over the students and townsfolk. But, when the Colquhouns were defeated, Dougald joined in the pursuit. On being asked by MacGregor what he had done with the students, he held up his dirk and said, "Ask that!" The MacGregors then harried the whole estate, drove off 600 cattle, 800 sheep, 280 horses, and destroyed the "haill plenishing, guidis and gear of the four score pound land of Luss," Colquhoun looking on all the time from his castle walls.

Then came the sledge hammer of retribution. Sixty Colquhoun widows in mourning appeared before the king at Stirling, carrying their husbands' bloody shirts on poles. The king never forgave the outrage. Letters of fire and sword were issued against the MacGregors, and their name was proscribed. To shelter one of the clan was a crime punishable by death, and the MacGregors were hunted with dogs over the hills.

Then came the long and lovely road up Loch Lomondside; winding in and out among great trees; slender birches and tasselled larches making whiffs of purple and green by the shores. The isles of Loch Lomond have their differing glories. Inchmurrin, no longer a sanctuary of silence with its single house, as in my youth. Inchcailleach which will soon be one mass of blue with wild hyacinths. Inchtavannach and Inchmoan with their lovely straits. Tiny Inchgalbraith with its ruined keep. Inchlonaig of the black yew trees, where the clansmen cut their bows in olden times. From Luss by Inverbeg, right up to Ardlui, this great inland sea is the fairest sheet of fresh water in Scotland. Only those who have lived on its waters, or by its shores, explored every island and looked down on it from the neighbouring heights, can fully appreciate the Queen of Scottish Lochs. Were it not at the back door of Glasgow and the playground of crowds, but further north, its glories would be appreciated far more by the average Scot. But who will grudge such beauty at the back door of a great city, or wonder at the crowds that throng its shores!

Our way now took us across from Tarbet on Loch Lomond to Arrochar on Loch Long, and when you cross the Bridge of Loin you are knocking at

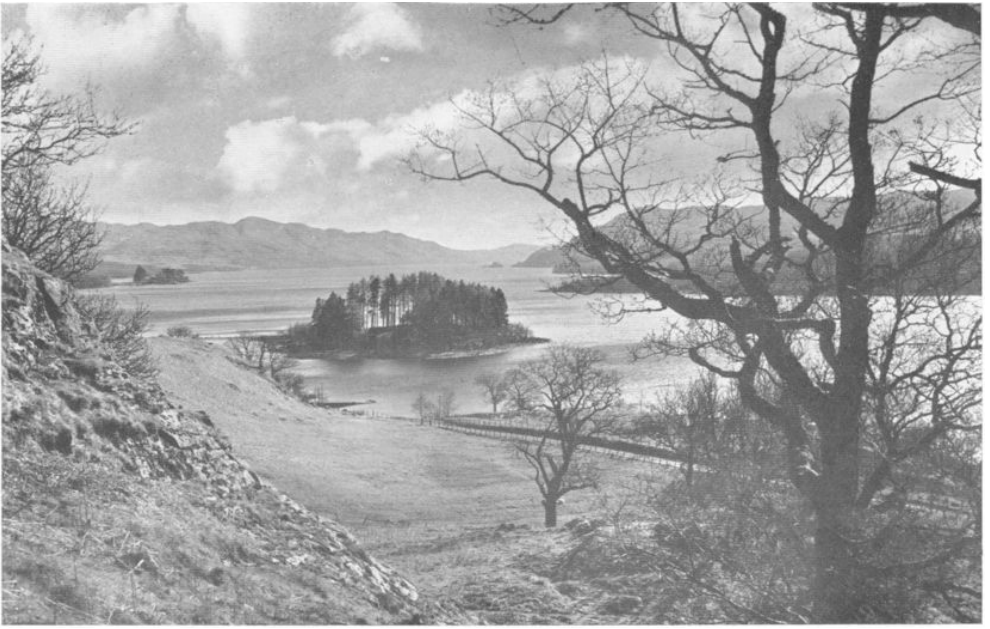
the gateway of Argyll. But you are also in the land of the wild Macfarlanes whose headquarters for centuries was round about the head of Loch Lomond and Loch Long. Their gathering-place was at Loch Sloy, a lonely loch which lies a few miles north of Loch Long, under the shadow of Ben Vorlich. The story has it that the family were here before the battle of Largs (1263) when King Hakon sent Olaf of Man with sixty ships to Loch Long. The Norsemen dragged their little ships across the narrow isthmus in the Macfarlane country, for every Tarbert or *tairbeart* means in the Gaelic a narrow isthmus over which it is possible to drag a boat from one water to another. Natives of this district still point out the spot, near the midway milestone, where the Macfarlane chief hid his family until the fierce Vikings had passed by. In later centuries the Macfarlanes became notorious raiders. They generally set out on their cattle-lifting raids on a clear moonlight night, so the full moon was called Macfarlane's Lantern. Many a Campbell or man of another clan sprang for his claymore and his targe when he heard the cry, "Loch Sloy!"

The main stronghold of the clan was at the Castle of Arrochar, but the chiefs owned other castles on Inveruglas Island and on Eilean Vow in Loch Lomond.

When you take the Glen Croe road, below the Cobbler, over Rest and be Thankful, you are already through the gate and in the first corridor of Argyll. What a land of beauty and history is this fair shire! It has figured largely in the story of our land for many centuries; for the oldest kingdom in Scotland, little Dalriada, was founded about 500 by Scots who came over from Ireland and set up a king's court on the tiny hill of Dunadd. What beauty, too, is to be found in Argyll. So indented is the shire that it has a coastline of 2200 miles, and no part of it is further from the sea or from some great inland water than twelve miles. For sea lochs, what could be finer than Loch Moidart, Loch Sunart, Loch Linnhe, Loch Etive, Loch Fyne, Loch Long, and all the little lochs of Lorne. For great mountains there are Bidean nan Bean and Cruachan, which are the highest, and a vast wilderness of beetling heights about Glencoe and in the Black Mount forest, where the red deer find abundant sanctuary. There are green glens too and fertile straths like Appin. Great islands like Mull, Jura and Islay, besides the holy shrines of Iona and Elach-a-nave, and many other blessed little isles where lived the saints who brought the news of Christ to Scotland. For artistry in stone you have only to go to Iona or Oronsay, Keills or Kilmory Knap, and there you will see scores of precious slab stones and crosses, carved as none can carve them now. All these bear witness to the scholarly monks who brought art as well as religion from Ireland; for the highest form of Celtic Ornamentation was and still is "The Book of Kells." From Campbeltown in the south to Moidart in the north, and from Rannoch in the east to Ardnamurchan in the

west, is there any shire in Scotland which combines so many bounds of beauty or holy relics of history as this same Argyll?

But the centre of the shire is Inverary, or Half Town, as it was called by the greatest of our Highland novelists, Neil Munro. Here was one who wrote from the inner recesses of his own Gaelic soul, and was no mere reporter of Highland hearsays. If Half Town was the centre of Argyll, the duke in the old days was the uncrowned king of the Highlands. Inverary is still half Fairy Burgh and half Real Town, with the bird-haunted woods thrown round her, and the waves of Loch Fyne lapping about her doorsteps. In the evening the woods are full of twilight wonders, and when the full moon rides high above Dunquoich the glades of Glen Shire are peopled with spirits of wandering men who have come back to visit the shielings and fight their battles over again. The gleaming white arches of the town are still there, but no longer do the half-pay officers take their meridian at the Black Boar, nor do the old families of the minor septs of Clan Campbell dwell in the town houses. The Duke has no longer the power of pit and gallows, or the power to pack a jury with Campbells. MacIan's portrait is a true picture of more than one MacCailein Mhor—a man sitting in the tartan, his legs crossed, absorbed in a book, neglectful of the sword at his side, scholarly, introspective, expert in all the diplomacies, and plastic to the influences which play about him like the wind. "Had our lordship inby," says John Splendid, "been sent a fostering in the old style, brought up to the chase and the sword, and manly deportment, he would not have had that wan cheek this day, and that swithering about what he would do next." There—you have a great man's life written in a sentence by one who never wasted a single word.



LOCH AWE—INNIS-SHEARRAICH

So, Inverary to-day is like an old *bodach* dovering in the sunshine by the shores of Loch Fyne, with a long pedigree behind him and all the beauties of the Highland world scattered about his feet.

Far and near we went, on the old adventure after cists and forts and cairns and sculptured stones, ever etting to recreate the life of an old world that is long since dead and buried. At Keills and Kilmory we watched the altar fires of April smoking on the Paps of Jura across the silvered sea, for the ghillies were busy at the moorburn on the bens and islands and in many a lonely glen. We lingered at Kilmichael-Glassary, Kilmartin, Carnassary Castle, and passed on to Oban round the magic lochs of Lorne. At the serpent mound on Loch Nell we watched a flight of white swans, those graces with the snowy breasts that tow the galleys of the fairies up and down the lochs. Ben More and Stobinian never seemed so ethereal, for their mighty brows all streaked with snow gleamed like castles let down from heaven in the morning sun, their bases still lost in the lower shadows.

We left Inverary by that grand road which leads over the hills to Cladich on Loch Awe. Here we were in the land of the MacArthurs and MacNaughtons. The MacNaughtons' castle of Dundarave, or Doom, still stands on the shores of Loch Fyneside, with this motto above the door—"1596—MAN . BEHALD . THE END : BE . NOCHT . WISER . NOR . THE HIEST : HOPE . IN . GOD."

Who can ever forget the view that bursts on the traveller when he looks down on the head waters of Loch Awe, from the Pass of Brander to Kilchurn Castle, with all the islands sleeping in the sun—Innischonain, Fraoch Eilean, and Inishail that is holy. Two fairy legends which have come down in *ceilidh* through the mists of a thousand years immediately leap to mind.

The first tells us that once the floor of this great loch was a fertile valley, with shielings and cattle and sheep and fine harvest fields where the reapers sang their happy songs. On the side of Cruachan there was a wonderful spring of water, which according to fairy command was always kept covered. But the good folks grew careless of the fairy law, and one day a girl who went to the well forgot to put on the cover. All through the night the water overflowed, and in the morning there was no fertile valley, but one vast loch studded with islands.

The second tale is of one of those islands—Fraoch Eilean. People now call it the Heather Isle, for that is what it means. But Ossian called it after Fraoch the Hero. There grew on this island an apple tree whose fruit gave the eater the secret of perpetual youth. But the tree was guarded by a fierce dragon. Fraoch the Hero fell in love with a fair maid called Gealchean, and all went well until the girl's own mother Mai also fell in love with Fraoch. Mai was old and had lost her beauty, so she yearned all the more for the apple of youth. She wheedled Fraoch to go over to the isle of the tree to get it. He went, but had a terrible encounter with the dragon before he slew it. Then he came back with the apple for Mai. But his wounds had festered, and when Mai stretched out her hand for the apple, Fraoch fell dead at her feet.

Such were the words of the bards in the days of song;
When the king heard the music of harps;
The tales of other times.
The sons of song are gone to rest.

THROUGH GALLOWAY

VIII

GLIMPSES OF GALLOWAY

A LAND OF COLOUR

My heart always goes out to Galloway. But for a toss of circumstances my home might have been there. So, when I set out one October day with a friend whose roots are deeply struck in the Stewartry, it was like keeping tryst with an old flame whose face I had not seen for half a lifetime.

I can never understand why this land of lordly rivers, green pastures and wild hills has been called Grey Galloway. To one who has travelled from the Solway to the Pentland Firth, and from the East Neuk to the Hebrid Isles, there is no part of Scotland which has more colour in it from May to October. It is a world of dazzling greens and blues when the brairds of May turn the fields into emerald champaigns, and the liquid skies repeat themselves in every loch and tarn, making them shine like sapphire mirrors. There is a purple Galloway when the hills and moors are all ablaze with heather: a golden Galloway when the broom is out on the sunny braes of June; and a red Galloway when the October woods are splashed with the blood of the dying year. To look down the avenue of Kenmure Castle on a late autumn day is like gazing down the aisles of a vaulted cathedral whose arches and pillars are built of amber, and every one of whose paving stones is a golden leaf.

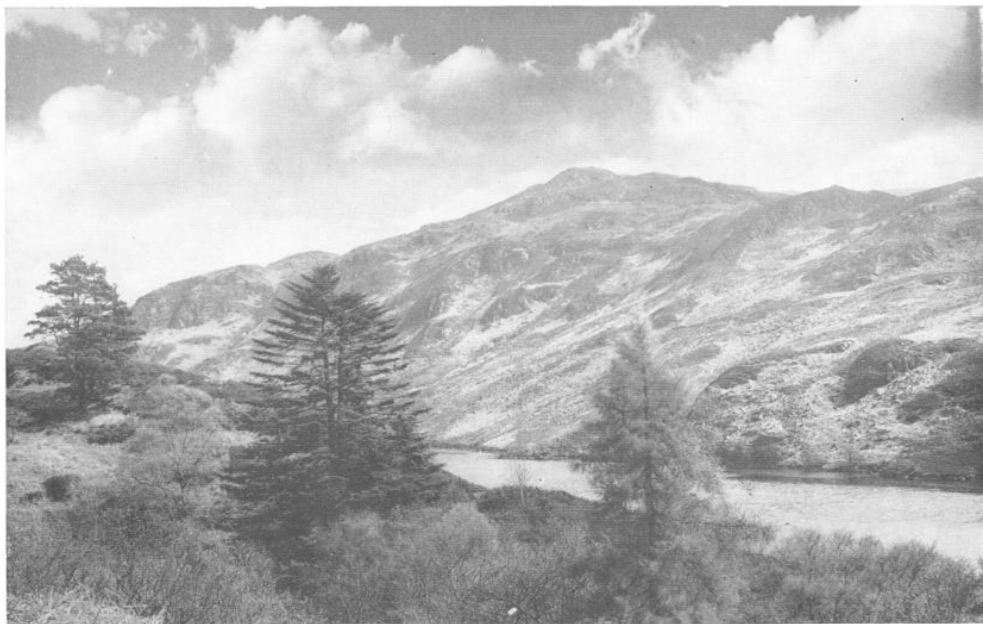
As for the weather—where in broad Scotland will you find a single county which is not draped in mist and hung with dove-grey clouds for eight months of the year?

We entered Galloway, as most people do, by the gateway of Devorgilla's Bridge and Sweetheart Abbey, and we left it at the highest village of Carsphairn. But, what a lot happened to us between the one place and the other!

Every time you cross that ancient bridge the sough of an old thirteenth-century love tale is in your soul. And when I first saw the blue mass of Criffell rising beyond the quaint village of New Abbey, I did not wonder that Devorgilla chose this vale of peace wherein to build an Abbey to the memory of her beloved husband, John Baliol. Sweetheart Abbey is a lover's shrine surrounded by a great sanctuary wall which is nearly four feet thick. We sat in the sun against the wall, and talked of the founding of this

religious house in 1275: of the Cistercian monks wandering in their long robes beside the Pow Burn; of the queenly lover who always carried about with her a silver casket containing her lover's heart: and of her burial in the choir with the casket laid on her own heart. Love outlasts all things. So this story of Devorgilla and her Dulce Cor will live in the minds of men long after these red and pink stones have crumbled to dust.

That afternoon was full of sunny experiences, warm welcomes and the best of hospitality. The woods of Shambellie and the glorious view from the high-set windows over the trees to the Abbey ruins and the sea beyond. The great red-brick wall in the garden at Kirkconnell Tower, and a dear old lady in a flapping sun-bonnet working among the flowers in the windless warmth of the October day. I can still hear her saying in answer to my question about the beautiful red wall: "One of my ancestors set up a kiln in the policy when he came back after the '45, and employed his men in making bricks to build that wall." This was that James Maxwell who served in Prince Charles's Life Guards, fled to France after Culloden, wrote a *Narrative* of the campaign, and returned to Kirkconnell in 1750.



MULDONACH, LOCH TROOL

There is a fine viewpoint from a seat on the side road which leads from Shambellie to Kirkconnell. Right below lies Sweetheart Abbey, glowing red in the sun, with the blue reek rising from the village which nestles in the

lovely tree-clad valley, and behind all the towering sides of Criffell, with a flash of the silver waters of Loch Kinder at the foot of the heathery slopes.

The road by Kirkbean to Dalbeattie and Castle-Douglas skirts a heartsome bit of flat land, which is washed by the Solway tides, and the two places here which remain in mind are Arbigland and Satterness, or Southernness. John Paul, afterwards renamed Paul Jones, that great adventurer of the sea, was born at Arbigland. Despite the fact that he is always called the father of the American Navy, he remained a good Scot to the end, for he saw to it that a stone was raised above his father's grave in the churchyard of Kirkbean. Across the flats stands the queer white tower of Satterness Lighthouse, the oldest lighthouse in Galloway. And beyond the Solway seas rise the blue hills of Cumberland.

All along these Solway shores, from Satterness to Wigtown Bay, I could not help thinking of moonlit seas, dark nights, revenue cutters, smugglers' sloops, the sound of keels grating down the shingle, dowsed lights, and the rattle of cutlasses when it came to a fight on the shore. The very place-names kept me awake at Kirkcudbright and Gatehouse-of-Fleet. Heston Isle and Daft Ann's Steps; Lot's Wife and Adam's Chair; Balcary, Rascarel, the caves of Barlocco and Orroland; Spouty Dennans, Lover's Bower, Clinking Cove, Dirk Hatteraick's Cave, and Carsluith. It was not by chance that the Wizard of the North laid the scene of "Guy Mannering" along these mischancy shores. Add to all these hair-raising names the memory of three inveterate Galloway smugglers—Quirk, Clark, and Grain—the master-mind, of course, being Quirk, else why such a cut-throat name? I can see this long-limbed, lanthorn-jawed man, with the fell face and cold blue eyes that could outstare the devil, walking the sands impatiently in the small hours as he awaits a cargo that is overdue. Ever since hearing the name of Quirk I have had a great desire to explore the cellars of Balcary House, which was built in smuggling times. Was Quirk the designer?

Galloway has always been a land of ships, ever since St Ninian landed in his skin and wattle boat at Whithorn and built his little White House of God. Even to-day you can see the masts of ships rising out of the green fields in this pleasant land. As we came up to the tidal river of the Urr, from Auchencairn by Bengairn and the Screel, I suddenly saw the tall masts of a schooner rising out of the pasture lands against a distant heather hill, as if some ridiculous adventurer had anchored his phantom ship in the middle of the lush meadows. Then, a turn of the road, and we were in the clachan of Palnackie, where the spirit of high gest took possession of our souls.

There is a tiny harbour on this tidal river, and at the quays a schooner, "The Rambler," of Lancaster, sat on the mud, with a ketch, "The Harvest," of Barrow, alongside. The sludge at low tide was all ribbed like a crocodile's

back, and streamlets of fresh water poured through the bridge at the top of the quay. A heap of granite setts lay on the further side of the harbour, and one or two sailormen loafed about the decks.

The harbourmaster was sweeping up the muck of some cargoes of artificial manure. A second official, wishing to impress us with the back-breaking activities of Palnackie in the busy season, assured us that he had “whiles seen baith winches workin’ at ae time.”

There is no kirk in Palnackie.

“If ye maun gang tae the kirk, ye bude tae gang tae Buittle.”

We then went into the post-office and asked for postcards. I sent off a telegram which read thus: “Palnackie for me—at the end of enterprise—quite happy—Himsel’.”

That roused the good wife’s curiosity, and I see her yet, with a picturesque blue clout round her head such as Raeburn put on the heads of some of the siccar Scots mistresses he painted. With a withering look, she straightway asked me what I was.

“Master o’ a wee sloop, ‘The Enterprise,’ oot o’ Troon, where the wife bides.”

“What size is she?”

“The wife or the sloop?”

“Hoots, man! The sloop.”

“Oh! fifty tons.”

“Is that a’? Did ye ever mak’ skilly in the galley?”

“Ay, often. And I’ll be in at Palnackie for granite setts aboot the middle o’ November. The wife’ll be aboard. Come and see her.”

But she was an unbeliever, yon one!

Apart from the men at the quay, the post-mistress, and another woman who was looking out of a door, we saw no other inhabitant. But at the side of the Commercial Inn there is a notice with three words on it: “Fill up here!”

Oh, Palnackie! Often when the busy world wearies me I dream of the harbour, the post-mistress, and the tall masts of the schooner rising out of the fields on that peaceful October evening, and my heart is at rest.

Dundrennan Abbey stands in a green valley and is buried among tall trees. It was founded by David I in 1142—that “sair sanct for the croon.” To-day there is nothing left but ruined transepts, the remains of a chapter-house, with a slype and cloisters. A few ancient monuments lie about—a priest, a knight, a cellarer. Dundrennan may not have the beauty of situation which belongs to Sweetheart Abbey, but at least we never think of it without remembering another Dulce Cor, Mary Queen of Scots, who was welcomed here by Abbot Edward Maxwell after her flight from Langside.

He would be a strange Scot who, having come this length, did not wish to travel two or three miles further down a narrow road to the sea. For on the shore, near Abbeyburnfoot, is Port Mary, where the Queen embarked in an open fishing-boat for Cumberland.

We sat on the rather desolate beach and watched the smoke of Maryport rising on the still October day, for it was somewhere on yon further shore that the landing on English soil took place. Away to our right Abbey Head rose above a sea that sparkled like molten silver. Few folk come here now. And yet, for a sentimental Scot, how poignant are the memories that cling to this beautiful woman who was the victim of circumstances and her own heart! Poor Mary Stuart! Three husbands and two murders by the time she was twenty-six; and, what was worse than all, years of imprisonment and the block at Fotheringay to end her tragic existence.

I shall carry for ever in mind three pictures of old-fashioned towns on the Dee, the Fleet, and the Cree.

Kirkcudbright. Floodtide on the River Dee. A ship at the quayside, and the dusk of an Indian summer day falling over the waters. Clean, picturesque streets gleaming in the half-lights of the gloaming. An ancient Tolbooth, with an outside stair and a quaint, square clock tower, rising alongside of a white gable-end. A church spire mirrored in the water. Solid little town mansions of the old Galloway lairds here and there in the streets, with a dignity about them which no new house will ever assume. A green mote hill and a roofless castle rising above the dream burgh, with a sough of long ago in the lanes and vennels which the filmy mists of autumn have softened into beauty. Then a great yellow moon rising above the silent town, and casting a path of gold across the Dee; while in a God's acre on the hill upby the martyrs are sleeping in their graves.

Of Gatehouse-of-Fleet, I have two memories of that sequestered little township whose unadorned streets are set in the greenery of great trees and surrounded by wooded hills. The waters of Fleet lap its very doorstep.

The first is a walk before breakfast through the Cally grounds, when the morning sunshine was dispersing the mist from the hills. The Rutherford Monument on a knobbly green hill across the valley; old Cardoness Castle peeping above the trees; smoke rising in the still air from the chimneys of the plain-faced houses, where many a good wife was using the porridge spurtle and masking tea.

The other memory is of Samuel Rutherford and the old Kirk of Anwoth. For the very thought of Rutherford still hangs over the valley of the Fleet like a golden mist of sunset. Anwoth is but an easy stroll, and when you get there may there be none present but those who are sib, lest the thrum of peace be broken. Bush o' Bield, Rutherford's Walk, Archbishop Ussher, and

the Eleventh Commandment; the woods where the birds were always singing; the heart-break of the little fair man who showed the people of Scotland the loveliness of Christ as he walked again and again to the manse grave where he laid his girl-wife and his two children to rest; the fiery eloquence of this letter-writing gospeller, and the almost too luscious sweetness of his dream about Emmanuel's Land—all that will come surging up in your mind as you stand by the grave of John Bell of Whiteside, who was shot, with four others, on Kirkconnell Moor by Grierson of Lag. Even when we climbed the steps of Ardwall and passed through one of the most beautiful old doorways in Scotland the sound of Rutherford's hymn was ringing in our ears.

And Newton-Stewart. There is one aspect of this goodly town which is unforgettable. The River Cree is the boundary between the Stewartry and the shire. As you stand in the middle of the bridge and gaze upstream, if the water be still, you will see a long row of houses rising from the water's edge, like Venetian dwellings on a canal. Stained and mellowed with age, these riverside dwellings are reflected in the water, with the greenery of the trees in spring or the reds and yellows of autumn. The whole town is dominated by the mighty mass of Cairnsmore of Fleet, and is the natural gateway to the wild region that lies beyond Loch Trool. But, despite its many delights, Newton-Stewart has nothing half so beautiful to show as this Mirror of Cree.

This is not the place to enlarge on Galloway as a martyr land of the Covenant, or as an unspoiled paradise for the gangrel Scot.

From the moment you cross Devorgilla's Bridge at Dumfries you are on enchanted land. You may then take the level roads round the Solway and slowly reach St Ninian's Shrine at the lonely Isle of Whithorn, or you may take the hill roads by Moniaive and Dalry to Carsphairn, or across the moors by Bridge of Dee to the Cree and Glen Trool. But for the real lover of the wilds there is a whole world of lochs and hills lying between Loch Doon and Loch Trool, which may in truth be called the Southern Highlands of Scotland. Here, for the young and strong, and for those who would seek the blessing of the separate or the treasures of the heights, nature will be found in all its primal glories, and the solitudes ring with silence.

But to me, Galloway will always mean the graves of the martyrs and the home of strong men who were unaffrighted in the face of death. Be it Kells or Kirkconnell, Glen Trool or Dalry, Anwoth or Wigtown, you cannot travel up and down Galloway without often hearing the crack of muskets on the moors or the sound of psalms in the deer slunks. The very colour of the heather reminds you of blood. And a grey, moss-covered stone, in kirkyard

or on hill, calls to mind scenes which are poignant with grief, and still compel us to instruct our memories to be proud.

