

SKETCHES of HIGHLAND CHARACTER.



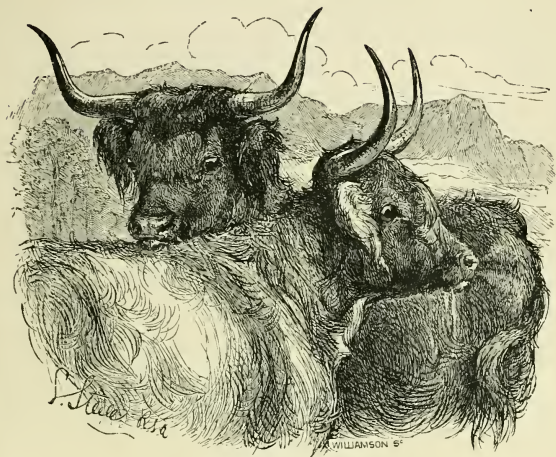
*A chiel's amang ye
takin' notes—*

BALINGALL, S.O.



"GENTLEMEN, SINCE IT IS YOUR PLEASURE, I'LL TELL YOU AAL ABOUT IT"

SHEEP-FARMERS AND DROVERS



WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.

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SKETCHES OF HIGHLAND CHARACTER

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SKETCHES OF HIGHLAND CHARACTER.

SHEEP FARMERS AND DROVERS.

It is well known that the Highlands have undergone a great change within the last thirty years ; that the human population has become less dense, the woolly population more so ; that the old proprietors have nearly all disappeared to make room for new ; that bogs have been drained, and moors reclaimed, making the “bonny blooming heather” succumb to the “yellow corn.” Much, however, remains to be known of the ways of the people—how they eat, and how they drink ; how they speak, and how they act ; how they live, and how they die. The object of the following Sketches is to show something of this, and to begin with a night with drovers and sheep-farmers on the Mull of Cantyre.

I believe there is no town, district, or country without a grievance or difficulty. Great Britain has its neutrality and income-tax ; France has its Bourbons, Orleanists, Imperialists, and gagged press ; Russia has its Poland ; Austria its Venetia ; Turkey its Principalities ; America its rebellion, and long bill to pay ; and Argyleshire its Mull of Cantyre. I was guiltless of such wise reflections as these some years ago, as I started for the pretty well known sunny little town of Oban. I had heard a great deal about Great Britain, but neutrality was not practised there at the time, and the income-tax did not greatly affect me .

and as for the grievances and difficulties of foreign countries, I really cared very little about them ; and, must it be confessed, I had never heard of the Mull of Cantyre except in my geography lesson at school, until the day I began my travels, as just mentioned. It was a squally not very pleasant day as I bowled along on the Glasgow and Greenock Railway towards the latter town, where I was to join the "Arab," which was to sail thence for Oban at four o'clock P.M. I knew little of steamers, and it never occurred to me that the voyage might prove anything but an agreeable one. There was a sallow-faced man sitting opposite to me in the carriage, who kept constantly looking out at the windows, every now and then turning up his eyes as if he expected his death-warrant from the clouds that scudded past towards the east. He carried something between a portfolio and a parcel on his knee, which he nervously clutched when he took his eyes off the sky. He looked at me wistfully at last, and seemed desirous to make some communication ; and as, I presume, he saw that I was ready to receive it, he leaned forward and said—

"It's rather blowy, I'm thinkin'." I nodded assent. "Weel," continued my fellow-traveller, "that will be against me."

"No doubt of it, if you are going against it." "I am goin' ower to Belfast, and I doot it will be roch wark or we win to Belfast loch ; but no so bad as goin' roon the Mull o' Cantyre to Oban."

This was interesting to me, and he saw it.

"You'll be goin' that gate?" continued he.

"Yes ; but I don't care much for the Mull of Cantyre."

Of course not, for I knew nothing about it.

"Lucky that for ye, for there will be a jabble there the nicht, or I'm no judge." This last remark was uttered after a long look at the sky, and was not very reassuring.

Immediately on arriving at Greenock I went to the quay, and found the "Arab" lying uneasily there, the wind whistling viciously through the rigging, and the steam screaming and tearing frantically from the steam funnel. I went on board and got my luggage disposed of, and walked to where I saw a number of people standing round the funnel busy talking, and having nothing particular to do I listened.