IX

LOCH TROOL

HILLS AND HILLMEN

North and South are two different worlds. When I go north I am one man, but when I go south I am another. And the Celt will never confound himself with the Borderer. So, Appin and Benderloch were far behind us, with all the magic of the Land of Lorne. Having said good-bye to the beloved North, we were racing southwards. A poet will to the end deny that a motor car is the ideal means of travel; but when all is said against it that can be said, it is the very best way for an ordinary person getting out of the world and into the wilderness that the mind of man has ever conceived. The good weather followed us all the way, and when the autumn day was dying, we turned up one of the innumerable roads that lead into the heart of the Galloway moors.

A bridge over the river, a tiny post-office, a school, and a clump of trees with a kirk hidden in the middle of them, and beyond that a white gate through which you pass up a little avenue to a grey house standing on the rising ground and looking out upon a world of moors and hills. Turn any way you please, and your eye will be trained on a far horizon. Eastwards—nothing but a great bastion of blue hills, where the loveliest loch in Galloway nestles in a glen that leads to a wild upland on which there are other lochs whose names are now a proverb for romance. Northwards—a road that runs through the sunlit heather till it dips over the horizon. Westwards—miles of uplands across the river, with one of those delightful side roads that meanders across the moors and finally drops down to a quaint little town on a great bay of sand, with a ruined abbey up the glen. And southwards from the front door, more little hills and dales and moors, with a sparkle of the river and the glimpse of a martyr's homestead on the sunny brae-face. What a thing it is to live in a house where, both inside and outside, you are compelled to take wide views!



KIRKCUDBRIGHT

There is not a village in the whole parish. We were nine miles from the nearest shop. Yet we lived in the lap of luxury, where you always get a little porridge added to your cream! When I arrived at this quiet retreat I felt like Odysseus after the shipwreck:

He went up to the wood and found it nigh the water, in a place
of wide prospect . . . and the steadfast goodly Odysseus beheld it
and rejoiced.

You might live here for a month and vary your walk every day. Up the Cree by Dalnaw and Barjarg, or, if you are a real walker, further on by Black Clachrie to the source of Cree in Loch Moan. Down the river to Clachaneasy—that is, the Clachan of Jesus—and over the bridge to Brighton, and up the Minnoch by the so-called Roman bridge to the water of Trool. Over the moors to the head waters of Bladnoch, where, at Derry beyond Polbae, you will find a Covenanters' Monument. In the winds of Galloway there is still a sough of sorrow for those who love the Blue Banner.

But the best of all roads is the one that crosses the Minnoch Water and leads up to Loch Trool. It branches to the right off the Straiton road, just before you come to Glencaird, and when you reach the bridge over the Water of Minnoch at the Black Linn, you will be a strange man if you do not

sit down on the rocks above the deep pools and dream. My dream at the Black Linn is always of a feat of good archery. And here is the tale.

Far away to the east over the hills on the Water of Dee there is a place called Craigencaillie. King Robert the Bruce had just escaped capture at the hands of the English near Loch Enoch, and in Craigencaillie he found a sanctuary. A widow who lived there received him hospitably. But, seeing his princely ornaments, she asked him if he was “her Leidge Lord.” He did not deny it, and simply said that he had come to pay her a visit. He then asked if she had any sons who would be likely to serve him. She replied that she had been married three times, and had a son by each husband. Then she set before him some meal and goat’s milk. Just then the three sons came in. The king received their promise of loyalty, and asked them if they could use their weapons. For an answer the three sons brought out their bows and arrows, and all went out to try their skill before the king.

The eldest son was called McKie. Having nocked an arrow on his string, he drew to the ear, took instant aim, and shot at two ravens perched on a rock. The arrow went through the head of each bird, and held both transfixed in death.

“I would not wish that he aimed at me,” said the king.

Then Murdoch the second son let fly at a single raven on the wing, and pierced it through the body.

The third son was called Mclurg. He also shot, but had not such good fortune.

These three men followed the Bruce into the wilds, and when the widow was asked by the king what she would like for a reward, she said, “Give me the wee bit hassock of land atween Palnure and Penkiln.” To the gift of this “bit hassock” is traced the origin of the three well-known Galloway families of McKie of Lurg, Murdoch of Cumloden, and Mclurg of Kerrouchtrie. The descendant of the eldest son of the widow is McKie of Glencaird, and his arms to-day are two ravens proper, upon a field of argent, with an arrow through the two heads. You can see the same device carved on the old Mclurg stone in the kirkyard of Minnigaff—one raven transfixed with an arrow at the top, and two ravens similarly pierced below—the one device for Mclurg, and the other for McKie. It is an ancient tale, and provides “a lang pedigree” for the laird who lives on the other side of yon wood.

You are continually meeting sheep and shepherds on the Galloway hills and roads—great lanky men, all bone and muscle, with clear eyes that are focused for far horizons, and faces that are tanned like leather, with the sun and rain and wind.

Near the Black Linn I met one of them driving sheep. In passing the time of day with him I asked where the sheep were going.

“Oh, I’m juist wearin’ them doon aff the hill.”

Good, couthie Scots, with a tang in it like the smell of peat-reek.

Another shepherd far up the hills surpassed him in eloquence, for when asked what they did when they needed medical skill so far from any habitation, he exclaimed: “Hoots, man, we hae sulphur and treacle for the sheep, and whisky for the fowk, and them that are gaun tae dee maun juist dee.”

His neighbour in the next hirsle spoke of death in a different way. When a farmer’s wife asked him if he would take a cup of tea or a dram, after a dusty day with the sheep on the road, he replied: “Deed, mistress, I kent a man whae took baith, and he’s no’ deid yet.”

After passing the high-set farm of Stroan, if you wish to make the circle of Loch Trool, you must take the first side road to the right and cross the Water of Trool at Caldons Wood. A little track will then lead you to the right again through the wood and over a narrow concrete path which has been laid across some marshy ground. This will bring you to a great, square, granite-walled enclosure, inside of which you will find the Martyrs’ Graves. Like Napoleon’s Tomb in Paris, you are compelled to look down with bowed head from the top of the wall to see the inscribed stones. What a scene rises before the mind’s eye as you read!

A quiet Sabbath morning in January of the year 1685. Captain Orchar or Urquhart with a handful of troopers is searching the district for Covenanters. This overbold officer is exclaiming at the badness of the going in the boggy ground: “May the devil make my ribs a broiling iron to my soul if I am not avenged on the Whigs this day.”

Then the sound of a voice somewhere near, and the troopers surprise a little company of hillmen at prayer. A sharp command. A musket shot. A fight. And six of the praying men lie dead, where a moment before they were worshipping God. Ten thousand years of history will never wipe out or justify the cruelty of any Government shooting down men at prayer, no matter what their form of worship may have been. So Old Mortality’s stone makes bitter reading to-day:



OLD PACK HORSE BRIDGE OVER THE BLADNOCH

Here lyes James and Robert Duns, Thomas and John Stevensons, James M'Clive, Andrew M'Call, who were surprised at prayer, in this house, by Colnell Douglas, Lieutenant Livingstone, and Cornet James Douglas, and by them most impiously and cruelly murdered for their adherence to Scotlands Reformation Covenants National and Solemn League, 1685.

One of the Covenanters escaped, and was followed by two dragoons. Running for the loch, he was hidden from his pursuers for a time behind a hillock of heather. Pulling some heather hastily, he walked into the loch up to the lips and held the heather above his head, so that when the soldiers came to the place they saw nothing but a clump of heather floating in the calm water. Thus the man was saved.

A steep little path leads along the eastern hillside by the Pulharrow Burn and below mighty Mulldonach right down to the green flats at the head of the loch. Here is the site of the battle which was fought between the Scots and English in the year 1307.

Loch Trool is surely the most beautiful loch in Galloway. Others may be wilder and more desolate, but here, the high steep hillsides with precipitous rocks, the pine trees on the western shores, the little tree-clad Maiden's Isle, the Earl's Lodge well bielled among the trees that clothe the lower slopes of

Eschoncan Fell—all combine to make both the glen and the loch of Trool one of the finest bits of scenery in Scotland.

Having refreshed ourselves by a long rest at the beautiful Buchan Falls, we began the return journey past the lodge and down the western side of Loch Trool. The day was wearing by. But in our company there was a native-born enthusiast with a fine pair of Galloway legs on him. So, having crossed Trool Water again below Stroan, we wandered down the Minnoch by Dalane to the Holm, crossed the river by a bridge, plunged through some wet and weary bogs, and finally climbed the hill that overlooks the valley of the Cree. On the top of this hill there are some ruins of the old inn and tracks of the old road. When the new road in the valley was made the inn descended from the hilltop to the hollow, and so it still retains the name of House of Hill Hotel—one of the tiniest inns in Scotland.

X

TWO TRAGIC TALES

BLADNOCH AND BALDOON

I know no part of Scotland that is more thickly peopled with the ghosts of history than Galloway.

It is one of the most ancient provinces of the kingdom. The character of the inhabitants has been welded into strength on the anvil of time by hard blows of circumstance. Kings have skulked in its mountain fastnesses. They have passed through its glens and along its shores with their queens to worship at the oldest of all the holy shrines in Scotland. Many a quiet herding could tell of high gestic of chivalry, or of cruel things done long ago. There is scarce a parish but has its martyrs' monument commemorating men and women who were slain for conscience' sake. Raids and reivers; kirk men and king's men; pirates and smugglers; lovers and patriots; hardy peasants who have made the fertile plains and well-watered valleys smile like gardens; silent hillmen who have lived from one generation to another among their sheep in the same hirsell; statesmen who have fished in the drumly waters of politics; the whole land is full of ghosts that still walk, so that you cannot take a day's journey anywhere without being haunted by some sad old tale of heroic memory.

As you pass along the road from Newton-Stewart to Wigtown, you get great views across the fertile Moss of Cree and the tidal waters of Wigtown Bay to that wonderful road on the further shore that leads to Gatehouse-of-Fleet. You must always climb a little whichever way you come to Wigtown, for the town stands on a slight eminence above the Bay. It is a sleepy royal burgh with a mellow dignity that is all its own. A long, wide square with old trees; tennis-courts and a bowling-green in the middle now, where once the cattle driven into the town for safety were penned at night; an ancient cross forwent a newer one; and a huddle of genteel old houses with an antique air about every one of them.

A sense of the past hangs about the whole place. Not that Wigtownians have ceased to be either gay or busy. Is not this the seat of the County Government, with a Law Court and a Sheriffdom? But, that Wigtown reminds you of a fine old country gentleman whose clothes, though a trifle out of date, are yet worn with such distinction that they put to shame the

later fashions of opulent strangers. I like Wigtown as I like fine old country gentlemen. I have never seen a vulgar crowd in its streets. When I poke about the square, or wander down the quiet side alleys, I catch glimpses of beds of flowers blazing with colour in well-kept gardens, and I stand amazed to read the legend of “The Harbour Road,” where now no harbour is. And all the while I am asking myself why it is that there is something disturbing, something haunting, something sad about this auld-farrant town, which stands above the tides of the great Bay. Then—I realise it all. For, the key to Wigtown is an old pitiful story which will live on and on so long as men write Scots history.

With that I take the side road which leads down to the harbour which is no longer there! The sea, like the clash of history, has receded from Wigtown long ago. Entering the old kirkyard on the left, I follow a path that has been trodden in the grass by many feet, and stand before the Martyr Graves of the Two Margarets, who were tied to stakes by the waters of Bladnoch, and drowned for their adherence to Christ’s Cause and Covenant.

The Rev. Alexander Stewart, of Glasserton, in his conclusive reply to Mark Napier—“History Vindicated in the Case of the Wigtown Martyrs” (1869)—crowds fact upon fact to prove the truth of the Solway Martyrdom.

Margaret Lachlison, aged sixty, a widow from Drumjargan, in Kirkcinner, and Margaret Wilson, of Glenvernoch, in Penninghame, a girl of eighteen, were condemned to be drowned for attending conventicles and adhering to the Declaration of James Renwick.

It was the 11th day of May 1685, and the townsfolk were all afoot. Grierson of Lag and Major Winram with a guard of soldiers were there, and in the middle of them walked the two Margarets. The course of the Bladnoch River has long since changed, but then it flowed close to the hill on which the town stands, so that little ships and gaberts sailed right up to a point near the site of the present kirk and kirkyard.

Two stakes were driven into the sands near the town, one further out than the other. Margaret Lachlison, the widow, was tied to the stake further out, doubtless to intimidate the young girl, who was tied to the stake nearer the shore. Then the tide came rushing in with that unrelenting haste which no man can defy. The water was already lapping about the face of Margaret Lachlison, who was struggling in the euthanasia of drowning.

“What do you think of your companion now?” sneered an official.

“What do I see but Christ wrestling out yonder?” replied the girl, whose turn was coming next.

They released her for a little to give her a chance of taking the oath, but she refused.

“I will not. I am one of Christ’s children. Let me go!”

It was then that a halberdier cried, "Tak' anither drink, hinny!" and thrust her under.

She sang a little from a psalm, opened her Bible and prayed. Then the waves broke about the stake, and Margaret Wilson's voice was silenced. Even yet, you can almost hear the trumpets sounding on the other side.

Nineteen years after, a prematurely old, conscience-stricken, unhappy man appeared before the kirk-session of Wigtown, asking for the privilege of the Sacrament, "declaring the grief of his heart that he should have sitten on the seize of these women who were sentenced to die in this place in the year 1685, and that it had frequently been his petition to God for true repentance and forgiveness of that sin." He was the bailie who had taken part in the trial of the Wigtown martyrs.

Tradition corroborates fact in this also. For, many years after the crime had been committed, a broken man might have been seen wandering about the streets of Wigtown. He was afflicted with an unquenchable thirst, and dared not walk abroad anywhere without carrying a large jug of water. The good folks of Wigtown, who have long memories, both loathed and pitied him. For this man whose thirst was never slockened was the town's officer who had thrust Margaret Wilson into the Solway seas with the words, "Tak' anither drink, hinny."

I have hung over the gate of Glenvernoch, the hill farm where Margaret Wilson lived, and I have watched the waters of Bladnoch swirling down to the sea. Is it wonderful that any proper man to-day tingles with shame that the soldiers of the king should ever have done such things in Scotland? Even now, hundreds of years after, when we stand before the Martyr Graves of Galloway, and remember, our hearts are hurt and our eyes are full of tears.

It was a gloomy day when next I returned to Wigtown. I did not linger in the town, but passed right through. The village of Bladnoch is one long street by the riverside, about a mile beyond Wigtown, and just before you cross the bridge. After crossing the bridge, you turn sharply to the left, and follow a sylvan road down the waterside. Passing along this road for about a mile, another narrow road to the right leads you to the farm town of Baldoon Mains, a sweet old house which stands among ancient trees and is surrounded by well-kept lawns. There is a tiny lake beyond the farm town, and on the way to it you pass the ruins of Baldoon Castle, which is literally smothered in overgrown ivy. Across the farm road, immediately opposite the ruins, is a beautiful old gateway which must have belonged to the castle, but is now one of the entrances to the Mains. If you walk through it for a little way within the Mains grounds, and look back, you will see the ivy-covered ruins framed most beautifully between the quaint pillars of the gateway. Recross the road, lift the sneck of the old door in the ruins, and you find

yourself in a large garden from whose walks you can view the other side of the ruined castle. A quiet, sequestered spot to-day, off the beaten track. But an eerie sense of tragedy broods over the whole place. Surely here, if anywhere in Galloway, a ghostly lady in white garment all splashed with blood walks in the small hours before the dawn.

Janet Dalrymple was the eldest daughter of Sir James Dalrymple, afterwards Viscount Stair. It is the old, sad story of true love outraged. Her real lover was Archibald, 3rd Lord Rutherford, and the lady clung to her first love all the closer because he was poor. But her parents were for what is so often called by love's blasphemers a better match, and favoured the suit of David Dunbar, the heir of Sir David Dunbar of Baldoon. Her mother was her worst friend, for she treated her daughter's love as a mere trifle to be brushed aside, and even threw a cloak of religion over her worldliness when she intimidated her daughter with the threat of the old Levitical Law (Numbers xxx. 5): "If her father disallow her in the day that he heareth; not any of her vows, or of her bonds wherewith she hath bound her soul, shall stand: and the Lord shall forgive her, because her father disallowed her."

The poor girl, worn down by her parents' domineering objections, at last gave in, and the marriage took place on 12th August in the Kirk of Old Luce, which is about two miles from Carsecreugh Castle, the home of the Dalrymples before they removed to Loch Inch. She rode to church between her two brothers, and one of them declared afterwards that her hand was as cold as ice. Then followed high hospitality at Carsecreugh for twelve days, and when it was ended the bride rode in the midst of a gay cavalcade to Baldoon, where a masque was performed.

The whole story is immortalised by Sir Walter Scott in *The Bride of Lammermoor*.

There are three traditions at least to explain the tragedy of Baldoon. In the first version of the story, the bride stabs the bridegroom in the bridal chamber, and dies insane. In the second version, the bridegroom stabs the bride, and himself is found in a state of idiocy. In the third version, the disappointed lover conceals himself in the bridal chamber, stabs the bridegroom, and then escapes through the window into the garden.

Andrew Symson, a contemporary, and the parish minister at Kirkinner, wrote an elegy entitled, "On the Unexpected Death of the Vertuous Lady Mrs Janet Dalrymple, Lady Baldone, Younger." In this crude poem he gives no hint of either madness or of murder. But that is to be expected, for funeral elegies were invariably flattering, and the minister would not have dared to mention any of the black deeds of a family which was so influential in his parish.

Sir Walter Scott, with the true instinct of a romancer, makes the reluctant bride “fey” before the bridal night, alternating between a flighty levity and fits of deep melancholy—which clearly points to the fact that he considered she was caught in the grip of incipient insanity. Hideous shrieks were heard from the bridal chamber, and when the locked door was burst open the bridegroom was found lying across the threshold, dreadfully wounded and streaming with blood. The bride also was found in a corner of the large chimney in her night attire, all splashed with blood, grinning at the company, absolutely insane, and muttering the words: “Tak’ up your bonny bridegroom.” She never recovered her wits, but died shortly after, on 12th September 1699. Such is Sir Walter Scott’s version of the tragic tale.

Dunbar of Baldoon recovered from his wounds, but refused ever after to discuss the matter of how he received his injuries. He married for his second wife a daughter of the 7th Earl of Eglinton, and was killed by a fall from his horse while riding between Leith and Holyrood, in 1682. Lord Rutherford, the real lover, never married, and died in 1685.

It was a cruel and superstitious age, and a further touch of horror was added to the whole incident by a local rumour that the devil had wellnigh killed the bridegroom, and that the bride was “harled” or dragged about by evil spirits until she was demented. But the real truth of the matter seems to be that a beautiful weak-minded daughter was driven crazy by a relentless mother, who laughed at love and worshipped gear. You cannot kill true love. And those who try only succeed in cursing a life.



ISLE OF WHITHORN

XI

THE HIDDEN SANCTUARY

WITH THE EVER-OPEN DOOR

What a blessed thing it is to live in a house where you are compelled to take large views!

To the east, a long range of blue hills, with a rolling carpet of red and brown moors. To the north, a road which runs through the sunlit heather, until it dips over the horizon and leads you at last to the sea. To the west across the river, the same sparkling Galloway uplands, with another heartsome road that meanders across a high tableland and at last drops you down at a quaint little town on a great bay of sand, with a ruined abbey up the glen. And southward from the front door, more little hills and dales and moors, with a martyr's homestead on the sunny brae, and a martyr's tomb over yonder in the deep shadow of the hills.

Cross the lawn, and you will find a gate in the fence leading into a field where the cows browse all day. From the gate a beaten track crosses the field and dips down the slope to the wood. Here there is a stone stile, and from it there runs through the wood a winding path which leads you to the back of the manse and down the avenue to the church. Or you can enter from the highway through the large gate and walk up the avenue which passes through the trees and is lined with rhododendrons. But from no point of view can you see the church itself. It is a Hidden Sanctuary with the unending song of a river. A calm retreat which all the world may pass by without knowing it is there.

In this parish without a village where there are only about 300 souls, some of the country folk walk five miles to church and five miles back again to their lonely hirsels. Here there is no problem of non-church-going. All go who can. There are practically no visitors, yet the little church is full. All sorts and conditions are there—the well-beloved old laird, the army officer from the Sudan, farmers and shepherds, old and young, with a good sprinkling of little children.

And yet, this country kirk always reminds me of vagrants. Woe to the Church of Christ that turns one from its door.

When Samuel Rutherford was at Anwoth, a tramp once appeared at the manse of Bush o' Bield on a Saturday night and asked for up-putting. He

was sent to the barn, where, on the fragrant straw, he slept for the night, remembering doubtless the Little Saviour who was born in a manger. Before sleeping, however, the minister called him into the manse for prayers with the household, as was his custom; and there was the usual catechism of questions in those austere days. When the vagrant was asked how many commandments there were, he answered that there were eleven.

“Eleven!” exclaimed Rutherford, surprised at the man’s ignorance.

“Yes—eleven.”

And despite all argument to the contrary he held by eleven.

On the Sunday morning Rutherford as usual walked early through the woods to meditate on the Word. While sauntering among the bird-haunted trees, he heard the sound of a voice. Stopping to look about him, he saw the vagrant on his knees. He was praying for the people of Anwoth in language of great felicity. Rutherford waited until his unknown guest rose from his knees, and then he asked the stranger if he had a cure of souls. After some talk he revealed the fact that he was Archbishop Ussher of Dublin. So anxious was he to hear the little fair man of Christ preach, that he had disguised himself lest the fiery Presbyterian and author of *Lex Rex* would not receive a bishop. But Rutherford gave him a great welcome, and asked him to preach in Anwoth Kirk that eventide. The Archbishop did so, using the Presbyterian Form, and his text was: “A new Commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another.”

“The eleventh commandment!” whispered Rutherford to his wife in the pew.

Presbyterianism has sometimes been called the religion with the closed door. The door of the sanctuary is opened on Sunday morning; there is a surfeit of services on this one day in seven; and the key is turned in the door for the next six days, thus offering no rest for the weary who may wish to creep into the silence of God’s House for peace and prayer. But not so with this Hidden Sanctuary among the trees. According to the local story, it was the desire of the minister that the door of the church should never be closed. I could not think, however, that it stood open all night.

So, on the last night of my stay in that paradise of peace, I slipped away from the happy company round the fire, and went out into the night. There was a touch of frost in the September air, and the stars were blazing like diamonds in the sky. Down the road I wandered to the gate and up the pitchy avenue under the stilly trees. A turn to the left, and there was the gleam of graves. Beyond them stood the church. I groped my way to it, and passed my fingers along the wall until I found the door. It was standing wide open! Then I struck a match. I could find no means of closing the door. There was neither bolt nor key. Wayfaring men though fools might slip in here to sleep,

to make a vow, or to pray. After all, was it not their Father's House? Who then dare close the door? I looked at the stars quivering above the graves and wondered what God thought of our narrow ways. Then I went into the pitch-dark church and made my vow. When I returned to the city I told the story of this Hidden Sanctuary with the Ever-Open Door. From that day to this the door of another church has been open every day of the year.

HERE AND THERE

XII

CULROSS

THE STORY OF AN OLD SCOTS BURGH

For eight years we looked beyond the garden walls, from beneath the shade of high elms, to a little haven across the sea. A steep brae fell away from the gate to an old harbour with a forest of masts and tackling which brought into our midst the glamour of foreign lands and strange tongues. Beyond these tall spars lay the waters of the Firth, with the sunlight flashing on them, like fire on a burnished mirror. The land beyond lay steeped in the translucent haze of midsummer heat. Along those wooded shores nestled a quaint little red-tiled town, with hanging gardens and the square tower of a medieval church looking down on the red roofs, calling up old-time memories of saints like Serf, and Mungo, and Thenew the distressed princess. Behind and above all stretched the dim blue hills, sleeping in the morning light like hills of dream on the edge of heaven.

But our days were not all clear and fair. There were days of dripping depression, when we could not see beyond our own gloom, and the world shrank to the little circle of muddied foreshore about our feet. When, however, the skies cleared again, yonder was the haven across the sea, uplifting our hearts with so fair a prospect that when we saw the red roofs we were always glad.

The very oldest story of Culross is to be found in a twelfth-century manuscript. St Serf is supposed to have founded a monastery here at the end of the fifth century. One day, about the year 518, there drifted up the Forth a little coracle in which sat a solitary woman. This was Thenew, daughter of Loth, a king of Lothian. She became a Christian and married a Christian lover of lowly origin. When the secret of their love could be hidden no longer, the pagan father ordered his daughter to be thrown over the steep face of Dunpender, or Traprain Law as we now call it. By a miracle the princess was not hurt. So her cruel father set her adrift in a coracle that she might be drowned in the Forth. The frail boat drifted out to the May Island on the ebb-tide, and then drifted back on the flood far up the Firth, until it was washed ashore at Culross in Fife. The distressed princess saw a fire on the shore, crept towards it, and there she gave birth to a son. She was found by the monks of St Serf, and the saint adopted the child as his own, calling

the boy Kentigern, which means “Chief Lord.” The lad became so dear to him that Serf soon called him by the more familiar name of Mungo, which means “The Lovable Man.” Many years after that, on the banks of the Molendinar, Mungo founded the monastery which afterwards became the great Cathedral of Glasgow. Indeed, until a comparatively recent date green boughs were borne on the first day of July through the cobbled streets of Culross in honour of St Serf.

The first time I caught a glimpse of Culross I was being driven down the Forth in a little canoe before a westerly gale. So to me the haven under the hill has always been glamourised by old legendry and a beauty that will never depart.



ON THE MINNOCH, GALLOWAY

Culross is rich in history. But rather than dwell on dates or dusty records, let us wander up and down its narrow streets and look with a leisurely eye on the crow-stepped gable-ends and the red-tiled roofs which are steeped in the sunshine of this slumberous day. The pigeons are preening their wings on the peat-stanes of the tall houses, and the cushies are crooning softly in the great trees of Dunimarle close by.

Here is a narrow lane running up between two walls. It has a causeway paving raised in the middle with a gutter on either side. On that “Croon o’ the Causey” only the gentry and bein burghers were allowed to walk in olden times, while the canalyie or common folk (Fr. *canaille*) had to plouter

their ways in the filthy gutters. Forby all this, the poor people, walking up and down these side condies in the twilight or the dark, had to suffer many a dirty drenching when the good wife forgot to cry “Gardy-loo!” from a top window. Is there in all Scotland to-day so fine an example of the “Croon o’ the Causey” as this one at Culross?

But the Palace is the gem of all the old houses. Until recent years it was a broken-down place. But now this beautiful old seventeenth-century mansion-house has been restored so that we can imagine something of its former glories. It is sometimes called the Colonel’s Close, and in the title-deeds it is called the Palace or Great Lodging in the Sand Haven of Culross. The Palace was built in 1597 by Sir George Bruce of Carnock, the founder of the Royal Burgh, and he enlarged it in 1611.

When at the end of your day’s stravaig you climb the cobbled Kirk Loan and enter the Abbey Church on the hill, you will see the Bruce Monument with the marble effigies of his three sons and five daughters all set out in a row in front of the tomb. Meantime, we enter the courtyard of the Bruce mansion by an ancient gateway in the wall. Like an old man, the Palace has grown old by stages. The courtyard is cleaned up, the thick walls have been repaired and pointed, and you will find the old stair with its broad worn steps in the corner. All has been made as near as possible to what it was of old.

Inside you will find the original timber beams and some of the wood panelling restored. Several of the rooms have had painted ceilings. One of these—the Long Gallery—was originally 46 feet long by 13 feet wide; at either end there is a fireplace, and there is a garderobe with a soil-vent alongside. The living-room has a rounded ceiling painted in distemper and divided into sixteen panels, with a pictorial scene painted in each. There are mottoes in Latin and rhyming couplets in English. For example:

And he whose tongue before his wit doth runne
Oft speakis too soone and grieves when he had done.

Or:

The righteous are lyk unto the Laurele tree
The wicked lyk the blasted boughis that dee.

The painted woodwork in these rooms was in ruin, and the subjects were almost undecipherable until the wood was taken to Edinburgh, where the colours were carefully treated by a special process and brought up to something of their original brilliance. Here also is an interesting

seventeenth-century strong-room; the kitchen with the bakery and great oven; and the water inlet at the side of the kitchen fireplace. Indeed, as you wander about you realise what a menseful man Sir George must have been. If you were left alone for a night in this old Palace, you would hear the sweesh of silken gowns and the tinkle of the instruments as the gaily dressed ladies and gentlemen moved slowly to the dance in the Long Gallery, while out in the causeyed courtyard, or in the stable close by, the horses champed and struck the cobbles with their iron-shod feet, impatient for the last minuet to be done.

But the most namely man who ever raised his voice under the painted ceilings was King James VI. It is said that he came to see Sir George in 1617, when he was making his one and only return visit to Scotland after his accession to the throne of Queen Elizabeth.

The Palace is now the property of the National Trust for Scotland, and the restoration of this old mansion, as well as of some other houses in Culross, has been carried through by H.M. Board of Works.

One of the most beautiful features of Culross is the Hanging Garden behind the Palace. The ground is very steep. So, behind the lawn at the back of the house two terraces are built with two very old retaining walls. On these terraces there are gardens and walks, and a little lane runs behind the topmost. When you have climbed up to these terraces you get a glorious view. The walls are covered with fruit trees, and the exposure is so sheltered that figs are hanging in the sun. The little town, with its huddle of grey roofs, lies directly below you; beyond that, the sea is shimmering in the brilliant light, and three miles across the shining waters rise the Lothian shores with the hills of home on the horizon. What a place to sit and dream in, when the town clock strikes the lazy hours, and the old-fashioned flowers drug the air with the sweetest of scents! Sitting here in the Hanging Gardens, I remember a stolid American I once talked to as we lay over the rail of a French steamer at Beirut when we were waiting to land in Syria before taking our different ways on an eastern tour. He was the town gardener in some town near San Francisco.

“Where are you going after this?” I said.

He had just been speaking to me about the mean nature of the Scots, and I had answered him by silently flicking a threepenny-bit into the sea.

“I am going to cross the desert in an automobile to inspect the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, of which I have heard quite a lot. I am a city gardener from out 'Frisco way.”

I did not wish to spoil his pleasure, so I did not tell him that the Hanging Gardens of Babylon have been dust and ashes for thousands of years.

Culross might well be called the Cobbled Burgh. A modern Philistine may grumble at the hard walking and sigh for the plainstones, but take the cobbles away and you would ruin Culross. Its streets are nearly all causeways. There is the Low Causeway, the Mid Causeway, the Back Causeway and the Little Causeway. A house at the corner of the Little Causeway and the Mid Causeway is called The Ark. Another is called The Nunnery, because there is carved on it a woman's face with a covering over her head. A third house, and one of the finest, is called The Study. This is a tall building of two storeys and an attic. The study room is the tiny one in the attic, very much the size of the small study in the house of John Knox at Edinburgh. But the whole house is often called The Study, or The Bishop's Study, referring doubtless to the saintly Bishop Leighton of Dunblane who sometimes sought retreat here.

Everywhere you will find stone tablets on the houses, from 1577 to 1671, with the initials of the owners and many quaint inscriptions. The Town House has a fine square tower with a graceful cupola, reminding one of the architecture of the Low Countries. Double outside stairs lead to the doorway. Turn where you will, Culross is an artist's paradise.

This sleepy little town was once a busy industrial centre, with a harbour and a good foreign trade. The chief industries were salt-pans, weaving, coal workings and the making of girdles.

The coal was worked right under the sea. A kind of moat was built to act as a breakwater, so that the sea could be retained within the basin, and thus the coal could be ferried to and fro. A passage to the coal workings ran underground from the shore, below the sea, with an ascent which emerged at the pit head standing out of the water. Sir George Bruce made use of the Egyptian wheel, or a chain of buckets, to pump the water out of the pit.

When James VI paid a visit to the famous collier in 1617, he was anxious to see the workings and this water engine; so the king was led by his host along the underground passage from the shore to the pit. When at last the king ascended to the pit head, he found himself surrounded by water. We know that James went in constant fear of his life, and always wore clothes that were stuffed to protect him. Thinking now that this was a plot against his life, he cried out, "Treason!" But Sir George assured him that he was perfectly safe, and, pointing to the pinnace riding at the edge of the moat, he said, "By which way will your majesty return—by boat or underground as you came?" "By the very shortest way," replied the timid king. So runs the tale.

But Culross did great trade in making girdles, or "Cu'ross Gridles," as they were called. The *Old Account* describes them quaintly as "a kitchen utensil well-known in Scotland for toasting unleavened bread." Indeed, by

two royal grants, one of James VI and the other of Charles II, the girdlesmiths of Culross had the sole right of making the girdles, which they had first invented. But in the year 1727 the Court of Session refused to continue the monopoly. When the Carron Company came into being a cheaper way of making them was discovered. Machinery followed, and the old hand-made girdle was doomed.

This girdle was not like its modern successor, with a semi-circular handle, but was beaten out with a straight handle, like a flat frying-pan. When hung up and struck like a gong it gave forth a fine resounding note. Hence the old Scots saying, “Gin ye dinna behave, I’ll gar yer lugs ring like a Cu’ross girdle.” A real Culross girdle to-day is a rare possession.

In the year 1794 there were no less than seventy-two weavers in Culross. They made diapers for the merchants in Dunfermline, and cotton cloths for the Glasgow dealers.

As for education, here is a fine description of a rival to the parish schoolmaster in Culross. “Besides these, a well-accomplished female (Miss Farquharson) teaches with success English, French, writing (an uncommon fine hand), arithmetic, geography and needlework. She has 7 boarders, at 20s each per annum; and has 5 day scholars at 10s 6d per quarter.” So runs the *Old Account* for the year 1794.

What a genteel addition to the society of Culross this “well-accomplished female” must have been at the end of the eighteenth century! How often must she have walked down to the little harbour at the Sand Haven, when the French luggers came in with fine laces and wines, to exchange the time of day with Monsieur le Capitaine in the most polite French, while her pupils stared with open-eyed wonder at her linguistic facility!

Alas, this day of happy wandering is nearly done, and we must take our way up the long winding causeway that leads to the Abbey Church on the hill. Its square embattled tower has stood sentry over the sleepy town below for many generations, although the Cistercian Abbey was founded by Malcolm, Earl of Fife, in 1217, long before the tower was built. All that now remains is the eastern portion of the Abbey, which has been used as the parish church since 1633; the incomplete southern wall of the nave, and portions of the cloister buildings. Here, on the east side, is part of the entry to the chapter-house. There, on the west side, are the remains of the lay brothers’ quarters; the day stair to their dorter, the kitchen, and the parlour between the outer court and the cloister. The manse occupies the northern end of this range—a quaint seventeenth-century building which has been modernised. The cloister garth itself is now the manse garden. Beyond the church to the east there stands the Abbey House which is now dismantled

and unoccupied. The monks' orchard lies between the monastery grounds and the shore far below. A magnificent cedar of Lebanon and a yew tree make splashes of dusky green among the sunlit trees. There is scarcely a breath of wind to temper the heat. The manse garden is a cloister of flowers which breathe out delicious fragrance. Here is summer silence. The noisy world is forgot. Peace reigns.

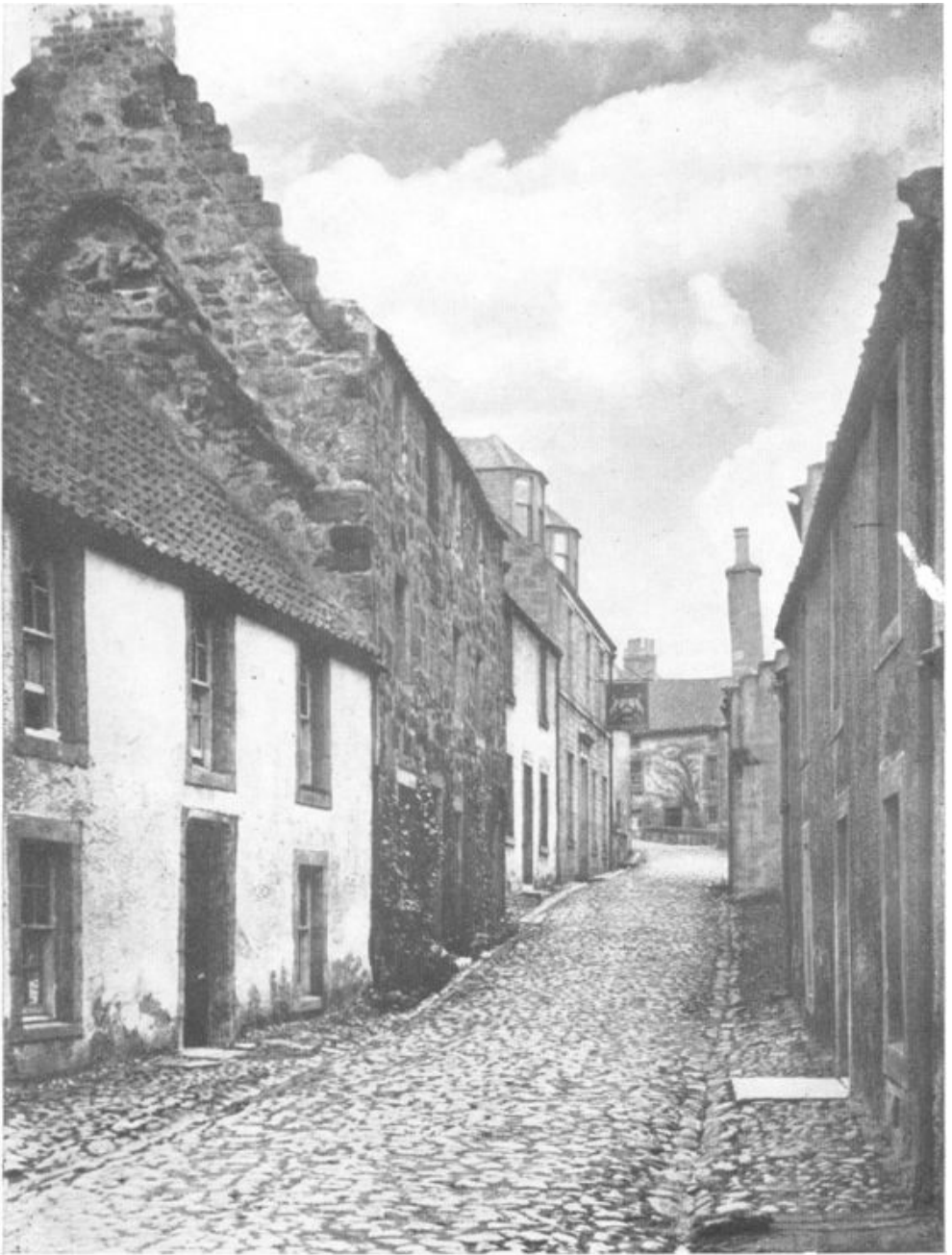
XIII

THE HARVEST OF A QUIET EYE

THE BEAUTY OF COMMON THINGS

Not long ago I read an article which was written by a well-known journalist under the rather curious title of "On Not Taking a Walk." He maintained that so long as we had a country garden to sit in and watch nature, there was no virtue in walking abroad. There is some truth in that. But the writer revealed such an intimate knowledge of nature that it is quite clear he must have walked and wandered in quiet, lonely places. The truth, as usual, lies somewhere between the two extremes; for there is great virtue in walking abroad at times, and there is great virtue at times in sitting still, if the nature lover is to gather knowledge. Whether, therefore, we wander or sit still, it is good to record with truthfulness and simplicity exactly what we have seen and heard. This is the blessing of the Harvest of a Quiet Eye.

All through my wandering years I have been the victim of what I can only call the Morning Melody. That is, I have found myself humming or whistling to myself some tune or melody which has slipped into my mind in the morning, and has persistently stayed there with me right through the day. It is sometimes a song, a psalm tune, a mere port of pipe music, or a classical air. But there it is, and there it stays, a musical companion that haunts the solitude and refuses to be left behind.



A CULROSS CAUSEY

Somewhere in Inverness-shire there is a glorious river which runs down a long glen. Halfway up it a burn tumbles into the larger stream. If you follow up the burn you will pass through the glen of the grouse cock, then

cross the balloch, and descend again into the deep gladed woods of a great Highland estate. But to-day I am all for eating my bread and cheese by the pool where the burn flows into the river. It is a truly strategic spot, for the pool cannot be seen from the road—a long quiet pool of deep water, with a delicious swirl in the tail of it. Of course, the fishing is strictly preserved. The flies are dancing above the water. There go the trout, each one rising with a seductive plop, making a circle of temptation which soon reaches the solitary watcher on the shingle.

Here surely is a subtle problem. Be it admitted at once that the very sight of fish rising in forbidden water has a demoralising effect on the very best of men. That is the worst thing about prohibition—it begets a painful desire to transgress. Fish plopping into a pool seem to rouse the primitive instinct for possession in a certain kind of man—nay, in the most respectable and law-abiding citizen. Of course, when a poor poacher stands in the dock before a judge there can be no justification whatever in law for taking the fish. But—if the judge is a keen fisherman, and if he stood all alone by the Golden Pool with a trout rod in his hand, would he or would he not try a cast, if the fish were taking? It is not for me to dogmatise or prejudge any case. I have a great regard for the open mind, and I know that every fisherman who reads these words will smile and say to himself, “Where is the Golden Pool?”

It was a day of great heat. The hills were sleeping in the sunshine, dim and elusive, with an eternal calm about them. If I could only describe the pleasures of this day as I wandered by a brawling stream, through resinous pinewoods and over the hot honey-scented heather—if only I could translate all that to some mountain lover who has had to lay aside his strength, and now lies on his back, suffering in some quiet room, it might surely be to him a blessed anodyne.

My seat this time was under a pine tree by the roadside. Below me ran the stream with a bridge crossing it. The water rippled over clean sand, whispering its modest music, without any rush or hurry. In the sunshine the water was like liquid amber.

Above the bridge there is a green bank, and above the bank you can see the white gable of a cottage. Behind the white gable is a tree, hanging with red rowans. Above the red rowans stretches a deep blue sky without a cloud, and all around lie the purple moors. What is there in this small cottage, when we think of the infinite variety of scenery in Scotland? But, look again—at the amber water, the green bank, the white gable, the red rowans, the blue sky, the purple moors, and surely here is a riot of colour in the commonplace, and an encouragement to the humblest soul to think nobly of self and so realise the divine possibilities that are in us all.

It was a long plug up in the heat to the glen. What a change of scene from the bridge by the pine trees! In this sanctuary of solitude the river still sings; but its bed is one mass of tumbled stones bleached white by the sun. Here, in winter-time, this modest tributary of the great river must roar down the wide haughland in terrific spate. But all the winter's turbulence is over, and in the August heat the stream flows through a modest little channel among the debris. The trickle has taken the place of the spate.

Again, I think of the once strong man lying in the quiet room far away. To him the river sends this good news—that, even although the spate of strength may be over, there is great good for us all when the days are still, and the full flood is reduced to a trickle. A whisper of music still comes to us out of the tranquillity of autumn days. So, as I listen in the hot silence to the almost inaudible sound of the stream, I know that the sweetest melodies are often hushed.

When Burns in one of his best-known poems referred to the breaking of nature's social union, he was thinking of one of the tiniest of creatures being hurt by the plough that he was guiding with his own hand.

I took my lunch in a birch wood beyond the stony river bed. The shooters were busy on the moors just over the hill. While I listened to the shots a rabbit came up the bank in the cool of the shady trees. He looked at me right in the eye, and wagged his long ears back and forward, like a dog when he cannot quite understand his master's mind. There was no fear in the rabbit's eye. So, after thumping his leg once or twice on the ground—which is a rabbit's way of showing a touch of nervous apprehension—he decided that I was just an immovable rock, and loped quietly into his hole, not two yards from my side.

A few days before, in another glen, a grouse sat still on the roadway and looked at me with his little red-lidded eyes, fearless, trustful and safe. I am no kill-sport. But, no one dare belittle Robert Burns, and the rabbit and the grouse made me wonder how he would have enjoyed sitting in a shooting butt helping to make a record bag.

At a junction of the roads, where the iron bridge crosses the great river, there stands a memorial in local stone. I have often paused to read the tribute here paid to one who was a great schoolmaster, a great sportsman and the kindest of souls:

This memorial was erected by people in Strathdearn and Inverness, and by shooting friends, to the memory of the Rev. Edwin Leace Brown, M.A., St Andrew's School, Eastbourne; for 20 years shooting tenant of Glen Kirk, Tomatin; during which

time, by his generous and kindly manner in doing good, he found great happiness, and was loved by all.

This ideal schoolmaster once said to an anxious mother who was committing her boy to his care: "We will do our best to make your boy a scholar, and a sportsman, and to keep him a Christian gentleman." So he taught generations of boys to be good scholars, to play the game, and to live straight. Could any sportsman have a finer memorial?

I think also of the telephone man whom I met the other day in the glen. A severe thunderstorm had swept over the countryside, and he had come in his little van 32 miles to repair some phones far up the glen. Many fuses had been blown. On the day of the thunderstorm he had motored 248 miles between midday and 2 a.m. the next morning. I learned much that day about telephones, and he showed me a boxful of blown fuses. A man's face is his best visiting-card, and very soon we passed from telephones to other things, for he was a most intelligent Highlander.

"You'll never find out," he said, "the secrets of Highland folk in guide books. Only if you go about among them, in all weathers and in the most out-of-the-way corners, will you get into them." Then he added this question—"Did you ever hear of the Brahan Seer?"

"Yes. I have his prophecies at home."

"Well—he knew. There is a place in the North where a saint was killed long ago. The Seer prophesied that the grass would never grow on the spot, and to this day grass will not grow there."

There, you touch that strange combination of fact and mystery which is the essence of life for the Celt. And for the rest, it must ever remain true that while haste and hurry are chasing the peace out of life to-day, there will always be ample room for the harvest of a quiet eye.

XIV

PENKILL CASTLE

THE STORY OF A FRESCO

Anyone who travels down the Girvan Water by Kilkerran, Dalquharran, and Bargany must surely admit that South Ayrshire is one of the most beautiful parts of Scotland. Just beyond Bargany stands the ancient church of Old Dailly, a roofless ruin now, with a belfry on each gable. The bell on the west gable was used for calling the people to worship—the bell on the east gable was only rung on certain very solemn occasions. Here, too, is the burial-place of that ancient family, the Boyds of Penkill.

Above the Penkill tomb there is a plaque to the memory of William Bell Scott, one of the Pre-Raphael Brotherhood, who was a life-long friend of some of the members of that band of poets and artists—Holman Hunt, Millais, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Michael Rossetti, William Morris, Swinburne, Burne-Jones—all of whom had such an influence on the art of Victorian times. But why, in this quiet old Ayrshire churchyard, do we find a memorial to William Bell Scott set above the burial-place of the Boyds of Penkill? Come with me up the side road that leads south-east, and you will hear a most remarkable story of Platonic friendship and fine painting.

This road will lead you over the hills for about five miles, and drop you down suddenly into the valley of the Stinchar, where the sequestered village of Barr lies in a cup of the hills. About a mile from Old Dailly churchyard on the right-hand side of the road stands Penkill Castle among ancient trees, looking giddily down into the sylvan gorge of the Penwhapple burn.

It was a hot Sunday afternoon. After going through the rooms of the castle and seeing all the treasures of art that are stored there, my host and I sat by the flagstaff on the embattled tower. Not a breath of air was stirring, and the flag hung motionless on the pole. The view over the countryside was a perfect dream of beauty. Yonder was the sea shimmering in the heat haze, with Ailsa Craig rising out of it like a primeval sentry. And yet, all the time I could not forget the extraordinary story which had unfolded itself to me as I wandered through the haunted rooms of this old Scots castle.

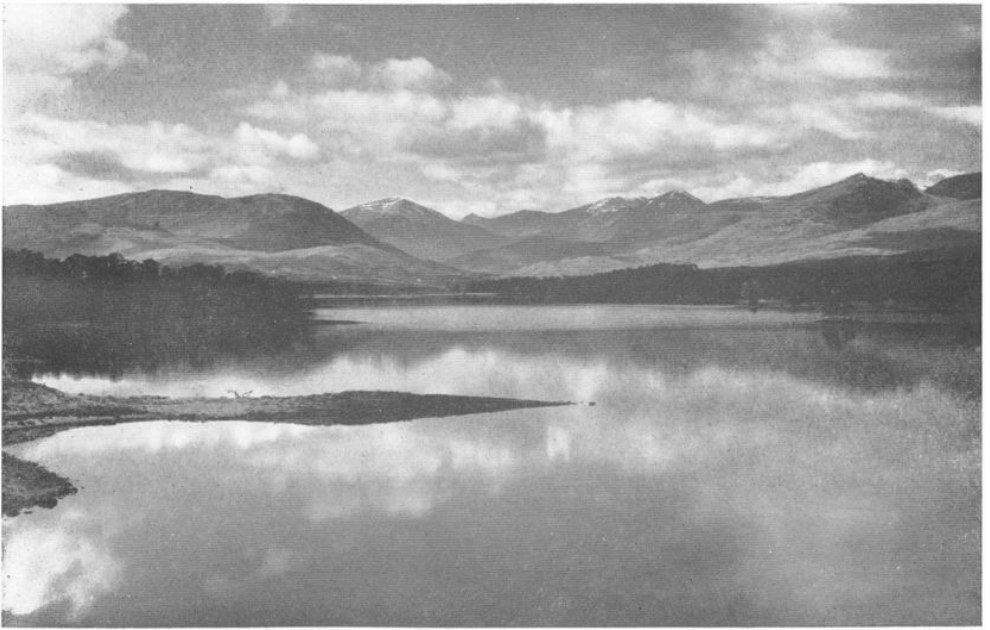
To begin with, the Boyds of Penkill come of a very ancient stock. The old sennachies tell us in their own gallant way that an ancestor fought with great bravery at the battle of Largs in 1263; that a Robert Boyd stood by

William Wallace; that another adhered to King Robert the Bruce. Then came Lord Boyd, an Earl of Arran, who married a Princess, the sister of James III; Earls of Kilmarnock; and at last, Adam Boyd, son of Lord Boyd, and ancestor of the Boyds of Penkill and Trochrig. Nor must we forget the great Zachary Boyd, who became minister of the Barony Kirk, Glasgow, in 1623, was a stout Covenanter, and while preaching in the Cathedral of Glasgow before Cromwell, "railed at him to his face." It was told of this eminent divine that when dying he had an idea that his wife should marry again. Indeed, she actually suggested that he should leave some of his considerable fortune to Mr James Durham. "No, no! Margaret," said he, "I will leave nothing but that which I cannot keep from him—thy bonny self."