"Ye'll think it'll pe a plowy nicht?" said a hairy-faced fellow, who had a plaid rolled tight round his neck, as if he had serious thoughts of doing himself a grievous injury.

"Ay will it," answered a short squat man in moleskins, all covered over with coal-dust. "Ye see the clouds, hoo they chase ane anither; that's a gran' sign o' wind; we'll hae a dance on the Moil the nicht, or I'm mista'en. There is plenty o' that afore us, or the winter is ower."

"No toot o' that; but ye're accustomed to it, and 'ill no mind it."

"We wadna need, Dugald, for mony's the awfu' nicht we hae o' it on the Mull o' Cantyre."

"It'll pe sometimes washing ower the feshel?"

"Washing ower the veshel! ay, man, sometimes washing ower the funnel, and near puttin' out the fire on us, and wad do sae if the smoke didna keep it frae comin' doon. I mind—"

At this point of the conversation I heard a bell ring, and my dusty friend disappeared leaving something very wonderful untold.

After this I went down to the cabin, where I saw some three or four ladies sitting together in a quiet corner. I could not help hearing part of their conversation, and again it related to the Mull of Cantyre. It is unnecessary to repeat any part of it except the conclusion at which they arrived, as enunciated by one of the party.

"I have," said the lady, "lived in Argyleshire for fifteen

years, and, but for this dreadful Mull of Cantyre, I would say it is as pleasant a place to be in, and as healthy as any part of the world. But I have much there to make me happy and contented," she added, "and I trust I am so, and grateful too, notwithstanding of the 'Moil,' and the wretched night I expect to spend in making the voyage round it."

By this time the conviction forced itself upon me that Argyleshire had a real grievance, and was to be felt for, and I began to imbibe a decided dislike to the Mull of Cantyre, and wondered very much how I had never heard of it before, when it was so well known to every one else. With this feeling gaining fast upon me, I again went on deck, and saw every kind of lumber for the Highlands taken on board. Old beds, old tables, old chairs, old boxes, old hampers, old every thing, were knocked about in great confusion ; but the principal part of the cargo consisted of tar barrels. These were rolling in all directions, and perfuming the boat and all in it in a way I did not by any means like. There was a number of patriarchal-looking rams—some with astonishingly tortuous horns, and some with none—cooped up forward ; and as to the number of wild, savage-looking fellows, with large whiskers, unshaven beards, and dirty faces, and gaunt but sagacious-looking dogs, their name truly was legion. All this was soon seen, and I must say it did not prepossess me with any favourable opinion of the comforts of the "Arab." The longest voyage I had ever before made was from Newhaven to Kirkcaldy, and I was therefore not aware of all the manifestations of a disagreeable one in prospect, that presented themselves to more experienced eyes than mine.

After losing a couple of hours of good daylight, everything was got on board, but certainly not in a ship-shape condition, and we started for Oban. I like to see everything going on around me, and instead of again going below



WASHING OWER THE VESHELI AY, MAN, SOMETIMES WASHING OWER THE FUNNEL *

to the cabin, I mounted up to a cross plank resting on the two paddle-boxes, which I heard them call "the gangway," and found a good-looking quiet man standing there looking right before him, and not taking the least notice of anything but the head of the vessel. I went up to him, and remarked it promised to be a good night.

"O yes," he said, "it's a good night." He then looked down to where the tar barrels were crowded about the deck, and cried, "Take you there, M'Innes, some planks and confine these sheep well forward, the shepherds will help ye. You, Beaton, get some hands and stow away these tar barrels, and make things snug for the night."

"Ay, ay, sir," sounded from below.

"You are the captain of the 'Arab'?"

"Yes."

"She is a good boat," I ventured to say.

"Yes, sir, she's a good boat," shortly.

"Is the wind fair, captain?"

"It will do very well if it keeps this way."

"You do not expect a change; do you, captain?"

"Well, sir, it is difficult to say when to expect a change and when not. I do not expect any change to signify."