Penkill Castle was originally a square keep or tower with corner turrets, built probably in 1500. According to George Street, the eminent architect, certain features of one of the old dormer windows point to the earlier date of 1450. Thomas Boyd added greatly to the old tower in 1628, when he connected the ancient building with the new addition by means of a circular tower and stairway. You can still see the Boyd arms, with the initials of himself and his wife, "T. B.—M. M.—1628." This stair was renewed and altered by Thomas Spencer Boyd in the nineteenth century. Later still, Miss Boyd added a large hall with an open timber ceiling, and this was used as a dining-room and picture gallery. Spencer Boyd was the fourteenth laird. He died in 1865, and was succeeded by his sister, Alice Boyd.

To-day, Penkill Castle is famous for a series of historical subjects which were painted on the walls of the circular stairway by William Bell Scott, the poet and artist, who was the life-long soul friend of Alice Boyd of Penkill.

Scott was an Edinburgh man, and came of an artistic family. His brother was that Blake-like painter, David Scott. William was born in 1811 in Gibraltar House, a small mansion with a garden at St Leonard's, so-called because it was built when Gibraltar fell into the hands of the British. He was a Royal High School boy, and tells us of some of his escapades while living at Gibraltar House. He settled in London, where latterly he became one of the group of painters and poets who started the pre-Raphaelite movement. Scott came to pay a visit to Penkill on one occasion, and the visit extended to over thirty summers, Miss Boyd in turn staying in the Scott household in London for the thirty winters. Indeed, Scott died at Penkill in 1890 at the age of seventy-nine, nursed to the end most faithfully by "A. B.," as the lady was always called in pre-Raphaelite circles.



THE BLACKMOUNT FOREST AND LOCH TULLA

Let Scott tell in his own words the story of how his friendship with Alice Boyd began:

On 18th March 1859 I had a visit from a lady some few years over thirty, ill and weary from watching by the death-bed of her mother. I had not heard her name before. She wanted to find a new interest in life, and thought to find it in art. She was somehow or other possessed to me of the most interesting face and voice I had ever seen or heard. I devoted myself to answer this desire of hers, and from day to day the interest on either side increased. At this moment I am sitting on a fearfully wet day in her old family castle, Penkill, in Ayrshire, where all these notes (his *Autobiography*) were written. This ancient house has been my summer home, and that of my wife, for many years, and all the friends with few exceptions mentioned in these pages, have come to see us here, the winter half of the year Miss Boyd being our guest in London. As important as my life at Wellington (he had painted a series of historical pictures in Wellington Hall), infinitely more so, indeed the name will be or ought to be the principal one in my later pages.

While at Penkill at the beginning of the friendship his wife writes from London, "I am truly glad you are in such good company as Miss Boyd and her brother, and finding such delightful landscape subjects in the glen."

Again Scott writes:

The friendship at first sight was confirmed. Time could not strengthen it, but the expression or instinct of sympathy was changed by experience into satisfied conviction and confident repose. I speak of my own feeling of course . . . here at last was a perfect intercourse made possible by the difference of the sexes. As we sat painting together by the rushing Penwhapple stream, in the deep glen, which D. G. R. afterwards commemorated, listening to the 'Stream's Secret' before he put it into verse; and I too by my three series of sonnets called 'The Old Scottish House,' 'Outside the Temple,' and those entitled 'Lost Love,' when there was the chance of A. B.'s health giving way; or in town during the long winter evenings reading a hundred books, or enjoying whatever a London season cast in our path—there had never occurred a misunderstood word or wish which might divide us. My wife had faith in us, too, and A. B.'s brother as well.

On the twenty-first anniversary of their first meeting Scott wrote a sonnet in which these words occur:

Your smile is still as bright as long ago,
We still are gathering shells on life's seashore,
We still can walk like children hand in hand,
Friendship and love beside us evermore.

It was Alice Boyd who proposed that William Bell Scott should paint some historical scenes on the walls of the great circular stairway which her brother had built. So he selected as his subject a series of scenes from the lovely story of *The King's Quair*, the poem written by King James I of Scotland at the end of his imprisonment in London.

Strictly speaking, this was not a fresco, which is a painting in water-colour laid on a ceiling or a wall before the plaster is dry. Scott worked with oil pigments, the medium being wax dissolved in turpentine, encaustic in short, and this occupied him for three or four months in each year. He began the work in 1865 and finished it in 1868. The wall on which he worked was three feet thick, and took a long time to be free of damp, or of the corrosive quality of the lime. He tells us that he began it too soon, and so had to

repaint some parts of it. But he found this species of encaustic almost perfect, and thought that the pictures would remain unchanged. And so they have. But in another place Scott adds that in his view the climate of Scotland does not encourage such painting on plaster. A beautiful picture of some of this painting will be found in the *Autobiographical Notes*.

The whole atmosphere of Penkill is reminiscent of Rossetti. Here is a recess by a window where he used to sit reading and writing poetry. Down in the glen below the house he delighted to dream and paint. In London, one midsummer, he was greatly depressed by the thought that his eyes were failing him. So A. B. persuaded him to accompany Scott to Ayrshire for an autumn vacation. Then comes one of those illuminating passages in the *Autobiographical Notes*:

We were a party of four—Miss Boyd’s cousin, Miss Losh of Ravenside, being a visitor at that time. This old lady—she was about seventy years of age—had somehow or other taken a jealous dislike to me, thinking I had too much influence over her younger cousin who entertained me so much and lived with us in London in the winter. She had therefore looked forward to Rossetti’s appearance, fully intending to play him off against me, which accordingly she did in the most fantastic way, without in the least knowing anything of the fearful skeletons in his closet that were every night, when the ladies were gone, brought out for his relief and my recreation.

One advantage Rossetti gained from these visits to Penkill. He got to know *The King’s Quair*—that is, book, cahier, or quire of paper. Indeed, his interest in the royal author’s death was the means of Rossetti writing *The King’s Tragedy*, for, as Bell Scott remarks, “The perfection of the scheme of *The King’s Quair* struck him with wonder.”

It is all an old story now. But, to tread the rooms and passages of Penkill Castle is to call up hosts of memories of the poet-painters who used to haunt its stairways, its gardens, and its steep little glen where, deep down among the trees, the Penwhapple burn still sings its way to the sea.

And for that sib-souled pair, Alice Boyd and William Bell Scott, who grew old together in their love for one another, let Professor Minto have the last word: “The poet’s dreams of an ideal friendship were realised, as such dreams seldom have been.”

XV

“HIDIE HOLES”

OF PRIESTS, PRESBYTERS AND JACOBITES

I cannot imagine a more exciting occupation for those who have the time and opportunity than hunting out the “hidie holes” in old houses where, in days of danger long gone by, men had to hide from their enemies. In England there are a great many of these bolt-holes. In Scotland there are not so many, for the very good reason that there are a hundred old castles, manor-houses, and granges in England for one there is in this country. Moreover, the very wildness of the moors and hills here offered facilities for hiding which could never be found in the flatter and more populous country to the South of the Border.

These historic hiding-places in old houses generally took the form of tunnels, secret chambers, or caves near by. The tunnels were mostly found in old monastic houses, but their successors either bricked up these sewers or used them for secret purposes.

The first people to use these secret hiding-places in old houses were priests who were outlawed after the Reformation in the time of Queen Elizabeth. That crafty, red-headed lady banned all Catholic customs, and priests who openly held services were liable to the death penalty. So they practised the rites of their religion in secret, knowing very well that if they were found out the spies who had reported them were rewarded with one-third of the fines imposed. Such priests were called Recusants, and the *Recusant Rolls*, together with the *Records of the English Jesuits*, supply breathless tales of Catholics who were either persecuted or executed. Then, the swing of the pendulum came, and our Covenanting ancestors were in their turn persecuted and executed by the authorities. But, whatever our religious convictions be, we must always admire those men and women who had the courage of their own convictions and were hunted for conscience' sake.

These priests' “hidie holes” were afterwards used by Cavaliers, and later still by Jacobites—so strangely did history swing from one extreme to another. But to-day these bolt-holes of historical interest in many an old house have given rise to traditions of ghosts and skeletons in the cupboard.

And there are old castles, like Glamis, where the number of windows outside is more than can be accounted for by the rooms inside.

It may safely be said that the day is past when men would ever dream of having underground passages leading from their private rooms to some quiet place in their grounds. But I know of one modern tunnel which a friend actually constructed when he was building a great mansion some years before the war. You enter through a door in the courtyard which is quite convenient to the library, and after a considerable walk down the long stone-built underground passage you emerge through another door, to find yourself in a beautiful stone-built garden house at the end of a terrace which is quite a long way from the dwelling-house.

But the real “hidie holes” of history are to be found only in very old houses. There is one such known to me. But with “hidie holes,” as with eagles’ nests, it is not always wise to broadcast their exact whereabouts. This old Border mansion stands amid immemorial trees on the banks of a river. It still belongs to an ancient Catholic family. The entrance to the priest’s “hidie hole” is in one of the walls of the present drawing-room, and is concealed by a piece of furniture. I have been in the priest’s little room, to which a private stair in the wall leads up. The stair, however, is so narrow and twisted that I did not accept the invitation to venture up it, lest being held fast in the middle darkness I should never get either up or down. Surely these recusant priests must have been thinned down by fastings oft! In the middle of the drawing-room floor stands the frail cradle of one of the kings of Scotland. Upstairs I saw many embroideries which were wrought by the deft fingers of our own Queen Mary of sad memory. In a case close by there are many Jacobite relics. Indeed, my host, an old gentleman of indescribable courtesies, still talked of “The Cause.”

In the far North I have followed the track of hunted Catholic priests and Jacobite gentlemen, from the glens of Inverness to the far Orkneys. In 1579 Thomas Chisholm, laird of Strathglass, was summoned before the Court for his adherence to the Catholic faith, and was imprisoned; but his tenants in the glen never went back on their ancient creed. Father John Farquharson, who was born in 1699 and died in 1782, was for many years the apostolic missionary of Strathglass. Maighistir Ian, as this remarkable man was called, had many “hidie holes” in the district, for he had to celebrate Mass in secret. To ensure greater safety, he always wore the kilt with tartan hose; but he invariably slipped his sacerdotal garments over the tartan before a service. Twice taken prisoner by the red-coats, he had to hide for a long time beneath some rocks which form a kind of cave on the Braes of Craskie, in Cannich. He used a little boulder with a hollow in it for a baptismal font, and this rough font stone is now preserved on the top of a stone pillar close by the

Church of St Mary at Invercannich. It bears a memorial plate to John Farquharson of the Society of Jesus.

But there is another side to the story.

Those stout Protestants, the Covenanters, also suffered great persecution for their faith, and a large number of them received the martyr's crown for conscience' sake. Their "hidie holes" were sometimes in the houses of Presbyterian families, but often they were in the open moors and in caves. I shall resist the temptation to enlarge, and confine myself to one rather weird example—a burial vault. For this we go to the Border country again.

Lady Grizel Baillie (to call her by her married name) was the daughter of Sir Patrick Hume, and was born in 1665 in the old castle of Redbraes, in the Merse. When the persecuting days came, her father, who was a Whig and a Presbyterian, had to go into hiding, and the place of concealment chosen was the family vault at Polwarth Kirk. Grizel persuaded the village joiner, Jamie Winter, to make a rough wooden bed, which was lowered into the tomb, and there the laird slept with the bones of his fathers; shivering in cold and darkness; and relieving his solitude by repeating George Buchanan's translation of the Metrical Psalms. Every night at twelve o'clock his brave daughter stole out of Redbraes and carried food to him in the graveyard. The minister's dogs used to bark so loudly that Lady Hume persuaded the Man of God to hang the dogs—"lest one of them should go mad," she added with a twinkle in her eye. In these midnight journeys Grizel often fell over the flat gravestones to her hurt, and not to the advantages of her father's supper.



KILCHURN CASTLE, LOCH AWE

Sir Patrick's favourite dish was sheep's head. Occasionally at the dinner table Grizel would slip the whole sheep's head on to her lap, while her nine brothers and sisters were still at the broth. One day her brother Sandy noticed this extraordinary carry on. "Mother!" he cried, "will ye look at Grizel, for she has ta'en the hale o' the sheep's heid to hersel!" When the vault was no longer a safe hiding-place this brave girl determined to make another "hidie hole." So, once more she persuaded Jamie Winter to make a great wooden box. She then started to dig a hole in the floor of one of the disused rooms of Redbraes Castle. As the hole had to be large enough to hold the box, and the box had to be large enough to hold the Laird, the extent of the work can be imagined.

One night her father was transferred from the tomb to the wooden box. It had holes in the top of it to let in the air. For three weeks Sir Patrick existed there. Then the whole family fled to Utrecht, where Sir Patrick was known as "Dr Wallace." They were a merry crowd. At the family dancings "Dr Wallace" always made the music on his flute. Young George Baillie of Jerviswood joined them. Indeed, Grizel Hume and George Baillie first met in the Tolbooth Prison of Edinburgh, when they were visiting the young man's father, Robert Baillie, who was afterwards executed. The two young people had not a penny between them, and they waited for one another from the time Grizel was twelve years of age. After the Revolution Settlement she married him, and became Lady Grizel Baillie, which is one of the great

names of Scottish history. This indomitable, plucky, and cheerful woman wrote a song, the refrain of which describes her whole life and spirit:

Were na my heart licht, I wad dee.

And her tombstone at Mellerstain bears the following words:

Good breeding, good humour, good sense
Were her daily ornaments.

The Jacobites were the next (and the last) of the outlaws to use such hiding-places. Here let me mention a curious example of how careful a Jacobite had to be lest he mention any great political personage by name, either in conversation or correspondence. It is the Key to a Jacobite Cipher giving a list of commonplace names which were to be substituted for those in authority, and it is to be found in the Achnacarrie Papers:

Mr Hunter	}	
Mrs Lucie	}	The King.
John Clerk	}	
Mrs Peggie	}	
Mr Ritchie		The Pope.
Mr Black		The King of Spain.
Mr Barker		The Emperor.
Mr Bromley		The Duke of Argyll.
Mr Colbert		The Duke of Gordon.
Mr Dow		Lord Traquair.
The Brewers		The Presbyterians.
Mr Hart		Lord Nithsdale.
Mr Morton		Glenbucket.
Mr Turner		Lochiel.
Mrs Brown	}	The Queen.
Mrs Bettie	}	
Mr Ritchie's family		The Cardinals.
Mr Baillie		The King of France.
Mr Buchan		Czarine.
Mr Can		General Wed (<i>sic</i>).
Mr Coalman		Lord Lovat.
Mr Enster		Bishop Fullerton.
Mr Enster's Children		High Episcopal Clergy.
Mr Mackie		Cluny Macpherson.
Mr Red (Reid)		Keppoch.
Mr John Wallace		Locheil, junr.

&c., &c.

Au caffèe de Don Carlos rue letify (?) à Paris.

Of course there are well-known Jacobite hiding-places like Cluny's Cage, on Ben Alder, and the many Prince Charlie caves, like that in Glen Moriston. But I know of no better example of a Jacobite refuge than the secret cellar which Cluny Macpherson occupied under a passage in Dalchully House, in Laggan.

On one occasion while at Dalchully, Cluny was surprised by the arrival of the dragoons. He had only time to throw off his bonnet, strip off his shoes and stockings, and appear like a bare-headed and bare-footed serving-man. He went boldly up and held the officer's horse, while the soldiers made a fruitless search for him in the house. When at last the officer rode away, he gave the tousy serving-man a shilling, and Cluny touched his forelock. I have seen the "hidie hole," and I have also seen in Cluny Castle the beautiful solid silver statuette which was presented to the late Cluny in commemoration of his narrow escape. I was told that, according to local tradition, the kindly officer had a pretty good idea all the time that the serving-man was Cluny himself. If so, all honour to the officer, whose name I shall not mention.

After this incident, a square "hidie hole" was constructed below Dalchully House, lined with wood, where Cluny could hide in safety. The entrance is on the floor of the passage which leads to the old kitchen in the south-east wing, which was the original house. There is an oblong bit of very thick glass in the corner of the trap-door to let in the light. I have called it ever since "Cluny's Cupboard."

XVI

THE LAST VOYAGE

CHRISTMAS AT SEA

It was Christmas morning. The narrow twisted streets of the old town were deserted as the Sky Pilot made his way to the harbour head in the half-lights of the wintry dawn. The air was strangely still, the frost bit viciously, and the feet rang on the icy cobble-stones like iron.

Here and there lights shone out from many a window in court and attic high up, where the children of the poor turned on their pillows and watched with sleep-sodden eyes the dim forms of women trying to light reluctant fires in the ash-cold grates. Somewhere in an alley as he passed a wee one wailed plaintively in the dawn. Cruel is the cold of winter on those who are weak, sickly and ill-clad. So with a shudder at the cry he turned a corner, crossed a network of railway lines, and was soon going up the gangway of the tug-boat which was waiting by the pierhead.

The sky was wan and grey. The paddles chunked loudly in the stillness of the bitter morn. On leaving the harbour head, the Sky Pilot looked back and gazed spellbound on his own earthly dwelling-place, for it was glorified. The sun was now rising behind the long low hill up which the houses climbed from the water edge to the skyline, with here and there a kirk spire piercing the dawn. The town itself was bathed in a mist of gold, and the blue reek rose from a hundred chimneys in the denser shadows under the hill. The harbour with its little forest of masts was now a sea of light where the tug wash made waves of dancing gold. On this Morn of the Mystic Birth the dull grey town was transfigured as it lay in the light of God. Then, the mist of gold slowly faded into the light of day as the sun appeared and sent its first level shafts of radiance across the sea. The Day of Christ had come, and the whole world awoke to life.

In the fairway between Lothian and Fife lay the sombre hull of H.M.S. *Sheldrake*—a grim rakish ship of war, now obsolete, and stripped of all her deadly accoutrements. Yet, death in all its mystery was aboard her this Christmas Day.

“A dangerous quiet day,” said the Sky Pilot to the man at the wheel who was casting his eye far down the Firth.

“Ay—it is the calm before the storm, sir; and when it does come there will be little or no chance of getting alongside the *Sheldrake*.”

With that the engine bell rang, and the tug-boat was made fast to the grey ironclad.

On a sea-chest in the middle of the empty deck stood a coffin with a union-jack stretched over it. Below, in the homely cabins, lived the caretaker—an old Navy man—and his wife. Up and down the deck ran their only child and a pet dog, the sole playmates in this lonely world at sea.

And to this haven of peace had come old Janet, after a weary warsle with life in towns, to spend the hinmost days of her eighty years. On the sunny summer days she would sit knitting in her chair on a bieldy bit of the deck, and watch with her tired old eyes the ships go by, while her little granddaughter played by her side. When the storm roared in the shrouds she sat below at the fireside, and but for the gentle roll of the great ship she would never have known that she was not in her own cosy kitchen in Fife. And then, one lown November day sickness came stealing over the sea, and old Janet fell on sleep.

Up the companionway came one black figure after another. The transshipment was made; the engines throbbed again; and the tug-boat once more chugged her way down the Firth for Burntisland in the icy-clear morning, with old Janet lying under the King’s flag near the paddle-box.

Then, the sound of a psalm rose and fell on the still air, sung by a little group of men whose heads were bared.

God is our refuge and our strength,
In straits a present aid;
Therefore, although the earth remove,
We will not be afraid:
Though hills amidst the seas be cast;
Though waters roaring make,
And troubled be; yea though the hills
By swelling seas do shake.

And after the psalm the sound of a voice reading the Holy Word, majestic in its everlasting comfort—“But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. . . . Behold I shew you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. . . . Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

And after the Word the sound of a prayer.

Still the engines throbbed. The sea of glass was all about us. In the still clear air the hills were mirrored in the calm waters along the shores, and the islands far down the Forth—Inchcolm, Inchkeith and the distant May—lay floating like phantom ships uptilted at bow and stern.

“When the islands float the storm is not far off,” said one.

“But by then,” said another, “old Janet will be well happit in her own place.”

And so it was. The Christmas sun shone brightly down on a little company that stood around the open grave, in a God’s acre that is bielled by a wooded cliff and looks out across the sea. Old Janet was home at long last.

That same day, when the sun was westering to its decline, the tug-boat drew in to the edge of the mud at Bridgeness pier, when the tide was very low. A plank was thrust up to the nose of the pier, and slowly up this precarious incline the cold benumbed figure of the Sky Pilot crept ashore on hands and knees.



SOUTH SHIAN FERRY, LOCH CRERAN

That very night the wind overswept the earth. The frost was gone. The storm had come. Next morning there were no distant islands floating in the sea. The wind shrieked in the rattlings of the ships in harbour. Great yeasty seas broke over the pierhead. On they came, one after the other, leaping,

angry, cruel, churning up the tidal mud from its sluggish bed, and throwing thundering seas with a brown spume against the barnacled piles. The clouds burst in lashing showers, and the wintry gales retched across the spindrift sea. Somewhere out in that vast wilderness of wind-lashed waters the *Sheldrake* plunged and strained at her anchor chains, like an angry sea-dog on its leash, and for days she was hidden from our view in the misty storm.

But old Janet was safe, at rest in that realm of Eternal Peace where no winds ever blow, and no storm, however loud, can disturb the calm of those who rest in God.

THE COVENANTERS

XVII

DARK DARMEAD

A COVENANTING WILDERNESS

Your feet will take you into some strange places if your heart lies there. On an October day I set out for one of the dreariest bits of moorland in Scotland. The day was damp and dull, with low clouds that threatened rain, mist on the heights, and that strange stillness in the air which is a presage of the dying year. We were making for Darmead, but we took one or two covenanting shrines on the way.

The Kirk of Shotts was one of them—that high sanctuary which stands four-square to all the airts in a cold bleak countryside. There was a church here as long ago as 1476. An old story has it that one Bartram de Shotts was a great robber who lived in the neighbourhood in the time of Robert II, pestering the people with his depredations. At length the Government decreed that whosoever should apprehend, kill him or bring him to justice would be rewarded with certain “shotts” or “plots” of land. A local daring-doer, the laird of Muirhead, gathered together a few trusty followers and stalked Bartram to one of his lairs in the valley to the east of the church. After a stiff fight they slew him, cut off his head, and brought it to the king. In the bad old days that was the way of giving sure proof that work had been well and truly done. As a reward the laird of Muirhead was given the lands of Lachop and Bullis. Sir Walter Scott refers to him in the five-verse ballad in the “Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border.”

Afore the king in order stude
The stout laird of Muirhead,
Wi’ that sam’ twa-hand muckle sword
That Bartram felled stark deid.

The parish of Shotts bulks large in covenanting history. The Rev. John Livingstone, after Communion on 21st June 1630, preached a sermon on the Monday in the churchyard which kindled the flame of a revival that spread over a large part of Scotland—a flame which even the persecutions of the next generation did not extinguish. But it was a superstitious age, and not many years after the revival we find the kirk-session of Shotts dealing with a

number of witches. Indeed, in 1683, thirty men met between the Kirk of Shotts and Cambusnethan,

who had forsaken the ordinances of God, and there did debate the authority of Scripture, and thereafter played at football with them [the witches], and after that burned them; this was verified by two ministers, Mr William Violent and Mr John Oliphant, who had certain information of it.

In 1650 Cromwell marched through Shotts with all his “Horses and fute, by the muir-way and the Kirk of Shotts, whare they had much difficulty to carey their cannoun and gunns.” Not long after this the Great Protector used these words in his indictment of the covenanting ministers before Dunbar: “I beseech you in the bowels of Christ think it possible that you may be mistaken.” Many of the Shotts people were stout Covenanters, and some of them took part in the Pentland Rising, in the affair of Drumclog, and in the battle of Bothwell Brig. The churchyard has its inevitable Martyr’s Stone. It stands upright, and on one side bears the following inscription:

Here lyes the bones of William Smith, who lived at Moremellen, who with others appeared in arms at Pentland Hills in defence of Scotland’s Covenanted Work of Reformation in anno 1666, agreeable to the Word of God in opposition to popery, prelacy, and perjury, and was murdered on his return home near this place.

It is a weird story. William was returning from the Pentland Rising when he called at a house not far from Moremellen, or Muirmailen, a little to the north of Murdostoun. His brother, growing anxious about him, went back on his tracks to search for him. As he crept past the farmhouse, he looked cautiously in at the window, and to his horror saw two men and a woman surrounding his brother William, who had a spit or rapier through his throat. The onlooker fled for his life, and durst make no immediate inquiries. Some years after the Revolution the headless body of William Smith was found in a peat bog. At a touch the body fell to pieces, and the bones were reverently interred in the churchyard of Shotts. It is said that the three murderers came to an untimely end.

Thirty or forty years ago there was a Covenanters’ flag in the farm of Loan, which lies exactly between Blackridge and Harthill village. The tradition is that it was at the battle of Bothwell Brig, and belonged to a family of the name of Thomson. It passed from them to the next occupiers

of the farm. Made of two pieces of linen sewed together, it was 5 feet 6 inches in length by 4 feet 6 inches in breadth. On it was the following:

An Open Bible.

Verbum Dei.

A Crown.

A Thistle.

For the Parish of Shotts.
For Reformation in Church
And State According to
The Word of God and Our
Covenant.

One or two small holes in the banner indicate that it was riddled with small shot. I wonder if this flag is still at Loan? If not, where is it to-day?

Our next trek took us to Benhar Moor, equidistant between Harthill and Starryshaw. Here in a hollow, by the side of a little stream, stands Peden's Stone. It is close by some cottages, and overshadowed by the great refuse bins of the pits. Long ago, this must have been a sequestered spot on the moor, with the burn running sweetly through the green hollow. A monument is built on the stone, and tells us that "This spot according to tradition is one of the places where Peden and others preached to the Covenanters." The memorial is surrounded by a simple iron railing. If any pilgrim would hear the voice of Alexander Peden, God's Gangrel, in this spot to-day, he will have to shut his eyes, blot out the scarred rubbish heaps and the pollutions of the little stream. And yet there is another side to the spoiling of the landscape which to-day has no beauty to make us desire it. This whole region has yielded untold mineral wealth which has revolutionised industry, and made Scotland a nation of pioneers in steel and iron both on land and sea, just as in olden times these same stern uplands bred men of an iron will and a steely faith which would neither bend nor break.

The last place to which we made pilgrimage that day was Dark Darmead. I call it dark because I have never seen the sun shining there, and because its memories—to me at least—still bring sadness when I think of the martyr men of God who once preached in this dreary spot.

There are two ways of reaching it. You may approach it from the east by the Headlesscross road, or from the west by Spoutscross farm, and whichever way you take you will wonder why so many of the place-names of this covenanting sanctuary are remembered by a "cross." Either way you will have to walk over the moor. When we reached Spoutscross the clouds burst and the rain came down. There was nothing but misty horizons, and

every step meant a squelch of water. On and on we trudged, until suddenly we dipped into a tiny hollow. There, standing in the solitude, was the Covenanters' Monument. This monument was maliciously blown up with gunpowder in July 1921, but it was afterwards rebuilt.

Standing here at Darmead you have only to draw a circle of five miles round it, and you will enclose the Covenanters' wilderness. On the circumference of the circle you will find all the ugly etceteras of ironworks, coal-pits, mining villages, and refuse bings, but this central plateau, a thousand feet above sea-level, is one vast desolation of moors with more bent grass on them than heather. Here you stand on a spot which was hallowed by many covenanting conventicles, and here the last martyr of the Covenant, James Renwick, was set apart as a covenanting minister, and preached his first sermon.

James Renwick was born in Moniaive. He went to the college of Edinburgh and took his degree, and when he was a student there he saw that singular Christian, Donald Cargill, die at the Mercat Cross. There and then Renwick resolved to carry on Cargill's work. At the Gallowlea, which stood near Shrubhill in Leith Walk, he also saw the hangman behead five Covenanters—Robert Garnock, Patrick Forman, David Farrie, James Stuart, and Alexander Russell. So he became a member of the Secret Societies for Prayer. He then went to Holland, where many of the faithful were in exile, and was ordained after the Presbyterian manner at Groningen. But his heart felt the tug of the Scots moors, and the outed folk who worshipped on them; so he returned in August 1683; and in October of that same year a general meeting was convened at Darmead, and there, James Renwick, at the age of 21, handed in his testimony, and was set apart as a minister of the remnant. He preached from Cargill's favourite text:

Come, my people; enter into thy chambers, and shut thy doors
about thee; hide thyself as it were for a moment until the
indignation be over past.

Then began Renwick's vagabond ministry. He had no church but the open moors. An ecstatic soul glowed like fire in a weak body. His ministry lasted only four years. Danger was his constant companion. Wind, rain, sleet, snow in winter, and the heat of the sun on the moors in summer—that was his daily atmosphere. Every time he preached a fast horse stood by him, saddled and bridled, for an instant gallop to safety. His eloquence drew crowds at all risks to places like Dark Darmead. He baptised hundreds in the open fields. By day and night the shadow of death was on him.



KILCHERAN HOUSE, LISMORE

Needless to say, Claverhouse was hot on his heels, and at one time Renwick had to fly to the north of England. But, back again he came, and preached at a conventicle on the Braid Hills. Then, venturing right into the lion's den, he went to stay with his friend John Luckup on the Castle Hill of Edinburgh. One day when he was praying in the house his voice was recognised. Trying to escape the next day, he was engaged in a tulzie in the Castle Wynd; a blow felled him, and his Christian vagabondage was over.

"What!" exclaimed Captain Patrick Graham, when Renwick was brought before him, "is this boy that same Mr Renwick whom the nation has been so much troubled with?"

The authorities would have welcomed a way out of another execution at this stage, but Renwick admitted he was guilty on three points according to the law—he would not acknowledge the king's authority; he refused to pay the Cess; and he had instructed his followers to carry arms to the field preachings. His only fear was that he would be tortured, for he had a frail, highly strung body, which tingled with sensibility. But mercifully all his fears were futile. "I am ready," he said quite calmly on 17th February 1688 when the drums began to roll; and the drums rolled till all was over.

There was neither beauty nor brightness at Dark Darnead on that rainswept October day. But, as we stood in the gloom and remembered, a

radiance that was brighter than the sun shone round about us.

XVIII

THE CROSS OF DALGARNOC

AND THE NITHSDALE MARTYRS

Dalgarnoc is a quiet little God's acre standing in green meadowlands a mile or two south of Thornhill in Dumfriesshire. An old kirkyard, its many graves are huddled round the site of an ancient church, a red stone wall of great strength is thrown like a protecting arm round the hallowed spot, and all is sequestered among great beech trees which are centuries old.

It was a perfect May day, hot and windless. Not a leaf stirred. Once inside the wall you look out and see cows browsing in the meadow, and sheep nibbling in a silence which is so complete that it reminds us of Carlyle and Jane Welsh at Craigenputtock. There, the stillness was so eerie that it was only broken by the bleat of a sheep, and Carlyle wrote: "My broom, when I sweep up the withered leaves, might be heard a furlong's distance." So, to-day at Dalgarnoc, there are only two sounds to break the brooding silence—the bleat of a lamb and the call of a peesweep.

Once this was a busy centre of life. Now Dalgarnoc tells the tale of brave men who gave their lives for Christ's Cause and Covenant. But when we look on these lettered memorials, we are reminded of the dearest loyalties of our souls—the Faith of our Fathers, Freedom of Conscience, and that Patriotism which must ever set above all else the good of this grey motherland. Look any way you please from Dalgarnoc, you see a far horizon of dim blue hills, reminding you of that heavenly horizon which the martyrs saw beyond all their earthly pain and death.

But why single out Dalgarnoc from all the other God's acres in Scotland? Because within the iron gateway of this churchyard there stands a tall cross of grey granite which is unique. On the top of the eastern side are carved in large letters these words, "The Nithsdale Martyrs." Below that moving title are recorded the names of fifty-seven men. On the western side there are symbols which are dear to every Scotsman's heart—the Thistle, the Crown, the Open Bible, the Sword of Justice, the Scroll of the Covenant, and the words "For Christ, Church, Covenant."

The Martyrs' Monument in Greyfriars' Churchyard, Edinburgh, certainly commemorates about a hundred noblemen, gentlemen, ministers and others who gave their lives for Christ's sake. But there is no monument

known to me in Scotland which commemorates so many men of the Covenant from one district who died for their Faith. Fifty-seven! Truly, Nithsdale was drenched in the blood of the martyrs. All honour, therefore, to those who erected this cross in the year 1928.

Read the names on the cross, and then remember the places where these Nithsdale men were buried—Balmaclellan, Scarvating in the Orkneys, Irongray, Greyfriars (Edinburgh), Kirkcudbright, Durisdeer, Tynron, Glencairn, Sanquhar, Stonehaven—and you will realise that their testimony covers the whole land.

But there are two places especially where some of the Nithsdale men of the Covenant made history—the Enterkin Pass, and Scarvating in the Orkneys.

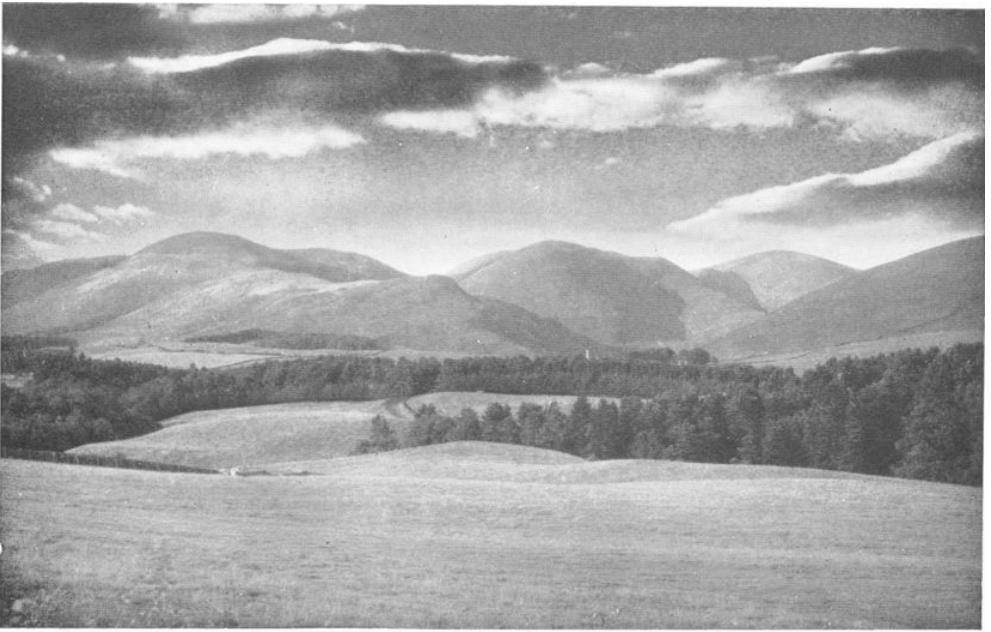
The rescue of prisoners at Enterkin is now one of the classic tales of the Covenant.

This lonely defile runs through the green Lowthers to the valley of the Nith. A stream threads its way down the bottom of the gorge, the sides of which are so steep that anyone walking on these sclid slopes is in great danger of losing foothold and being hurled to the bottom. On the north side the track is so narrow that man or beast must travel single file. This path is all that is left of the old drove road which led from Galloway to Edinburgh.

The Enterkin has been well named the Via Dolorosa of Nithsdale. Up this track passed many prisoners of the Covenant to the Tolbooth in Edinburgh. Also, in the sad old days of superstition, suicides were drawn on sledges to the top of Enterkin, and buried with ignominy in a place where the lands of three lairds met. The body was never even streikit, but was thrust into a rude box, and the box was buried in a shallow hole which was hastily dug. The sledge, with any ropes or harness used, was left on the spot to rot away as something accursed. It must have been a gruesome journey at any time, but eerie beyond words when the twilight fell, or when the day was hot with summer silence.

Defoe, Woodrow and others have given accounts of the affair at Enterkin. But from all accounts the following seems to be the essential story:

On a misty summer day, the 29th of July 1684, half a troop of dragoons, under Lieutenant Patrick Muligan, was riding slowly up Enterkin, escorting several covenanting prisoners among whom was a minister. They were all being taken to Edinburgh for trial. A couple of prisoners were tied to each horse, which was led by a pedee or footboy. They had almost reached the top of the pass, where it is most dangerous, when the silence was broken by a man's voice challenging the soldiers. A band of Covenanters had suddenly appeared on either side of the gorge.



THE HILLS OF DURISDEER

“Who are you?” cried the officer, “and what do you want?”

“Sir,” replied the leader of the band, “will you deliver our minister?”

“No, sir, and be damned to you.”

With that the leader raised his gun. Crack! And although the distance was so great, the bullet took Sergeant Kelt on the head. His horse staggered, the dead man fell from it, and rolled down the steep into a pool in the burn below. To this day the pool is called Kelt’s Linn.

There must have been an exchange of shots, for one or two were wounded, and the Covenanters were just about to take aim again when the soldiers saw another band of men cutting them off in the rear. The ambush was complete.

“Hold your hands,” cried the Lieutenant, for at the top of the pass he saw yet another group of men looking down on the fracas.

“A truce!” cried the officer again; “what will you have?”

“Deliver our minister.”

“You may have him. But you must stop firing.”

“We desire not to hurt you, but you must deliver the prisoners too.”

“You shall have them.”

The pedee could not control the minister’s horse at that moment in the dangerous place.

“Loose him, and let him go,” said the officer.

The minister stepped aside and the prisoners were set free.

“Instruct your men not to hinder our march,” cried the officer.

And turning to the minister he told him to go.

“But,” added he, “you owe your life to this damned mountain.”

“Rather, sir,” replied the minister, “I owe it to the God who made the mountain.”

“Call off these people who are at the head of the pass,” cried the officer to the leader of the Covenanters.

“Sir,” replied the leader, “these are not my people, but unarmed travellers who are waiting to descend the pass.”

“Had I known that,” replied the chagrined officer, “you would not have got your men so cheap.”

“Then,” said the leader, “are you still for battle? Will you cry off the truce? We are ready to fight.”

“No; I think you are brave fellows. Gang your gait.”

Clavers soon appeared on the scene. He combed Nithsdale. An enquiry was held at Dalgarnoc Kirk. At last he captured five men who were asleep in a cave at Closeburn. First he took them to the prison at Dumfries, and then marched them to Edinburgh. One of them, James Harkness, escaped. The tradition is that his wife sent a rope to him concealed in a large cheese. Three of the five were tried at noon on 15th August. They were found guilty, and by 5 o'clock that same day all three were hanged in the Grassmarket. But this was their united testimony: “If we had a hundred lives we would willingly quit all for the truth of Christ.”

Another glance at the names on the Cross of Dalgarnoc reminds us of the sore tragedy at Scarvating in the Orkneys, where five of the Nithsdale men were drowned. It is a story we are almost ashamed to tell to-day.

After the defeat of the Covenanters at Bothwell Bridge on a summer Sunday, 22nd June 1679, 1200 prisoners were penned up in an inner yard of Greyfriars' Kirkyard, Edinburgh, and the place is still called the Covenanters' Prison. Through five months of summer heat and winter cold, ill-clad and ill-fed, their only bed was the damp earth. Some escaped. Four hundred were released on taking an oath of non-resistance. Many died. By 15th November only 257 of the 1200 remained. One morning these were marched down to the Port of Leith, where they were put on board a ship called the *Crown*, to be sold as slaves in the American plantations. The hold had accommodation for 100, but the 257 were crammed into that terrible prison. For twelve days they remained at Leith. Then, after other twelve days on stormy seas, the captain was forced to land at Scarvating, which is about a mile and a half from Mull Head in the district of Deerness, part of the mainland of Orkney. To allow the sick to lie down the strong had to

stand up day and night. Intolerable thirst drove many of them to dreadful extremities. In a letter which one of them—James Corson—wrote to his wife from Leith, even before the voyage had started, he says: “All the troubles we met since Bothwell were not to be compared to one day in our present circumstances. Our uneasiness is beyond words. Yet the consolations of God overbalance all, and I hope we are near our port, and heaven open to us.”

On 10th December the ship was driven on the rocks and broken in two. The captain ordered the hatches to be battened down, despite the cries of the prisoners. When the ship foundered, about fifty of the Covenanters managed to get out and either swam or scrambled ashore. Even then the brutal captain ordered his men to thrust them back into the surf. Not more than forty got ashore, and two hundred were drowned under hatches like rats in a hole.

Let the diary of Thomas Brown, Notary Public in Kirkwall, corroborate the bald facts: “The 10th of December 1679, being Wedinsday, at 9 in ye evening or yrabout, the vessell or ship callit ye *Crouin*, qrin was 250 or yrbv of ye Quhiggs takin at Bothwell Brigs to have bein sent to Verginy, paroched at or neirby ye Moull head of Deirnes.”

It is a miserable memory, and if it were possible to undo history we would blot it out.

Robert Louis Stevenson has this apt word in *Weir of Hermiston* about the memory of a Scot: “That is the mark of the Scot in all classes, that he stands in an attitude towards the past unthinkable to an Englishman, and remembers, and cherishes the memory of his forebears, good or bad; and there burns alive in him a sense of identity with the dead, even to the twentieth generation.”

So to-day in far-off Scarvating, there stands a tall square monument beside the restless sea, with an inscription on it which tells the sad story of those who were drowned there. Every year on a summer Sunday many gather at this lonely memorial to worship God, to sing a psalm, to hear the Word, and to give thanks for the blessed dead. Leal hearts have long memories, and we dare not forget those who by their death long ago bought for us Freedom of Faith and left us a legacy of liberty which is to us most dear.

As we stand at the Martyrs’ Cross at Dalgarnoc there burns within us this same sense of identity with the dead, and a word comes down the wind to seal our faith:

I have a tryst to keep;
It was plighted long ago
With some who lie asleep.

.
And, I have a tryst to keep.

NORTH AND SOUTH

XIX

THE MONARCH OF THE GLEN

RED DEER AT HOME

The August relax had come. For the first few days there was the busy man's apprehension about having nothing to do—as if leisure was a crime! But gradually the old instincts of the primitive man reasserted themselves. Birds, beasts, fish, and all the sights and sounds of nature began to lure us away from the thought of the old routine, and I could lie on the heather in a lazy contentment, with a seeing eye, a hearing ear, and a heart beating in perfect unison with the heart of mother earth.

To a nature lover, one of the secrets of a good holiday is to have no programme, but to let each day determine its own. It is also a safe rule in this age of mechanised speed to travel as much as possible on your own feet; to avoid beaten tracks; and to look for friendship in every man you meet. Then your harvest of memories will be sweet.

I never tire of exploring the secret places of the glen, the corries where the deer find sanctuary, and the high tops. Through the defile the river thunders when in spate, or flows in long black pools between the grey rocks in the quiet weather. The glen has everything that a highland glen ought to have—a noble salmon river; immemorial trees; long green flats by the still waters; towering mountains over 3000 feet high, their steep sides patched with purple heather or scarred with stone screes below the precipices. Many of the high tops are carpeted with long stretches of close-cropped, weathered moss. Here the cloudberry grows—that strawberry-leaved plant with the luscious orange-coloured fruit which is like a large bramble. You seldom find that plant below the 2000-foot contour line, so it is a rough indication of height. In this glen, on the open moors, and in the far recesses of the mountains you will find all kinds of wild life, and wherever there are deer on the hill and fish in the river the eyes of the natural man will seek out the desire of his heart.

One of the greatest pleasures of a stravaiging man is following the spoor of wild animals and birds in the forest or on the hill. A deer forest is a silent, lonely place, but in it dwell the most fascinating of all the wilder beasts in this country—the Red Deer. The mark which a deer makes with its hoofs in the soft ground is called the “slot.” You can tell a great deal from a slot—the

age of the deer, its sex, the pace at which it has been travelling, and even the approximate time it has passed that way.

The slot of a stag's hoof is always larger than that of the hind, so you can be sure of the sex. The two halves of the hoof open and let the soft earth rise up in a ridge between them. As the stag grows older the points of the hoof separate or splay out more and more, until about the age of five the marks are wide apart. But after six years there is no increase, so you can guess the age of the deer. Moreover, when a stag walks, his hoofs sink very little in the soft mud, but when he gallops they strike the earth so hard that they make a very deep dent. You can therefore tell the speed at which he has been travelling. Even the freshness of a new slot in soft ground, or the hardness of the slot in ground that has dried hard, will give you pretty certain knowledge as to whether he passed that way yesterday or some weeks ago.

The lair also of the stag where he has slept in the grass or in the wood is unmistakable.

There are three distinct notes in the family speech of the Red Deer. Up on the solid scree of yonder cliff face I first heard a little deer calf calling in alarm to its mother hind, and the sound that it made was *maw-maw*, as near as I can spell it. A very appropriate call for a baby deer. Deer calves are queer, long-legged, helpless creatures. They are so spotted and speckled when only a few days old that you might almost walk over one lying among the heather before seeing it. On this occasion the hind was not far off, and she answered the call of her offspring with a sudden bark, or cough, or grump. But the great stags are silent until the rutting time comes in October, when every glen and hillside in the deer forests of the Highlands will be full of the fearsome bellow and roar of the angry stags. A stag roars at that time when he is challenging another stag to a deadly fight for the possession of his enemy's herd of hinds. The roar is a warning also to the rival mistresses in the harem. A stag will fight to the death for more hinds. But if the stag be an old one, and is worsted in the fight, he will sulk away in high dudgeon, leaving his harem to his younger and more valiant opponent. Stags fight with their antlers, sometimes even with their feet, but they never bite. The part of the antler that is most deadly is the brow point. It curves outward and upward from the brow, so that the two brow points are like the sharp prongs of a hay fork—a very deadly weapon when both stags are charging with their heads down. It is during this time of passion that the stag's roar is perhaps the fiercest sound of any animal that can be heard in this country.

The stag's horns make one of the most fascinating studies in nature. A stag sheds his antlers every year, and the new horns begin to spring from the head just when the brackens begin to unfold their green crosier-like fronds. At first the horns are soft and full of blood, and they are covered by a

protecting skin which is called the “velvet.” So the stag has to be very careful not to strike them against anything hard like a tree or a rock. If, indeed, at this stage the stag did injure his horns severely he might bleed to death. But later on in the season, when the horns have grown hard, the “velvet” begins to peel off, and the stag, irritated at the hanging strips of velvet, rubs his antlers freely against any tree or rock, until about mid-August the monarch of the glen is said to be “free of velvet,” and so is shootable.

One day, on a hillside of a little deer forest, I tried to hammer off the horns of a dead stag with the largest piece of rock I could handle, but I made no impression. So soft and tender are the antlers in velvet—so steely hard and terrible are they as weapons in the October wars!

The antler is judged by the number of points or “tines” which spring from the beam. The part of the horn which joins the head is called the “burr.” Round the root of it there is a circlet of little white knobs called the “pearls.” Then come the “brow points,” the “bay,” the “tray,” and finally “three on top,” making a full horn. Six points a side, or twelve in all, make a “Royal” stag, and fourteen an “Imperial.”

To enjoy the wild life of nature you need not fire a single shot. You can stalk a stag upwind, crawling on your hands and knees, and very often on your stomach when you dare not rise so high as your hands and knees, creeping nearer and nearer in the heather, or from rock to rock, or even up a water-course, until, with a good pair of glasses, it is possible to see every motion of the lazy stag enjoying his rest, sniffing the wind, and rising with an apprehensive sense of danger before making off and over the top at a steady gallop. He carries his antlers like a king of the forest.

More than once when the October world was dying in all the glory of its reds and russets and browns, I have grown restless in the city because I was hungry for one more sight of the Red Deer. There used to be a little bedroom available in the Black Mount Forest where I was always sure of a welcome by the kindest hearts in the Highlands—now, alas, no longer with us! Charlie always met me at the station with the last story about the deer or the salmon. When I arrived in October or November it was quite dark, and the first question always was—“Are they still roaring?” After a royal feast in the best of kitchens, I went out alone, over the soo-backit bridge which crosses the river below the Lady’s Pool, and up or down the forest road, with the stags belling and roaring all about me. Sometimes I would listen to them far up the slopes of Inverveigh. Sometimes there would be a blood-curdling roar quite close to me in the dark. But, near or far, the night was made eerie with the throaty belling of many a challenge, and if there was some little risk at

least it thrilled me to know that, in the rutting time, you are as near to the presence of wild beasts as you can ever get in Britain outside the Zoo.

Far into the night I would lie in the little room, with an open window, and a star or two peeping in from the frosty sky, listening to the belling of the deer. By day I would watch the angry stags routing up and down the hillsides, or making mad rushes at each other as they spoiled for the fight. The hills and woods were all aflame with the colours of the wounded world, and many of the trees stood out in the sunshine like great splashes of blood.

Then, another night of the fearsome music; a supper of deer's liver or stag's heart, or venison as it ought to be cooked; and good-bye to the monarch of the glen for another year.

XX

THE BLACK ISLE

CROMARTY AND THE FIRTHS

Many travellers who go north of Inverness never turn aside at Muir of Ord and take the road eastward across the Black Isle, that rich farming land which is the Garden of the North. This fertile promontory, which is almost surrounded by the Beauly Firth, the Moray Firth, and the Cromarty Firth, is called the Black Isle because, according to local tradition, snow does not lie on it in winter, and the land remains black when all the surrounding land is white.

It seems so near when you look across at it from Inverness, and yet it is a long way round by road. In the old days, when the motor car and 'bus did not compete with the little railway which goes to Fortrose, a native of the district, leaving home after a furlough, grew impatient as the train crawled on its way. When he reached Inverness he said to a fellow-passenger: "Thank goodness, the worst part of my journey is now over." "Where are you going?" "To China," replied the Black Isle humorist.

If you are going to Cromarty by road you pass through two of the quaintest little towns in the North—Fortrose and Rosemarkie. To linger in Fortrose is to realise the beauty of that fine poem in pink stone—the ruined cathedral, with the old-world houses that stand on the edge of the grassy precincts.

To me Rosemarkie recalls memories of the old parish minister of my youth, with whom I once stayed. His stories were endless. He always wore a tall hat, and was dressed in broadcloth clothes, his flapping surtout coat fastened with a single button and loop. My most remarkable memory is that, after a five-o'clock tea, he asked to be excused as his housekeeper generally milked the cow at this time, and the faithful beast would only give her milk if he stood in the byre and scratched her head. Even yet I can see the old bachelor with his tall hat on his head and his spectacles on the point of his nose standing in the dim byre caressing the cow's head. With a shamefaced look, he remarked rather sadly: "I've had few holidays of late years, for Crummie here won't give milk unless I am at home to scratch her pow."

The road turns sharp to the left when you leave the town, and after ascending a beautifully wooded ravine you turn again to the right and

continue for other seven miles until you reach the extreme nose of the promontory. Here the Royal Burgh of Cromarty snuggles along the shore of the Bended Bay (Gaelic, *crombagh*), almost under the shelter of the south Sutor and looking across the mile-broad strait to the north Sutor. These two grand bluffs, each of them over 450 feet high, guard the entrance to the Cromarty Firth, one of the finest naval harbours in the British Isles.

Sir Thomas Urquhart of Cromarty (1611-1660), in his little book with the extraordinary title, *Locopandecteison—An Introduction to the Universal Language*, gives us a delightful description of the Cromarty Firth:

A certain harbour or bay, in goodness equal to the best in the world, adjacent to a place which is the head town of the shire. . . . The harbour, in all the Latine maps of Scotland, is called *Portus Salutis*; by reason that ten thousand ships together may within it ride, in the greatest tempest that is, as in a calm: by vertue of which conveniency some exceeding rich men of five or six several nations, masters of ships and merchant adventurers, promised to bring their best vessels and stocks for trading along with them, and dwell in that my little town with me.

Well might Sir Thomas call Cromarty “my little town”; for the family of Urquhart enters largely into the records of this Royal Burgh, as proprietors. One extract from the records illustrates the ways of a pugnacious member of the family. It was in the time of Sir John Urquhart. One September day in 1669 the Town Council held a meeting at which a protest was made by Alexander Clunes against Sir John for enclosing the Commonty—that is, for depriving the people of their rights to the common grazing land. Sir John thereupon

Reproached him with base language, called him raskall and knave, and not satisfied therewith, pursued him with a kaine, and bate him to the ground, and threw away his hate [hat] and pirivige [periwig], the said Sir John desireing him to hold him with that for a rascall’s rewaird.

Then, when the Magistrates and Council proceeded to a new election, Sir John fell upon Thomas Lindsay, one of the bailies, and “did breake his face.” The Council then adjourned—that is, took cover!

But Sir Thomas, the Scottish Cavalier, who came before this Sir John, was a voluminous writer, and seems to have been less ferocious in his methods than Sir John. He travelled in France, Spain and Italy, and came

back with a great knowledge of languages and the art of fencing. He fought against the Covenanters in Scotland and also at the battle of Worcester. During that fight he lost most of his MSS.—“seven large portmantles full of precious commodity.” Did ever cavalier go into battle with seven suit-cases of his own books and papers? This extraordinary literary man tells us that when harassed by family debts, “I, as I had done many times before, betook myself to hazards abroad.” His translation of Rabelais is an English classic. But he died abroad, not in “my little town” of Cromarty, and his end was as unique as were many of the hazards of his life; for we are told that he died in a fit of laughter on hearing of the Restoration of Charles II.

When I walked down the main street of Cromarty on a sunny August day at 1.15, I saw only two people. Save for the cry of seagulls, there was not a sound. Then, in the empty street, I heard the tinkle of knives on plates through an open window. I thought perhaps that later on the people would appear. But no—at three o’clock it was just the same. Old houses, crow-stepped gables, sweet old-fashioned gardens, a huddle of grey roofs along the shore, a church tower, a foreign-like cupola on the tower of the Town House, a cloudless sky and a sapphire sea, with the bold bluff of the Sutor standing like a sentry to guard the gateway of the Firth.

In front of the Town House stands the shaft of the ancient cross on three steps. I looked through the window and saw a long row of leather-bound volumes on a table, and I thought of the secrets hidden in the Burgh Records—secrets like the story of the bailies and councillors taking cover from the fisticuffs of Sir John. I walked down the vennel where a few fisher-folk were mending nets or baiting lines. Here, as in all ancient fishing towns, the houses are built higgledy-piggledy in a gable-endy confusion which is very picturesque. A lazy seagull was stalking quietly down the passage, so that I had almost to shoo it out of the way before I could get past. In the old churchyard I came upon another bird, a young seagull this time, asleep on a flat stone. When I approached, it opened its beady eye for a moment, then closed it, and went to sleep again.



ON THE NITH, DUMFRIES

There is an old house with very thick walls tucked away modestly behind a garden. In the cellar there is a passage. Here, long ago, an exciseman was dealing with some smugglers. A shot in the dark, and the wrong man was killed. How many more tales of hair-raising adventure could these old houses tell? For Cromarty of old was full of seafaring men, captains courageous, navy men who had suffered from the pressgang, and douce kirk-going burghers. Then it was in close touch with foreign parts. Now that the fishing has failed and gone elsewhere, it is like an old man dovering in the sunshine, the grey roofs and the warm pink stone of the houses reminding us of his grey hair and his rosy cheeks. For that very reason here is an ideal resting-place for those who would spend a quiet holiday and relax in the caller winds of the sea-blown burgh after the stress of a city life.

I stood again and again gazing at a beautiful old three-storeyed house. It stands back from the street, surrounded by trees. A great flight of twelve steps leads up to a square stone porch. The ancient gateway is flanked by two elegant stone pillars. At the side of the garden wall a “crown of the causey” leads up the cobbled brae to the church and churchyard on the hill, and you can look down into the garden of this old eighteenth-century house, with its two flanking wings, as you go by. I stood in the mellow sunshine looking and listening, and I seemed to hear the tinkle of a spinet, the sweesh

of high-waisted gowns and the tap of buckled shoes on the floor, as a little company of gaily dressed men and women danced sedately to the minuet. Just then the town clock chimed a lazy three o'clock, and I awoke from the dream.

Above the town, on the very ancient site of the old castle of the Earls of Ross, stands that greater mansion of Cromarty House. Up a little brae among the trees you can see the back entrance to that stately dwelling—a dark tunnelled passage which must have given the creeps to many generations of domestics as they stole home late on the pitchy nights.

But to me the rarest sight in Cromarty is a humble little thatched cottage with a crow-stepped gable turned to the street. Here Hugh Miller was born. He began life as a working mason, and, as he tells us in one of his books—*My Schools and Schoolmasters*—he was practically a self-educated man. He had a passion for geology, and found many of his most famous fossils in the Old Red Sandstone, especially in the neighbourhood of the Ethie Burn. He was a devout man, but he lived in an age when most Christians took for granted that the earth was made in six days. When Hugh Miller proved by his geological researches that the world took æons of ages to grow he was greatly misunderstood, and even abused, by the narrow-minded church folk of his day. He was not only a famous geologist; he wrote many books, and latterly went to Edinburgh, where he became the editor of *The Witness* newspaper.

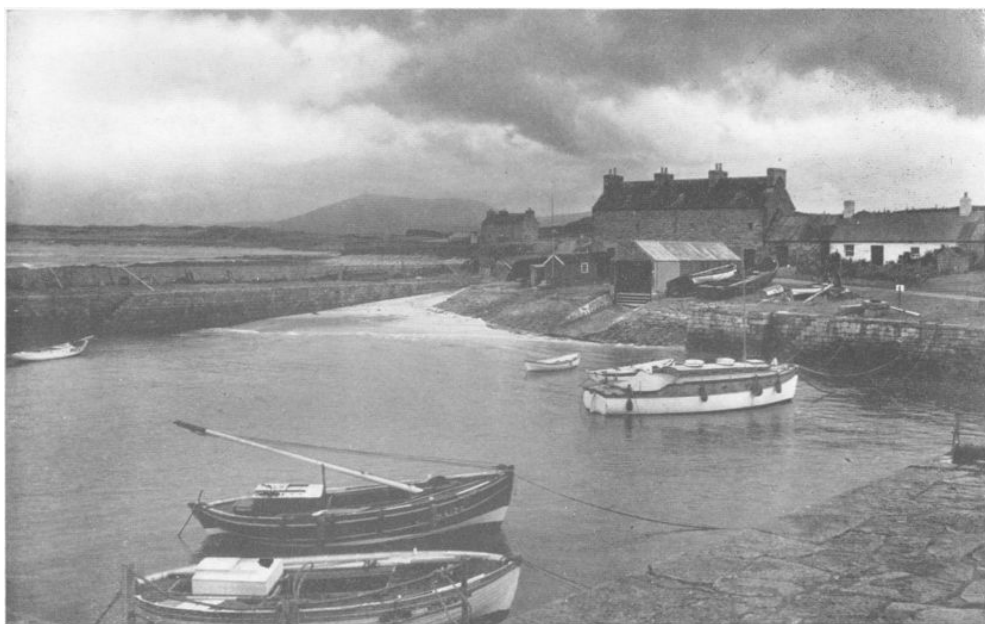
This is not the place to revive old controversies. But when you enter this humble cottage and look round you at the poor birthroom; at the collection of his books and fossils; at the letters written to him by Queen Victoria, Lord Brougham, Agassiz the great naturalist, Darwin and Thomas Carlyle; at his mason's wooden mell, and his old shepherd-tartan plaid—you realise that the greatest product of Scotland in all the generations has been men like Robert Burns, David Livingstone, and Hugh Miller. Each was born in a lowly cottage. Each rose to a fame that is greater than any fortune. By their sheer genius and grit they all overcame the difficulties that life threw in their way. Their names are written for ever in the history of their native land.

BY PENTLAND SEAS

SUTHERLAND AND CAITHNESS COASTS

When the train stops at Forsinard, drops you and your luggage on the platform, and moves off again, you realise that you have arrived at one of the lonely places in Sutherland. Although the altitude is only 500 feet above the sea, you can well understand that in winter time the local people call Forsinard "Frozenhard." Having collected your luggage, the car moves slowly off on the rather rough road for a drive of sixteen miles down Strath Halladale to the northern sea.

Yonder to the west are two blue hills, Ben Griam Mhor and Ben Griam Bheag, and still further to the west of these hills Strath Naver runs down to the sea. Strath Naver used to be called by the old crofters the Pride of Sutherland; but that was when it was thickly populated by little communities of men and women who worked contentedly on their crofts. There is, however, a little red book in my baggage which always makes me sad. We have just come up the beautiful Strath of Kildonan from Helmsdale, and these three straths—Kildonan, Naver, and Halladale—were once full of crofts, until the Sutherland clearances at the beginning of the nineteenth century swept the people from their native glens, compelling them to emigrate or to crowd down to the sea coasts. It is a tale of burning cottages and evictions. About 500 families were rendered homeless in Strath Naver, and in Kildonan about 2000 people were "cleared" to make room for a few large sheep farms which the Napoleonic wars had made more profitable.



SANDSIDE HARBOUR, REAY

Highlanders have long memories, and the little red book which tells the *History of the Highland Clearances* makes sad reading to-day.

Melvich is an unspoiled community. Indeed, as you travel westward along the Sutherland seaboard you come to one crofting community after another, all with intriguing names—Melvich, Port Skerray, Strathy, Armadale, Kirtomy, Farr, Swordly, and so on to Bettyhill. The views seawards are infinite, and every night the afterglow of the setting sun lights up the great cliffs of Hoy, in the Orkney Islands. The population of some of these townships is still considerable. There are a hundred children in the school at Melvich. But the old men sit in the shelter of the great peak stacks and hold their Gaelic colloques. From every cottage comes the delicious smell of peat-reek.

For the benefit of motorists a word should be said about the roads. Those who have travelled along the roads from Durness to John o' Groat's will remember the trying surfaces as well as the glorious scenery. Now, the Sutherland roads are being entirely remade. From John o' Groat's to Thurso the road is quite good. From Thurso to Melvich the new road has an almost perfect surface. But from Strathy westwards the road is in the painful process of being entirely rebuilt. This new road west of Melvich is only ten feet wide, but there are numerous passing places on every stretch of a mile, with visible posts to indicate them.

There are some fine fishing lochs on the Melvich moors, and there is a great sweep of golden sand a little way off where that famous salmon river, the Halladale, floods out to sea at a wide estuary. The mansion of Bighouse stands close by. Even in calm weather the sea grumbles round a bluff headland, and when a gale is blowing the white spume shoots up the cliff face. Bighouse Bay can be a heavenly loafing place when the sun is hot and the calm sea reflects the blue of the sky.

As we wander east among the crofting townships there is always a fascinating little road which leads down to the sea. One of the finest leads to Strathy Point, a rocky headland that thrusts its nose right into the ocean. The road stops a mile from the headland, so you must walk the rest of the way over the green turf. Westward you look to Whiten Head, and eastward to Dunnet Head.

Sitting on a heather knoll looking out to sea, I thought of the hardy Norsemen who sailed in their little galleys through these Pentland seas for four hundred years, during which time they ruled the Western Isles. Then came the battle of Largs in 1263, when Haco was defeated. His broken navy sailed away never to return. Haco was smitten with a deadly plague, and had to be carried ashore at Kirkwall. After a few months' illness there he died, consoling his last hours by reading tales about the great Norse kings.

Many of these Viking ships were quite small. The Gokstad ship, part of which was found preserved in a blue clay bog, measures only 60 feet on the keel, 75 feet over-all, with a maximum beam of 15½ feet. Judging by the number of row holes, which are 18 inches below the gunwale, there were 16 oars. It is clinker-built, and the wood is oak. Of course, there were other warships which carried a large number of men. The largest ship of which we have any record was that of Knut the Great. It had 60 pairs of oars, and, according to the above calculation of space for rowing benches, this ship must have been about 300 feet long. In the Viking ships there was only one mast, stepped amidships, and one great sail. The Bayeux Tapestry shows us one of these ships carrying four horses. These galleys sailed all round the coasts of Britain, to France and Spain, and right up the Mediterranean. Let us never forget that the blood of these hardy Norsemen flows in the veins of many a fair-haired West Highlander to-day. After Haco's defeat at Largs, Magnus, king of Norway, sold the Hebrides to Alexander III, king of Scotland, for 4000 marks.

Passing eastwards from Melvich over the heathery moors, we soon cross the boundary between Sutherland and Caithness, and come to the delightful little village of Reay. Here there is a miniature village green, on which stands a cross. Reay Church is a quaint whitewashed structure, with an outside stair and a unique tower, which has an open belfry. There are

considerable woodlands about Sandside House, and the inevitable side road leads down to a harbour at Sandside Bay. We are now in the region of Caithness flagstones, and many of the fields are still fenced with these flat upright stone slabs. The only beautiful thing about them is the golden lichen which covers some of the older ones.

Some people will tell you that there is no beauty about the Caithness flats. But there is a beauty that is all its own about flat countries—long swathes of greens and blues and yellows and browns, which can only be seen where the distances are limitless. The Caithness skies are as wide and splendid as those of Holland, and we all know how the great Dutch painters loved to paint them. Wherever you go along this road by the Pentland seas you will also see that perfect poem in gold and blue—the long line of yellow cornfields meeting the sapphire seas. And for the light! Dawns and sunsets are never so beautiful as when they are seen over a wide sea or a level land.

One of the most picturesque places in the whole district is Forss House. This high old Scots mansion, with its tall stone chimneys and many windows, stands above a bend of the River Forss against a background of trees. Close by the mansion there is a quaint old mill, with a weir, a water-wheel, and the miller's house alongside. From the bridge you can see the whole scene reflected in the water, and the constant hush of the weir adds the last touch of tranquillity to the sunny picture. The road here, unlike other Caithness roads, runs through a perfect tunnel of trees.

Caithness is the land of ancient remains—standing stones, underground dwellings, brochs and old chapels.

Crosskirk stands on the shore, about a mile from Forss House. It was a wild, wet day when we visited it. The side road stops at a cottage; then you cross the River Forss by a footbridge; and another half-mile of walking over the grass brings you to the old Chapel of St Mary. The roofless church itself is very old. It is built of dry stones, with a later enclosure to the east, which contains three Gunn graves. All round the ruined chapel there are modern gravestones; but a funeral here must have its difficulties, for there is no road. Between the chapel and the sea there are the well-defined foundations of a broch, the round walls being now completely covered with turf. Indeed, between the House of Forss and the sea, and to the north of the little hill of Lybster, there are the remains of three brochs. To the south of the chapel there is also the Well of St Mary. The situation of the chapel and the broch is wild in the extreme. A grim-looking, grey house stands by the shore, with some lobster traps at the gable-end. Great seas were pounding against the rocks while I stood in the rain on the foundations of the broch, and watched the surf flooding up the slanting slabs.

The other old chapel is at Brims Ness, about a mile further along the shore. Here the side road leads down to the little port of Brims. The bald old house, which is called Brims Castle, is an aggregate of buildings of different periods, and it is now occupied by several families of farm workers. I found the old chapel behind the castle. It is built on the rocks; the upper roof is gone, and the walls are crumbling; but a solid and ancient barrel roof of stone covers what must have been a crypt-like apartment. I looked in and found that this is now used as the pigsty of the farm. Three fat pigs were grunting in the dark. The barrel roof is covered on the outside with rough thatch. On the east and west gables there are four holes in the masonry, placed exactly opposite one another, as if beams had been thrown across. Mere conjecture is a dangerous thing; but could it be that this upper room was the dwelling of the priest, added at a later time; and that the barrel-roofed vault was the very ancient and original "cell" of the church?

Having passed through the considerable town of Thurso, one finds the country eastward to John o' Groat's a fine fertile land, without any hills. A few miles from Thurso we saw the aeroplane taking off on its daily flight of twenty minutes to Kirkwall. At Castletown the road sweeps to the left round Dunnet Bay, a glorious circle of sand, which runs for two miles to the point of Ness. There is another picturesque church at Dunnet, with a typical tower, and then the rather rough road carries on past St John's Loch, an inland sheet of water which in olden times was believed to have curative properties. The road climbs up and up until it crosses the bare waste, on the top of the cliff, and you are at Dunnet Lighthouse. The cliffs are well over 300 feet, and Dunnet Head is the most northern point of land in Scotland. Needless to say, the view is magnificent, across the Pentland Firth to the Orkneys, along the western coast to Whiten Head, and inland to the distant Sutherland mountains of Ben Loyal and Ben Hope.

From Dunnet, the road goes east by Mey and Gills Bay to the Kirk of Canisbay. Here in the eighteenth century the Rev. John Morrison, D.D., was minister (1750-1798). He was a poet of considerable ability, and wrote seven of the Scripture paraphrases. The 35th would have been enough to keep his memory green, for it is the Communion hymn that is sung by Scotsmen at the Sacrament all the world over.

The other interest to me at Canisbay Church was a memorial stone set up on the south outside wall of the church, recording the death of Donald Grot, son of John Grot, in 1568. A large cross is carved on this stone, and there is some very elaborate lettering round it. I found several other Grot stones in the churchyard.

Many people will tell you that there is nothing to see at John o' Groats but a hotel. But the Pentland landscape makes a fascinating picture, with its

cliffs, its restless tides, the isle of Stroma lying in the lap of the ocean, and the Orkney Isles beyond. Sitting above the little bay of snow-white sand, we looked east to the dreaded Boars of Duncansbay, and west to the Merry Men of Mey. The white surf was breaking over these death-traps to unwary sailors, and a constant battle of the tides goes on round them even when the sea is as smooth as glass. Beyond Stroma there is a whirlpool called the Swelchie. The legend is that a sea monster lived deep down in the Swelchie, and, if a ship was caught in this cauldron of the seas, the only way to propitiate the monster was to throw overboard the whole cargo.

As to John o' Groat, he was a Dutchman who came to Caithness with a letter of introduction from King James IV recommending him to the care of his loyal subjects in the North. Settling here, he became the accredited ferryman between Caithness and the Orkneys, and latterly a landed proprietor. His charge for the crossing was fourpence, or one groat. The groat was a silver coin in circulation between the years 1351 and 1662, and a groat was the name still used for a fourpenny piece in the nineteenth century. So pleased was John de Groat with his success—so the tradition says—that he celebrated his good fortune by giving an annual feast to which his eight sons came. But the sons began to quarrel about precedence and wrangled about who should sit at the head of the table. Wise John de Groat then built a large octagonal room with a door on each of the eight sides and an octagonal table in the centre. Each son then entered by his own door and sat at the head of the table. So John de Groat grew old and wealthy. But the octagonal room no longer stands.

XXII

HOME OF MY HEART

LAMMERMUIR MEMORIES

Doubtless I am prejudiced, because my first home lay just below the heathery slopes of Lammerlaw. Every morning on awakening the eye swept that restful line of hills. The peesweeps seemed to be always calling above the great fields, and the whaups gurling on the moors. The winds of the Lammermuirs have been wedded to the winds of the great North Sea ever since the world began, so they are always clean and strong.

Weather is a grand introducer. Many years ago I took shelter from terrific rain in a Princes Street restaurant, and hung up my dripping coat near an empty table. Soon a lady came in and sat down at the same table, because there was no other vacant at the moment. There was nothing for it but to laugh at the weather and compare notes. Something was said about Soutra Hill in a rainstorm.

“Do you know Soutra?” said the lady. “I live on the south side of it.”

“And I on the north side.”

From that moment eating became a mere drawback to conversation, and very soon we were speaking about Lady John Scott.

“My mother knew her, and I know every one of her poems. What is your favourite?”

“‘Durisdeer,’ ” I replied.

“We’ll meet nae mair at sunset,
When the weary day is dune;
Nor wander hame thegither
By the lee licht o’ the mune:
I’ll hear your step nae langer
Amang the dewy corn,
For we’ll meet nae mair, my bonniest,
Either at eve or morn.”

“It’s a bit sad,” she remarked.

“I admit it. But life is like that. And poetry is life. What is your favourite?”

“Oh, mine is ‘Lammermuir’”—and there and then she repeated the whole poem:

“O wild and lonely Lammermuir,
Would I could feel once more
The cold north wind, the wintry blast
That sweeps thy mountains o’er.
Would I could see the drifted snow,
Deep, deep in cleuch and glen;
And hear the scream of the wild birds,
And be free on thy hills again.”

When the rain was over we exchanged cards, and never saw each other again. When I looked at hers after parting I recognised a well-known title.

That is the Lammermuirs. Once they get into your heart they stay there to the end of the long day.

We were far from the railway station. In my day there was not even a horse bus. A motor car was such a rare sight that we ran to look at it. The minister’s first wedding took place after a snowstorm, and he had to ride on horseback over the hills for three miles in the snow, and back again in the dark, because all the roads were blocked. One of his first baptisms entailed a walk of six miles over Soutra into Lauderdale, and six miles back. On one occasion, to meet a friend from Edinburgh, who was coming to eat his Christmas dinner with us, we had to take an ordinary farm cart for three miles through the fields to dodge the snowdrifts, and back again, sitting all the time on bundles of straw. But since then the winters seem to have changed, and the world has swung forward into untold luxuries.

The name of Lady John Scott is inseparably bound up with the Lammermuirs. She was one of the last of the auld-farrant gentlewomen, and her favourite motto was, “Haud fast by the past.” In the very year I made my home under Soutra she died. All her life she hated railway trains, and preferred to drive to Dalkeith Palace in her own coach-and-four to see her brother-in-law the Duke. Hers was the very last coach to put up at Blackshiels Inn, which is now a farmhouse. The slight gimp girl who inherited from her mother the curly hair and the heavy-lidded blue eyes of the Wauchopes of Niddrie married Lord John Scott of Buccleuch. This little Scots gentlewoman was full of music and poetry, and she had in her that sough of old romance which brings tears to the eyes at the very thought of ancient things. It was she who wrote the present words of “Annie Laurie,” and she put a tune of her own to it as she sat drawing virgin melodies from the strings of her beloved harp. I knew the man who bought her harp after

her death; but, alas, he too is dead, and I often wonder where the harp is now.

Like all the old eighteenth-century gentlewomen in Scotland who wrote verses and songs, Lady John wrote “Annie Laurie” anonymously in the year 1838, and it was published without her knowledge or permission. Indeed, she always thought the air and the words had been stolen when she sent her music book to be rebound. But when the Crimean War broke out, she gave the manuscript to be published for the benefit of the widows and orphans of the soldiers. Only then did the real authorship become known.

She was a siccar Scotswoman, and had “nae broo o’ the English.” Indeed, Lord John and she only lived for a small part of each year at Cawston, their beautiful English home in Warwickshire. Did she not once say in a joke, “I would rather live in a pigsty in Scotland than in a palace in England”? Her love of country was nothing short of a passion. From her wedding-day to her burial, she was always out in the shine and storm of her beloved Lammermuirs. Her bridal trip was a drive from Spottiswoode to Bowhill, and the coach ran into a drift of snow. When her last song had been sung, and they carried her shoulder-high to the old Kirk of Westruther, the little black procession was caught in a blinding snowstorm. It was just what she would have liked. She once remarked to her grandniece at Spottiswoode, “Heaven won’t seem heaven if I don’t see these benty fields and tufted rushes there.”

When I last rade down Ettrick,
The winds were shifting, the storm was waking,
The snow was drifting, my heart was breaking,
For we never again were to ride thegither
In sun or storm on the mountain heather,
When I last rade down Ettrick.

There is a little shepherd’s house, in the very heart of the Lammermuirs, which I will call Lonely Bield. The road stops long before you come to it, and the only track is up the green grass by the burn-side. I have many intimate memories of that solitary cottage.

The first time I came on this shepherd’s house I did not know whether it was occupied or not. So, when I had descended the long heather slope, I approached cautiously and looked in at the kitchen window. Then I saw that a young lanky herd was kneeling before the fire toasting bread. He was quite unconscious of my presence. But before long we were both sitting at the table eating delicious buttered toast and drinking strong tea. A few months

after that the herd went the way of all the world, and the next time I was there I told his wife that she had got a fine housekeeper.

Every year, early in the month of June, I used to go up this quiet glen with a tall friend for a day's fishing. The hot happy hours slid by like minutes. The sheep baaed up on the heather hills. The stream made music throughout the livelong day. The moor birds called continually. The little trout plopped in the golden pools, and our hearts literally sang songs of peace. We bathed, too, in a long golden pool and lay in the shallows looking up at the blue sky with a heavenly contentment. Then, when the day was drawing to late afternoon we chapped at the shepherd's door and received a hearty welcome.

A strange thing happened on one of these visits to Lonely Bield. When we were sitting at tea the old shepherd asked us if we had caught any good ones. Oh yes. We had a dozen, at least. The basket was lying at the door, and I promised to show off the trout after tea. When we went out I opened the basket, and to our horror we found only two small trout! The tall fellow looked at me and I gazed at him.

"Well," said I, "when we arrived here there were fourteen fish in the basket."

But we knew the value of fishermen's stories. The old herd laughed heartily. The good wife said nothing. So we went down the glen that evening completely mystified and feeling rather sore.

Six months after, on Christmas day, I received a card from a farmer's wife who lived at the foot of the glen. On the back of it was written this sentence: "I hope pussy will behave better the next time you are at Lonely Bield." The shepherd's cat had lifted the lid of the fishing basket and extracted twelve fish, one by one, leaving the two smallest.

Fifty miles will take you round the Lammermuirs. From Gifford to the heights above Danskin. Down the Whitadder by Priestlaw to Cranshaws Kirk. Then Ellemford. Over the hill road by Whitchester and down again into Longformacus. Across the heather by Rawburn to Wedderlie and Westruther, between Dirrington Law and the Twinlaw Cairns, and so home up the Leader Water. What a heavenly round, and what soul-stirring views!

Long ago, those mysterious wee folk called Brownies were of great service to the farmers. Brownies would do all kinds of work during the night while everyone in the farm town was asleep. But the farmers had to treat the Brownies with great respect, so they left plenty of food lying about for them, such as barley bannocks with jugs of milk and ale. Thus was the Brownie kept in good humour, and bad luck always came to the farmer who offended the Wee Folk.

One Brownie at Cranshaws took great offence because a certain farmer complained of poor work done. The result was that one night the entire crop which this Brownie had previously threshed was taken to the Raven's Craig and thrown into the river.

At Ellemford, on a still summer day, peace seems to come dropping slow. Where the Longformacus road turns sharply to the right there is a quaint old house, part of which is completely round, like the Retreat at Abbey St Bathans. Here in this sheltered pleasaunce, by the still waters and far from the madding crowd, one might surely find a refuge from all the disturbing things of life.

Over the hill again, and you suddenly descend into the valley of the Dye Water, and a quick turn across the bridge lands you in Longformacus. There is a local saying, "Out of the world and into Longformacus." And so it is. For here is a village sequestered, in an upland valley, beside a stream, with whispering trees all about you.

I shall never forget my first visit to Longformacus. Here in August 1914, just after the Great War had broken out, I was taken for a spy. There was at that time a scare in Berwickshire about spies. I must have looked like a German, with gold spectacles, a brown knickerbocker suit, a Homburg hat with a little bow of ribbon behind, and a rucksack on my back. I was riding a bicycle, and carried a few Ordnance maps, as I always do.

After the long run over the hills I was feeling both hungry and thirsty. So I went into the likeliest place and asked for something to eat and drink. The proprietress was a delightful lady, but she was also an ardent patriot. She told me bluntly what she thought of me, and would give me neither food nor drink. All my protests were wrongly construed, and it seemed useless to tell her what I was, or that I had a house on the other side of the hills. I admired the stand she took, but thought it wise to slip quietly out of the place. I went up the Rawburn road pushing my bicycle before me, and sat down to look at the map that I might make sure of my way across the heather carrying my bicycle. Just then a motor car passed down the road, and it stopped. The people in it stared me out of countenance and held a hurried conference. But I sat still munching some bread and cheese. Resuming their journey with very sour faces, they doubtless reported the suspicious character.

Feeling very hot, I took off my hat, and for want of something to do examined the inside of it. I had just bought it at Henry Burton's in Glasgow. To my horror I saw stamped in gold letters on the leather, *Made in Austria!* Like a witless gomeril I whipped out my knife and cut away the lettering. Then too late, I realised that I had done the very thing which would draw suspicion if I was arrested.

The following April I was actually reported as a spy by the military authorities guarding the Kames Powder Works, between Loch Fyne and the Kyles of Bute. By good luck the local doctor was an old friend and vouched for my innocence, else I would have found myself in rather restricted quarters. It all shows how awkward the spy business can be; for, once suspected, every explanation becomes a cock-and-bull story.

Not long ago I was again in Longformacus and ventured into the old place. To my delight I found the same lady, looking just a trifle older. I told her I had been there twenty years ago. But she did not remember me. So, lest she should feel sensitive, I slipped away again leaving no name. Long may our country be served by such patriots.

There is a sad legend about the Twinlaw Cairns. These two very tall heaps of stone crown a hill which stands above the Watch Water. They mark the resting-place of twin brothers, who fell fighting there. From boyhood they had been separated, and now one led the Scots army and the other led the Saxon army, quite ignorant of their relationship. So the two leaders determined to fight out the issue of battle as champions of the opposing forces. The conflict was a bitter one, and both were slain. But an old man of the district who had known them in their youth recognised them in death as the twin brothers. Such is the story of "The Battle of Twinlaw" told in the old ballad.

But the end of the story is better than the beginning. After the discovery of their identity, the soldiers of both armies foregathered like friends. Forming long lines up from the Watch Water to the top of the hill, they passed stones from hand to hand and so built these two tall cairns in memory of the dead brothers. You can see the stones a long way off. How true it is, that—

A mist of memory broods and floats,
The Border waters flow,
The air is full of ballad notes,
Borne out of long ago.

Old songs that sung themselves to me,
Sweet through a boy's day-dream,
While trout below the blossom'd trees
Plashed in the golden stream.

The Borderland is drenched in memories of love and war. For centuries those siccary men had to fight desperately for their homes. On their very playing-fields to-day they still fight to uphold the honour of their little burgh

towns. A Borderer is just as touchy as a Highlander about his particular family or clan. Indeed I always tremble lest I spell the name of a Border man wrongly. Elliot, for example:

Double L and single T,
Elliot of Minto and Wolflee.

Double T and single L,
The Eliotts they in Stobs that dwell.

Single L and single T,
Eliots of St Germain's be.

But, double L and double T,
The deil may ken wha they may be.

XXIII

BRAVE BORDERLAND

THE TRAGEDY OF FLODDEN

When we reached the top of Soutra the view northwards over East Lothian made us think of the Garden of the Lord, and when we came to the Red Brae and began to descend the valley of the Leader Water, a glimpse of the Eildons stirred up the whole romance of the Borderland. All the way to Cheviot the colour of the world this May day was unbelievable: the livid green of the braided fields; the red earth of the Berwickshire farms; the woodlands all dressed in fresh foliage; here and there the purples and crimsons of bursting buds. Yonder were the landmarks which every Borderer knows—Hume Castle on the east; Penielheugh in the middle distance; and dark Rubers Law on the west, with the rich country rolling southwards to the dim ramparts of the debatable land.

Then we ran into the quaint old town of Kelso, with its great market square, a stately balustraded hostelry, a fine old town house with pediment, Ionic pillars, and cupola from which the curfew still rings. The lazy chimes make sleep an easy temptation on a hot afternoon. We entered a tall pillared gateway near the ruined abbey, and arrived at one of those dignified old mansions whose beauty is never likely to be repeated in these modern days of straight-lined architecture. Pass up the stone stairway and through the house to the french windows on the other side. There below you is Tweed, with two white swans floating on its glassy surface. You can hear a whisper of water where Teviot falls into the larger stream. Beyond the river stretches a noble park with ancient trees in it. In his day Sir George Douglas would never allow a tree to be cut down if it could be avoided. But on one occasion, when a tree had to come down for road widening, he watched the process with anxious eyes, and afterwards thanked the forester because he had done the deed tenderly.

Kelso town is full of quaint features and old gentry houses. It is, above all things, a market town. Read the names of the streets which open off the square and you will find the horse market, the coal market and the wood market. There are many queer little courts and corners: houses with outside stairs hidden away in back yards, narrow alleys in unlikely places. One of those long, straight passages is so narrow that I touched each wall with a

hand stretched out on either side. Cobble-stones are everywhere. Unless on a market day, when the square is crowded, Kelso is so quiet that strolling seems natural, and puts hurry out of fashion. The ruins of the abbey dominate the town with a mellow dignity, and the new cloister which has been built for the Dukes' burial-place seems to nestle closely to the side of the old grey mother. The Abbey Court, just across the road, is now a sleepy cul-de-sac with some old-world houses in it.

Like all the Border towns, Kelso has known the clash and clang of history. It was the "Sair Sanct" who placed in this abbey of the Virgin and St John a company of Tiron monks from Picardy in the year 1128. This is not the place to launch out on the history of the abbey. Sufficient to say that the Norman tower was constantly used as a defensive keep in the Border wars. It was the old story of hammer and tongs between the English and the Scots. Dacre burned the abbey and gutted the town in 1523. Norfolk did the same in 1542. Hertford completed the ruin two years after that. The monks were fell fighters. In the last desperate fight against Hertford twelve monks and ninety laymen held the abbey, and when the guns battered down the walls the soldier monks took to the tower, where they held out all night. A dozen escaped in the darkness by the help of a rope. But at dawn the tower was won, and the last Scot fell fighting.

For a long time the form of the building was a puzzle to students of architecture. It was solved by that well-known archæologist, the late John Ferguson, of Duns. With his wide knowledge, he got on the track of an unindexed document in the archives of the Vatican—*Monasterion S. Mariae de Calco*, of the Order of St Benedict. It was written in 1517, and it gives a clear description of the abbey church of "Calco," or Kelso, twenty-eight years before it was destroyed by Hertford. This document states that the church had at both ends and on either side "two very lofty chapels like wings," showing that the great church was like a double cross. The portion of the abbey which we see to-day is only the west end of the building, with a beautiful three-storey Galilee porch. A plan of the completed abbey lies before me, drawn from the details of the Vatican manuscript. Well do I remember Mr John Ferguson, in whose house at Duns I handled a beautiful illuminated missal long ago.

The old Grammar School of Kelso, to which Sir Walter Scott went when he was eleven years of age, was tacked on to the east end of the abbey ruins. His classmate was James Ballantyne. All the world knows the tragic end to that friendship between the author and the Kelso printer. After the Reformation the Parish Church was part of the ruin roofed in, but it was abandoned for a new one in 1771.

The whole district is reminiscent of ballad lore and battle story. There is Roxburgh Castle, now a few ruined walls, standing above the steep banks of the Teviot. The castle must have covered an enormous extent of ground, and you can still trace the remains of the moat or ditch. Not a trace is left of the ancient town of Roxburgh, with its streets, its convent, its school and its mint, where many of the Scots coins were struck. It was a sore point with the Scots that Roxburgh Castle was held by the English for nearly a century. Wandering up and down this green plateau, between Teviot and Tweed, I seemed to hear the din of the desperate battle. Then a terrific explosion in 1460. It was the sound of the bursting of “the Lion,” a great gun similar to “Mons Meg,” and the explosion killed James II on the spot. No wonder his widowed queen razed Roxburgh Castle to the ground.

I turned my steps next to Yetholm, a pleasant village pillowed on the foothills of Cheviot. There are two Yetholms. One, Town Yetholm, on the north side of the Bowmont Water; the other, Kirk Yetholm, on the south side. Kirk Yetholm was the old-time home of the gypsies, of whom Johnny Faa was the king. When first I went to Yetholm there was still a sough of the Faas about the place. But now the old “palace” of the king is toshed up, and is quite evidently a showplace.

After that I met a shepherd and his dog on the grassy path.

“Do you ‘look the sheep’ up there on Stairoch Hill?” I asked.

“Ay, Stairoch’s in my hirsle, and a gey cauld place it can be. Dae ye ken it?”

“Forty years ago I was often up it.”

“Mercy me! That’s a lang time. Man, I whiles ‘look’ that hilltap for twae ‘ooros afore breakfast, and whan I get hame I’m sae hungry that I could eat a raw man!”

A raw man. It was worth coming all the way to hear of such an uncommon meal.

My next journey was to Ednam, a sequestered village on the north side of the Tweed, about two and a half miles from Kelso. It stands on the side of the River Eden, and whether you derive its oldest name of Aednam from Aidan, the Scots king and saint, or its present name from a Home on the Eden, you will find matter for dispute. You enter the grounds of the church and manse through a tunnel-like avenue of foliage. The village can boast of two distinguished natives—James Thomson, author of *The Seasons*, who was born in the manse, and whose monument stands on the little hill over yonder; and Henry Francis Lyte, author of “Abide with me.”

But my real interest in Ednam centres in an old charter of the twelfth century. It is the charter of Thor Longus, who owned the lands of Ednam, and is dated 1105 A.D. He was a devout man, who built a church and gave it

with a ploughgate of land to the monks of St Cuthbert. A ploughgate of land (*una carrucata terrae*) was 104 acres Scots, the equivalent of 120 acres English. This endowment of a church by a private individual in 1105 at Ednam was the beginning of that vast accumulation of church funds in the form of legacies or gifts to God in the ancient Church of Scotland. There were doubtless many other gifts by charter before and after that, but this is the oldest example known to me of how a parish was set up and endowed by a lord of the manor. The wording of this old charter makes it clear that such gifts were never meant to be the property of the State, but that they were to be the property of the monks or their successors perpetually:

Et ecclesiam in honorem Sancti Cuthberti fabricavi quam ecclesiam cum una carrucata terrae Deo et Sancto Cuthberto et monachis ejus in perpetuam possidendam dedi.

And this church I have built in honour of St Cuthbert, which church with one ploughgate of land I have given to God, to St Cuthbert, and to his monks as a perpetual possession.

My last pilgrimage was to the battlefield of Flodden. After visiting the village of Cornhill and its old church, I set out to walk to Branxton, for the road to Branxton is the road to Flodden. The village is a mere hamlet set on a hill, with the sturdy tower of an old church dominating the tiny world of high-set fields.

On the roadside just below the village I stopped at the Well of Sybil Grey. It was to this well that the Lady Clare came for a cupful of cold water to slake the thirst of the dying Marmion after the battle, and to-day the old well with the cross above it is inscribed with Scott's own words:

Drink, weary pilgrim, drink and pray
For the kind soul of Sybil Grey
Who built this cross and well.

The memorial monument stands on Flodden Hill—a great cross with a simple inscription, which gives the true judgment of history in the fewest words:

Flodden—1513—To the Brave of both
Nations—Erected 1910.

The view over the Borderland is unforgettable, not only for its beauty, but because every Scot who fought and died here said good-bye to life in full

view of home. Flodden is the bloodiest doorstep in Scots history.

The army set out from the Boroughmuir of Edinburgh in brave loyalty to their king, James IV, who was determined to do battle with Henry VIII because the English king was making war on France. It was a superstitious age, and James was well warned against this invasion. Two uncanny freits are recorded. The one was at Linlithgow in St Michael's Church. While James was worshipping there at evensong a man clad in a long blue gown, bare-headed, and carrying a pikestaff in his hand, appeared to the king and warned him not to march into England. Then, the blue-gowned figure disappeared. As Pitscottie says, he "vanished away as he had been a blink of the sun, or a whip of the whirlwind, and could no more be seen." The other weird warning was in Edinburgh, when a voice was heard from the Mercat Cross at midnight calling out the names of the earls and lords, barons and gentlemen who within forty days would appear before the Judgment Seat. But James was determined to have his way, and the great army marched south.

James wasted time in a series of little raids, crossing the Tweed at Twizell on 22nd August, and thereafter taking the castles of Norham, Etal, Ford and others. The weather was cold, wet and windy. A council was held, at which the significant decree was passed that the heirs of all who fell in battle were to be exempt from all royal dues of wardship, relief and marriage. At last they came to Flodden, and camped on a strong position on the hill. On 9th September James made three mistakes. First, he left the hill to fight the English on the level ground. Second, he exposed himself needlessly by fighting in the ranks like a common soldier, while Surrey, the English commander, remained in his chariot directing the fight. Last of all, and fatal in so many fights, the impetuous Scots, who were victorious on the left wing, carried on too far, and so were not able to go back to the assistance of their hard-pressed fellows on the right wing when it was broken. The English held their ground and kept their line intact, and so were able to go to the assistance of their fellows whenever they were in need. The English arrows fell on the Scots in a pitiless shower. Then, when defeat was inevitable, the gallant Scots formed a ring round their king and fought until it was dark. When the deathly night was over, the sun rose on an unbroken ring of the dead, heaped high about the king. Among the slain were found thirteen earls, fourteen lords, an archbishop, a bishop, two abbots; and there was no noble house or lairdship in Scotland that did not mourn for some kinsman lost.

To an Edinburgh man one of the most poignant memories of Flodden is that of the lone horseman who rode wearily into the capital of Scotland carrying a tattered standard with the tragic news of Flodden Field. There has

been a sound of keening in our history ever since, and “The Flowers o’ the Forest” is our ageless coronach of death.

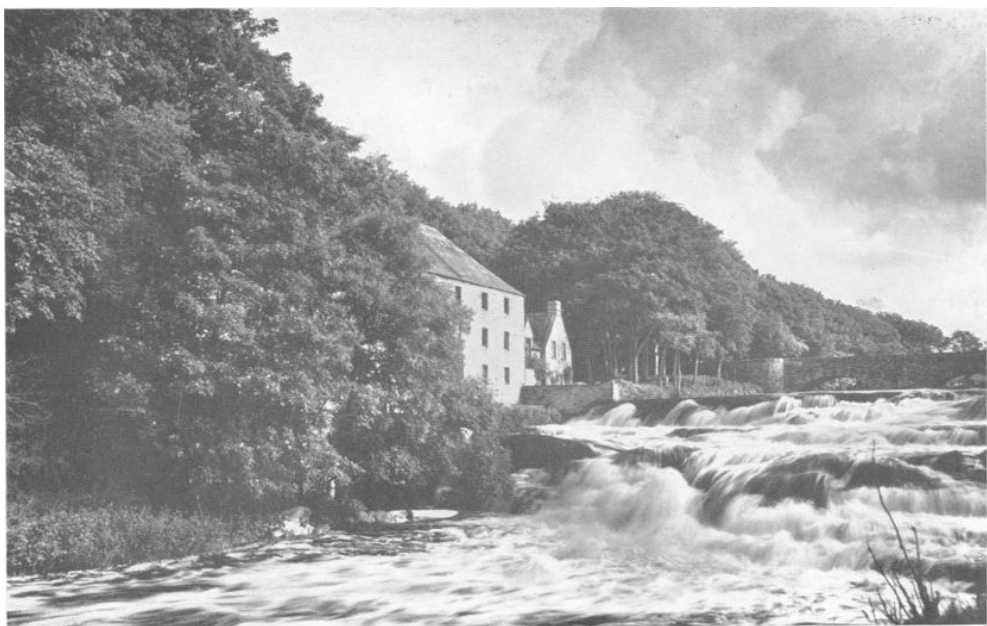
XXIV

HAPPY VALLEY

THE PLACE WHERE I WAS BORN

Blessed is the man who can call his own some valley with green pastures and still waters. To be born in a place of quietness and beauty is to be sealed for life with a love of country places.

Samuel Johnson once wrote a book called *Rasselas—Prince of Abyssinia* to raise funds to pay the expenses of his mother's funeral, and to clear off some little debts she had left. An old tattered copy of the book lies before me now, for I once bought it out of sheer regard for the great man whose simplicity forbade him to contract a debt which, on such a high occasion of the soul, would have been inexcusable. Those who have read the book will remember the happy valley of the east which if a traveller entered he could never leave again. But, with all its pleasures, it did not satisfy the Prince of Abyssinia. Therefore after much searching he found a way out, and so came to the great world. In one sense *Rasselas* is a parable of life. We all begin in the happy valley, but however beautiful and peaceful it may be, we must all find the way out; then we must take the world for our pillow. This is just another way of saying we must all grow up.



OLD MILL OF FORSS

There must always be something significant about the place where one was born. My happy valley lies in a western shire, about twelve miles from a great city which has not as yet spread its tentacles so far as to destroy the immemorial peace of the place.

You alight at a pleasant wayside station from which you get a glimpse of green hills, occasional woodlands and fields of ripening grain. The wind blows clean and caller. A stranger might say it was a commonplace countryside—this valley with cows in the fields, little whitewashed farmhouses, quiet country roads, woods where the birds make music every spring, and meadowlands along the riverside. But what could be more tranquil to the spirit or restful to the eye than a place of green pastures and still waters?

You take the first turning to the left from the station yard, and cross the bridge over the river, where you can see the waterfall and the old sawmill, with big saugh trees hanging over the stacks of sawn timber. Then on for quarter of a mile, until you come to a place where three roads meet. Turn to the left again, up a little hill, and in five minutes you will be looking right into the gateway of the happy valley. The gate is just a quiet country road, with hawthorn hedges creaming white in May, and heaven above.

Far away before you rolls the pastoral vale, with a slow-running river meandering through the fields. On one side, the homely hills with the Skiff

wood running to the top; on the other side, pasture lands which mount up and up in billows of green and brown, until they lose themselves in the blue distance among the moors of Misty Law, whose lonely summit catches the clouds sooner than any other hill in the shire. From that rounded summit there is a limitless view every way, but especially westward to the distant sea.

Down in the valley yonder stretch the peaceful waters of Castle Sempill Loch, like a sapphire set in green.

Descending the road between the hedges, I see a clump of trees in the centre of which stands a cottage on a slight eminence, with a lawn in front on which grow trees and shrubs. In summer time when the trees are in full foliage you cannot see the house from the top of the road, only a whiff of blue smoke rising from the centre of the greenery, mysterious and intriguing. But when the trees are stripped of all their leaves there is a glimpse of chimney-pots, a front door, oriel windows, and a miniature sweep of gravel in front. Here is a real country cottage—not a “cottage with a double coach house,” as De Quincey says in his *Confessions*. But, alas, the place has lost some of its mystery, for the trees have been almost all cut down. I am, however, speaking of the place as it was long ago.

You had only to step within the gate, and in a moment you were in a garden enclosed. Here, blackbirds flirted with one another the livelong day, and fluted their full-throated litanies when evening came. There was a tiny stream, too, on the south side of the garden to which the cows came down to drink from the neighbouring farm on the sweltering summer days. Behind the house there was another garden running down to a bushy bunch of trees, and this brought the tiny demesne to an end. Here were sweet scents and delicious fruits, with a constant drone of bees in summer. And here the Great Adventure began for me, far from the world’s racket, lapped in a dream of peace, in the spacious times of Victoria the Good, when ladies wore crinolines and men stocks and tall hats.

But if you would see the nerve centre of the valley, you must take the field path to the right which leads to the back door of Sleepy Hollow, a village which nestles in the bield of a wooded hill. I am thinking, of course, of Sleepy Hollow as I first knew it, long before the railway arrived. In those days you might climb the Steeple Brae at noon and see but a few stragglers gossiping in the sun. But all the way up, from the Low Barholm to the Steeple, you could hear the click-clack of handlooms in almost every property. Behind the weaving shops were well-kept gardens whose show pansies were famous. Alongside of the weaver’s shop, or above it, was the weaver’s house, often approached through a narrow close. At meal hours, or

in the late afternoons when work was done, the wise old weavers stood at their doors in groups and discussed the politics of the world.

The weavers in my day were a peculiar people. Red Radicals in politics and inveterate in debate, each had three things which he could call his own—his opinion, his loom and his twang. They had, too, their own way of pronouncing names; Tom became Tammuck, William Willuck, and James Jimmuck.

The real name of Sleepy Hollow, of course, is Kilbarchan, which means the Church of St Barchan. Barchan was a Celtic saint who lived some time between 550 and 650 in Ireland and Scotland. He may have founded a cell at Kilbarchan. Stricken with blindness in old age, he developed the gift of second sight or prophecy, and retired to Ireland where he died. He was buried at Inishmore on Galway Bay in a common grave with other three saints, and thereafter the church close by was called the Church of the Four Illustrious.

But the local patron saint of Kilbarchan is Habbie Simpson, the famous piper who lived at the beginning of the seventeenth century. A wooden statue of him was placed in a niche of the Steeple in 1821, and Robert Sempill of Beltrees has for ever enshrined him in his “Ballad of the Life and Death of the Piper of Kilbarchan.” There is an oil-painting of unknown date which was handed down in the Beltrees family, and in this quaint portrait the Piper of Kilbarchan is decked out with ribbons, flowers and feathers. Habbie Simpson keeps his eye on the ongoings of the peculiar people, and everyone who is born in or about the village is still called a Habbie. The old wooden statue was replaced by a more substantial one in 1935, and part of the wooden one is now preserved in the Town House. But, old or new, the children of Habbie live on.

We owe most of what we know of Habbie Simpson to Robert Sempill’s ballad of “The Piper of Kilbarchan.” The Sempills were an old Scots family, and the place of Beltrees is still to be found on the south side of the Happy Valley overlooking Castle Sempill Loch. John, son of the great Lord Sempill, married one of the “Queen’s Maries”—Mary Livingstone, sister of William Lord Livingstone. John Knox in derision called the bridegroom “John the Dancer,” and the bride “Mary the Lusty.” Both were favourites of Queen Mary, who granted the lands of Beltrees to the second Lord Sempill.

The ballad tells many things about the life and customs of the time. It tells us that Habbie Simpson carried flags on the drones of his bagpipes; that none could take his place as a player of fine tunes, or as a supporter of the town’s cause; and that he was the centre of merriment at every feast and fair, whether it was Beltane or Barchan. You get a vivid picture of the folk of the fair dressed in gay garments, the spearmen with their steel bonnets, jacks

and swords. At the local pageants Habbie appeared playing his pipes to the accompaniment of a drum. He attended the horse races and was an expert at games, particularly football. He was a welcome guest at weddings, wore feathers in his cap on Sundays, and tethered his old mare in the kirkyard during the service. At long last Habbie Simpson was “toothless, auld and teuch.”

But there is one melodramatic touch in the ballad which shows us the Piper of Kilbarchan in another light. On one occasion he was playing a new tune called by the extraordinary name of “Whoop-Meg-Morum,” when a youth who had imbibed too much whipped out his knife and ripped up the bag of Habbie’s pipes. The music died with a roar as the wind escaped. Then or now no greater insult could be offered to any piper, so Habbie instantly struck the fellow with his bittock, or *biodag*, which is the Gaelic for a dirk. The lad immediately fell down. Habbie thought he was killed, ran off, and hid for a few days in Craigends Moss. Then one dark night he crept home and asked his wife about the dead man. She told him that the lad was pretty well. The truth was that the dirk which Habbie in his alarm had thrown away had never left its sheath, and the blow had been blunted.

Thus from an old ballad the history, the life, the local language, the period costumes and the social habits of a village hundreds of years ago can be recreated.

Despite the passing of the handloom weaving, there are still some weavers left in Kilbarchan. Indeed, the tartan used by the Royal Family for kilts is woven in the village. At the display of Scottish textiles at the British Industries House in 1936, a Kilbarchan weaver—William Meikle—was seen weaving a royal tartan.

“Fifty years ago,” said Willie, “there were eight hundred weavers in our village, but now only the old people are left.”

How the weaving has declined may be judged by the fact that in 1860 there were 900 looms; in 1902 there were 200; to-day, old David Borland told me that there were only 12 left. The tragedy is that not one of the twelve weavers is under sixty years of age, and there are no apprentices. In spite of that, I wonder if there is any other village in Lowland Scotland where there are so many handlooms working?

I stood in the Borlands’ weaving shop talking to the old man, and watching his sister weaving a most beautiful Prince Charlie royal red tartan. She had a crown of pure white hair and a pair of spectacles on her nose. He is a little, wiry old man, full of life and interest. Little wonder. For there have been weavers in the Borland family since the year 1640. As I stood there, listening to the old man deploring the decline of his beloved handicraft, and watching the eident woman with the white hair making a

royal tartan to the click-clack of the flying shuttle, I felt that I was at the funeral of a fine old industry. The power loom has stabbed the handloom to death. And yet, any kilt-lover who has sense and sensibility will insist on the tartan of his kilt being made on a handloom, the tartan hard and fine, and the colours all fast with vegetable dye. The local humorists call Willie Meikle the “baby weaver” because he is the youngest. Would it hurt his sensibilities if I suggested that his age is round about sixty?

I said good-bye to the two old weavers with great reluctance, but I was proud to carry away a tiny bit of Leslie tartan with the thrums all hanging from it.

I have mentioned the fact that the old weavers were all red-hot Radicals in politics. Many years ago, when Joseph Chamberlain was a Liberal, one of the perfervid Radicals in Kilbarchan—Malcolm Neil—with a few of his fellow craftsmen determined to present Mr Chamberlain with a beautiful silk handkerchief, each weaver in the group working a little bit of it. It was a gift from the very heart of the Habbies, and it was well received by the great politician. But not long after that Mr Chamberlain became a Unionist, and the Kilbarchan weavers felt that they had been betrayed. Malcolm Neil was so outraged that he determined to recover the silk handkerchief. So he travelled all the way to Birmingham, called at Mr Chamberlain’s house, and demanded an interview. Alas, he was told that the politician was away from home!

One of the streets in Sleepy Hollow is called Shuttle Street. The weaving shops in it are all empty and silent now. I can imagine a child of the next generation asking why the street is called by that name. Most of the remaining weavers work now in a little cul-de-sac on the top of the hill called Gateside.

It was a radiant day in June when I walked out to the cottage by the field path. On my way I came to a public bench at a sunny corner. On the bench sat a row of old men, all dozing in the heat, some asleep, the others startled into an open-eyed bewilderment at my passing salutation. When I reached the cottage I sat down on the roadside and ate my sandwich in the sun. Afterwards I ventured in at the wooden gate, knocked at the front door, then at the back. But silence was the only answer. I wandered round the premises at will, looked at the roses, at the little greenhouse, and in at the oriel windows, half expecting to hear a child’s cry. But there was no sign of life. Then I slipped away.

Loved of wise men was the shade of my roof-tree.
The true word of welcome was spoken in the door—
Dear days of old, with the faces in the firelight,
Kind folks of old, you come again no more.

Fair the day shine as it shone on my childhood—
Fair shine the day on the house with open door;
Birds come and cry there and twitter in the chimney—
But I go for ever and come again no more.



BETTYHILL AND THE RIVER NAVER

XXV

LISMORE

THE HOME OF ST MOLUAG

In the days of war it is a means of grace to dwell on the things that make for peace and beauty. There are certain days which are good to remember because they were so full of tranquillity. But neither the pen of a writer nor the brush of an artist will ever be able to reproduce all the beauty of one Highland day. However, there is still left with us something of the miracle which the eye conveyed to the heart on one such day.

As we loitered at South Shian Ferry for the motorboat to come over for us from Lismore the morning glory was still on the sea. Little waves lapped along the shore like a lullaby, for the hills of Benderloch and Appin were still asleep under their coverlet of blue-grey shadows. To those who have lived and lingered in this district, exploring Loch Creran from Balliveolan to Airds Bay, and penetrating the glen by Fasnacloich to Glenure of murder memories, this is one of the beauty spots of the west, and it is steeped in the history of a poignant past.

As we raced past a grey islet a family of seals were sunning themselves on the hot rocks. One clap of the hands and they slid lazily into the sparkling water. The liquid eyes in their sleek round faces gazed stupidly about them before they disappeared. Then past the Appin Rocks, and the great cliff just beyond Airds Bay, and Castle Stalker with Shuna Isle beyond came into view. The grim mountains of Glencoe and the mighty mass of Ben Nevis itself were robbed of all their terrors because they too were sleeping in the summer haze. Soon we were landing on the north point of the green flat island of Lismore, which means the Great Garden.

On stepping ashore it is well to remember that Lismore is essentially the island of St Moluag, just as Iona is St Columba's island. It is, however, unfortunate that in the minds of most people almost all the credit of founding the early Celtic Church in Scotland is given to St Columba, the martial missionary of Iona. We are apt to forget that, long before the coming of St Columba, St Ninian set up his little White House at Whithorn, and that during his lifetime he founded cells of Christ over a large part of Scotland. Then, when it came to the lifetime of St Columba, one of his greatest contemporaries was St Moluag of Lismore.

The first vivid picture we get on landing is that of a coracle race between two skin boats thirteen centuries ago. In the one boat was Columba, with some of his monks; in the other, with his followers, was Moluag who is described in the Litany of Angus the Culdee as “the pure and brilliant, the gracious and decorous, the sun of Lismore in Alba.” Here is the old Hebridean account:

St Moluag was sailing towards Lismore when he beheld a boat carrying St Columba for the Lismore shore at highest speed. St Columba’s craft was the faster. When Moluag saw that he was likely to be beaten he seized an axe, cut off his little finger, threw it on the beach some distance away, and cried out, “My flesh and blood have first possession of the island, and I bless it in the name of the Lord.” St Columba, seeing that he was outwitted, began to invoke various curses on St Moluag’s occupation.

“May you have the alder for your firewood,” wished St Columba.

“The Lord will make the alder burn pleasantly,” replied St Moluag.

“May you have jagged ridges for your pathway,” exclaimed St Columba.

“The Lord will smooth them to the feet,” answered St Moluag.

Thus it was that Lismore became the centre of St Moluag’s missionary work. He founded other centres of Christian work at Rosemarkie, Mortlach, and Clova, all of which were under the control of Lismore.

There is a quaint old village of one street called Port Ramsey on the west side of the island. All the houses are joined together, and are dazzling white. Each used to be occupied by a fisherman, but, alas, the fishing industry, here as elsewhere, has declined. The chief road runs for ten or twelve miles from the north tip of the island to the lighthouse at the south. The highest point is Barr Mor, which is only 417 feet high. From end to end Lismore is green and fertile, with prosperous little farms and sheep runs. Lismore owes its fertility very largely to its limestone soil. The climate is mild, and the largest fuchsia tree I ever saw stands by the roadside.

But the chief interest centres round Clachan, where the Parish Church stands. There is nothing of special interest about the outside of the church, except four ancient buttresses on the south wall, a doorway, and an aumrie near the eastmost buttress. Inside there are certain interesting features, and the whole building has recently been restored in a seemly way. A pointed arch, three sedilia, with rounded arches in the south wall near the east end; a

sharply-pointed doorway in the north wall; and a piscina in a pointed recess—all carefully restored. Nothing could be more appropriate than the simplicity of the white walls. Three very old wooden collection ladles stand in a corner. The present church is evidently part of the chancel of the pre-Reformation building.

In the neighbourhood are many relics of the saint. Down by the shore, about half a mile away, is Port Moluag, where the holy man landed. The place is just a little to the north of the ruins of the Pictish broch, now called Tirefuir Castle. On a certain place above the Port there are indications of walls below the turf, and this is probably the site of the earlier church. Here also are Moluag's Cairn and Moluag's Well.

In a field between Clachan and Balnagown stands the Sanctuary Stone. If a hunted fugitive could reach this stone and lay his hand on it before the avenger reached him, he was safe for a year and a day. During that time he could repent of his offence and be freed of his guilt, unless it was a capital crime. There is also a rough boulder called St Moluag's Chair, shaped like a seat, not far from the church. Two hillocks are of interest. One is Tom-a-Crochaidh, the Hanging Hill, where the extreme penalty was carried out; the other, the Moot Hill, where the local court of justice met regularly to hear cases. If the criminal was condemned, yet not found guilty of death, he was led round the pillar against the sun; but if he was acquitted he was led round the pillar *deisul*, that is, with the sun, which meant that his honour was completely vindicated.

One of the most precious relics of St Moluag still exists—his Bachuill Mor, or pastoral staff. It is a plain staff, stripped of all its ornaments. Only a few rivet-holes remain to show how the rich covering was fixed. Some tiny fragments of copper also remain. It is 2 feet 10 inches in length. This is surely one of the oldest relics of the Celtic Church remaining to us. The Bachuill was for a long time in the possession of the family of Livingstone of Bachuill. Indeed, they were known as the Barons of Bachuill. From them it passed to the Duke of Argyll, in whose possession it remains.

St Moluag's Bell is another holy relic. The bell is believed to have been the saint's bell when he was in Lismore. It is at least an extremely ancient Celtic bell, and is preserved with its shrine in the Museum of Antiquities in Edinburgh. It was found about 1814 under a heap of stones on the farm of Torrebhlaurn, in the parish of Kilmichael-Glassary, Argyllshire. The bell-case is of brass and, of course, is of a much later date. The bell itself is very frail and broken. There is a possibility that this may be the bell made for St Moluag in Lismore, about which a legend is related in the *Aberdeen Breviary*. The story tells us that St Moluag employed a native smith to make a square iron bell for use in the church, but the smith complained that he had

no coals. Thereupon the saint went and gathered some rushes, “and thus was fabricated the bell which to this day is held in great estimation in the church of Lismore.” The words “to this day” were, of course, written in the time of Bishop Elphinstone, who himself superintended the compilation of the *Breviary* about 1509. All that we can with certainty say is, that there is no other Argyllshire bell now known to exist which answers this description.

From end to end of this island you will find the ruins of old brochs and castles like Tirefuir and Caifen, ancient cairns and duns, and the site of a chapel on the isle of Bernera. Each has its own story, and the lore of Lismore would make a book in itself if all were told.

On the west side of the island, just across from Clachan, there is a picturesque ruin of the old castle of Caifen, standing above a little bay. Caifen was the son of a Norse king, and lived in the castle with his sister Beothail. Beautiful Beothail was as gentle as her brother was warlike. It was said of him that he neither allowed his galleys to rest nor his arms to rust; but of his fair sister it was said that her steps were like the music of songs. Her lover, a son of Lochlann, was killed in battle. The princess died of a broken heart, and was buried at Eirebal close by the castle. But in her death-sleep she never ceased to cry to her father that he would carry her home to Norway and bury her by the side of her lover. A ship came to Caifen Castle; the body was found, it was washed in the holy well, and taken on the long voyage to Lochlann. When they reached the homeland, Beothail was laid to rest beside her lover. Even then she did not sleep in silence. The joints of one of her toes were missing. Again the ship returned from Norway; the small bones were found in the holy well where the body had been washed; at long last they were reinterred in the lovers’ grave far from Castle Caifen, and both rested in silence. To this day the well in Lismore is sometimes called the Well of the Bones of Beothail.

I visited Kilcheran House, which was once a college of the Roman Church. At the end of the eighteenth century this seminary was situated at Samalaman, a lonely house in Moidart, on the shores of Loch Ailort. Here young priests were trained for work in the Highlands and Islands. But in 1803 the house at Kilcheran in Lismore was purchased and the Priests’ College transferred to this old ecclesiastical island. Lismore continued to be the residence of the Highland Vicar-Apostolic and the Training School of Priests until, in 1829, the college was transferred to Blairs in Kincardineshire. The present dining-room was the old chapel, and the gable-end is still surmounted by a belfry. Two bishops of the name of Chisholm are buried in a small walled-in plot immediately behind the house. Great trees surround the place, and from the level lawn there is a superb view across some little islands to Benderloch and the lordly peak of Cruachan.

On the island of Bernera, off the south-west shore of Lismore, there is the site of an ancient chapel. A yew tree grew there, and its branches were so widespread that it is said a thousand people could stand under them. About two hundred years ago the laird of Lochnell cut down the yew that he might make a staircase of the wood for his great house. However, an old *cailleach* with the sight warned him that his house would not stand, and he would have no more heirs male. Not long after that the great house was burned down, and to-day strangers own Lochnell.

No account of Lismore would be complete without some reference to *The Book of the Dean of Lismore*. This is a collection of Gaelic poetry taken down from oral recitation as early as 1512-1526. It was compiled by Sir James Macgregor, the Vicar of Fortingal, who was Dean of Lismore. With the exception of the Gaelic notes on the pages of the *Book of Deer*, the Dean's book furnishes us with the earliest specimens of written Gaelic. In this great work the Dean was assisted by his brother Duncan, and his book gives the lie to Dr Johnson's assertion that "there is not in the world an Erse (Gaelic) manuscript a hundred years old."

A CAMPBELL LAIRD

BLACK DUNCAN OF THE SEVEN CASTLES

Wherever you go in the Highlands, you will find old castles. Every old castle has an aura about it; for history is history, and if the old grey stones could speak they would tell us the tale of many a clan feud, with the romance and tragedy which made the daily life of those who dwelt within the walls.

Again and again I have passed Barcaldine Castle, but until 1939 had never set foot within the narrow doorway, or sat in Black Duncan's great chair. There have been many Campbells of Barcaldine, but I shall confine myself to Donacha nan Seachd Caisteil, or Black Duncan of the Seven Castles, as he is called in the language. He began to build the castle in 1594, and finished it in 1609. In an old account it is described as "a great house of four hows height, the lowest how wollit"—that is: a house of four storeys, the lowest storey vaulted.

If you have never come down through Appin from the north to Barcaldine on a perfect summer day, or up through Benderloch from the south, you have missed an adventure in beauty—white clouds piled up in the blue sky, like heavenly Alps; the mountains of Glencoe and Creran all dappled with plum-coloured shadows; green Lismore like a fertile garden lying in the waters of Linnhe, against the darker loom of Morven; and, if it be late summer, that perennial poem in colour—golden grain fields bordering the blue sea.

Barcaldine Castle stands on a mere knoll on the shores of Loch Creran. Indeed, Barr a Challtuin means the hazel knoll. But if the castle does not stand on some beetling crag, at least the view from it is magnificent on every side, and the very openness of its stance must have made it easy for a sentry to anticipate the attack of an enemy by land or sea. Forby all this, here is a Highland keep that is so strongly built that in the days of clan warfare the besiegers might spatter the walls with bullets and shoot showers of arrows in vain.

Black Duncan was one of the greatest of the Campbell lairds, and he lived in a time when a Highland chief had the power of life and death over his people. You have only to cross the road, step over a stile, climb a tiny

green hill, and you are standing on Tom a chrochaidh, or the Hanging Knowe. Every chief had then his gallows tree, and he did not seem to have had any objection to the gallows, with its gruesome bodies, being visible from his windows. He had the responsibility of maintaining law and order throughout his own territory. Hence the underground prisons and hanging trees. Many a poor and perhaps innocent man must have taken a last longing glance round the fair world ere he went to his doom.

The castle itself is like the man who built it—strong and bluff, with very few tender features about it. Every window in the lower storeys is still barred with heavy iron grilles. There is the inevitable round corkscrew stair-tower, and one or two tiny pepperbox turrets at the corners. There is no policy surrounding this grim battle tower—only a few plane trees and a tiny garden—which suits the austerity of the place. The prevailing impression is that of stark strength.

When the Lordship of the Isles fell in 1493, in the time of James IV, the Highlands and Western Islands became the scene of many feuds and factions. Law and order did not exist, and killing without trial was not uncommon. It is just in such times of history that strong men and dictators arise to shape the destinies of the people. Black Duncan was one of these, and he did not scruple to make use of his dictatorial powers. In a clause in an old Barcaldine lease the tenant was “bound with all the forces he could command to enter into deadly feud with the Macgregors” (1588).

Out of this lawlessness gradually emerged the Clan system, when men of one name and kinship banded themselves together under a chief. The chief was a law unto himself, and soon every clan had its own badge and tartan. The chief had really more power than the king over his people, and this clan system was not broken legally until after the 'Forty-Five.

Look at the portrait of Black Duncan and you will see a black-bearded man of war, dressed in sombre raiment, of a stern countenance, a sinister eye, his hand on his sword, and a sash over his shoulder. Sometimes he wore a cowl on his head, so his people called him Duncan of the Cowl. There was at times a touch of mediæval ferocity about him. But while he could be a ruthless dictator, he was a man of considerable culture. He had travelled abroad in his youth, and he learned military tactics in the wars of the Low Countries. He was a patron of the arts, as his portrait shows. He had a great passion for tree-planting in his own wild and bare country. He even commanded his tenants to plant the oak, the ash, and the plane tree every year, the number of trees to be in accordance with the size of their holdings. He himself planted the avenue of limes behind Taymouth Castle, and that other splendid avenue of limes, called the Cathedral, at Finlarig Castle. He

was also a lover of books, and on the fly-leaves of some of them are written religious poems by a hand that may have been Black Duncan's.

This ruthless man became a great landowner, and his estates were not always obtained by purchase. Black Duncan had his own views about ruling his people and preserving his own estates. He raised what might be called a series of block-houses or castles from which he controlled the wild caterans and raiders of each district. The following were the seven castles which he either built or repaired for this purpose. From Barcaldine he kept watch over Appin and Glencoe. Achallader at the head of Loch Tulla was his watchtower over the wild moor of Rannoch. Dochart Castle stands on a tree-clad island on the loch of that name. Kilchurn Castle at the head of Loch Awe commanded Glenstrae and the great passes from the east and west. Edinample Castle at the head of Loch Earn was a convenient sentry over the wild Macgregors and others at Balquhiddy. Next came Finlarig Castle at the west end of Loch Tay; and last of all Balloch Castle (now called Taymouth Castle) at the east end of Loch Tay.

Thus the Campbell country was ruled, and it became prosperous, fertile and peaceable. To visit these seven castles is like reading seven volumes of Highland history, and they take us to some of the most beautiful scenes in the country.



AT PORT KILCHERAN—LISMORE

The ruins of Finlarig Castle stand on the summit of a great mound near Lochy Bridge, Killin. But the knoll to-day is surrounded by a high stone wall, and the circular enclosure is planted thickly with trees. The entrance now leads not only to the ruined castle but to a burial-place of the Campbells. But close by the wall of the castle ruins there remains a mediæval pit—the only one known to me in Scotland. Common criminals were hanged on the gallows; but all gentlemen who were to die were sent to the pit where, after being chained by the hands, they were ordered to place their heads in a stone mould shaped for head and neck; and then they were executed by axe or sword. Here at Finlarig the square stone-lined pit with the mould for head and neck remains, even the rusty chains remain.

All visitors to Finlarig Castle will notice near the pit three small figures carved in stone standing on the grass. One of the stones has some lettering on it, part of which is rubbed away, but the name is quite plainly Campbell of Glenorchy. Below that there is the head of a man with a beard, and wearing a curious headgear, a close-fitting conical cap with feathers in it. This is Black Duncan of the Cowl.

I have mentioned Black Duncan's Chair at Barcaldine Castle. It is a huge black oak arm-chair. I was duly impressed when I was asked to sit on it. But I was astonished on rising to see my hostess working a catch at the back of the chair, and immediately the whole back swung down on the arms and made Black Duncan's Table.

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY
OLIVER AND BOYD LTD.
EDINBURGH

BORDER BY-WAYS & LOTHIAN LORE

BY REV. DR T. RATCLIFFE BARNETT

CONTENTS

RIVERS OF ROMANCE
THE HOMELY VALE
DIARY OF A TWEEDSIDE LAIRD
GANGREL'S GLORY
LONELY LOITERING
LAND OF MERLIN
HOUSE OF QUIET
FOUR ABBYS OF THE SAIR SANCT
WINTER BEAUTY
HERMITAGE CASTLE
IN THE LAP OF THE LOWTHERS
EAST LOTHIAN
ST TRIDUANA
THE RETREAT
PENTLAND HAUNTS OF ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON
ROARING SHEPHERD AND HIS DOG
MY WINTER SANCTUARY
WINTER WANDERINGS IN WEST LOTHIAN
CASTLE EERIE
INCHCOLM
CASTLE DUNGEONS
CRAMOND AND BARNOUGLE
GLOSSARY

With 29 full-page illustrations from photographs by Robert M. Adam.
Crown 8vo, cloth. Pp. xii+228. Published price 6/- net.

Press Reviews

Border Byways and Lothian Lore links up past and present so pleasantly that it is indispensable to the rambler and a veritable source of refreshment to the stay-at-home, for Dr Barnett has not only the observant eye and an intimate knowledge of historical lore, but he has the art of conveying something of the speech and manners of the people and of the atmosphere of romance that hangs over all. . . . Dr Barnett is a genuine lover of nature, steeped in poetry and a fine appreciation of beauty, and his book clearly

reveals it. The illustrations, admirably reproduced from photographs by Mr Robert M. Adam, are in keeping with the lofty standard of the subject-matter.—*Weekly Scotsman*.

THE ROAD TO RANNOCH & THE SUMMER ISLES

BY REV. DR T. RATCLIFFE BARNETT

CONTENTS

THE SUMMER ISLES. WHITE WINGS ON SAPPHIRE SEAS
ISLAND OF LEWIS. STORY OF THE FIFE SETTLERS
ROCK OF BRISSAY. A ROBBER'S STRONGHOLD IN THE ATLANTIC
MULL OF THE MOUNTAINS. A GANGREL'S PARADISE
THE BAD STEP. JACOBITE HIDIE-HOLE IN THE ORKNEYS
COMING OF SPRING. ON THE BRAES OF PERTHSHIRE
HEART OF THE HIGHLANDS. IN PRAISE OF PETROL
GLEN LYON. THE LONGEST GLEN IN SCOTLAND
MACGREGOR'S LEAP. LEGEND OF GLEN LYON
OLDEST WEAPON IN THE WORLD. AN ARCHER'S REVERIE
VOYAGE OF THE 'KELPIE.' A CANOEING CRUISE IN SCOTLAND
AN OLD HIGHLAND HOUSE. ITS ROMANTIC STORY
ROAD TO RANNOCH. THE APPIN MYSTERY
BOUNDS OF BLACK MOUNT. AN IDYLL OF THE RED-DEER
LOCH OF THE VANISHED RACES. A RUNE OF RANNOCH
BLACK WOOD OF RANNOCH.
LAND'S END OF SCOTLAND. DEATH ON DUNAVERTY AND PEACE IN
KILCOLMKIL
ISLAND OF MARY ROSE. SOAY MORE
LURE OF WAYSIDE WELLS. WINTER DREAMS OF SUMMER DAYS
WANDERING WILLIES. MEMORIES OF THE ROAD
WINTER BEAUTY. FIRES OF DEATH AMONG THE HILLS
A KING OF THE ROAD. THE LAST OF THE MINSTRELS
GLOSSARY

With 22 full-page illustrations from photographs by Robert M. Adam
and two drawings by the author. Crown 8vo, cloth.
Pp. xvi+184. Published price 6/- net. Postage 7d.

Press Reviews

The author . . . is an enthusiast for the scenery and traditions of the highlands and islands of Scotland, and describes them with intimate knowledge and fervour . . . shows a familiarity with the scenes . . . and an interpretative power, which should make it welcome to the Southron . . . There is a glossary of hard words, Scots as well as Gaelic . . . Apart from his

stories of tradition and legend, dating back to Columba, the author's own memory recalls conditions now vanished.—*Times Lit. Supplement*.

Transcriber's Notes

A small number of typographic errors were corrected, and punctuation changes made to achieve consistency.

[The end of *Scottish Pilgrimage in the Land of Lost Content* by Thomas Ratcliffe Barnett]