I observed that he looked at the moon, which was surrounded by a bright golden ring. The clouds were scudding past her very fast, and a black cloud stood right ahead of us, which I would have willingly steered clear of, if that were possible. I saw the captain every now and then looking to see that his orders about the tar barrels had been carried out, and I confess that a sort of disagreeable idea began to creep upon me that we were to have a stormy passage round the Mull of Cantyre. I kept up on the gangway to see how matters were likely to go, and I began to perceive a decided heaving under me. This suddenly increased, and the steamer gave a plunge that made my heart start to my

mouth. Still the reflection of the moon shone brightly on the water, and there was plenty of laughing and talking on all sides of me, which made me think, at all events, that there was no danger. The plunges became more frequent, and by and by the vessel began to go down sideways, and then come up with a sudden spring that was very unpleasant to me. Shortly after this a bell rang, and I saw a man making his way towards me, and with much ingenuity avoiding the many obstacles that lay in his path. He would dive under one thing, round another, and lightly step over a third. I am quite certain that I saw him make a stepping-stone of the body of a recumbent Celt, almost without being noticed. At last he reached me and said,—

“Tea is ready, sir ; will you be pleased to take some ?”

“Well, I suppose I had better.”

“This way, if you please, sir ;” and away he went in the same eel-like manner as he came, but every moment looking back and saying, “This way, if you please, sir.”

I soon found following him a matter of no small delicacy and difficulty. Every place that was not taken up by tar barrels and other unsavoury lumber was occupied by human beings, who lay about in inconceivable places, and I found myself tumbling and floundering among them, kicking this one, trampling upon that, and leaving behind me a track of “oich-oichs” and guttural benedictions which I did not pretend to understand. My first feeling on getting into the cabin was one of dislike to everything I saw. There was a smell of fish, flesh, and fowl, combined with a close and oily atmosphere, and the fumes of toddy and bilge water, which prejudiced me against the display I saw of dish covers, cups, and plates, surrounded by a goodly row of weather-beaten, rugged faces, seemingly intent upon some expected event of considerable interest.

“This way, sir, if you please,” said my friend the steward,

who steadied me into a seat, and then bustled out of the cabin. There was solemn silence for a few minutes, and I observed my neighbours never took their eyes off the dish covers, and one or two began to finger their knives, as if impatient for the word of command. The captain made his appearance at the door, and there was a simultaneous move of satisfaction. He sat down quickly, said grace, and instantly off flew the dish covers, giving to view an enormous quantity of substantial fare. It was worth while seeing the earnest alacrity with which the passengers turned-to.

"Mr. Finlay, I'll trouble you for a bit of feesh."

The party addressed was at the moment conveying a liberal allowance of ham and eggs to a capacious and willing mouth, and gave a questionable grunt before he seized the fish slice and helped the requisitionist. The clatter of knives and forks went on for a long time with scarcely an interruption, except now and then that one would ask another for something that he fancied.

"Mr. M'Craw, I'll thank ye for a little cheecan," and forthwith the *cheecan* was consigned to the tender mercies of a case of powerful grinders. I do not know that I ever before saw good cheer done such ample justice to. The assailants, however, began by and by to give in, one by one, but some of them returned more than once to the charge, and seemed reluctant to give up to the very last. Indeed it is difficult to say when some veterans would have, finally ceased, had not the steward commenced operations whereby he very summarily cleared the tables.

For my own part, I felt little disposed to eat. Every time I attempted to swallow anything, there was a repelling movement inside, which, as I did not understand, I marvelled at. When tea was over, I rose to take possession of an unoccupied sofa, but of a sudden felt as if the top of my head had flown off, and I dropped into my seat again in

much perplexity. An intolerable heat came over me, and the perspiration came streaming out of every pore. The steward came past, and I said to him—

“The room is too close; will you open the window?”

“All battened down for the night, sir.”

“Steward, what can the matter be with me? I feel very uncomfortable.”

“Perhaps you are getting sick, sir,” without even attempting to throw a grain of compassion into his voice; “a little brandy might do you good, sir.”

“Bring me some;” and forthwith it came, but I cannot say that I experienced much relief from this sovereign remedy for sea-sickness.

The rest of the tea-party still lingered about the table, as if there yet remained something to be done, and my helpless state, for I may now call my state helpless, attracted their attention. They instantly began to prescribe.

“A pottle of porter did me goot once,” said one.

“I think ale’s petter,” said another.

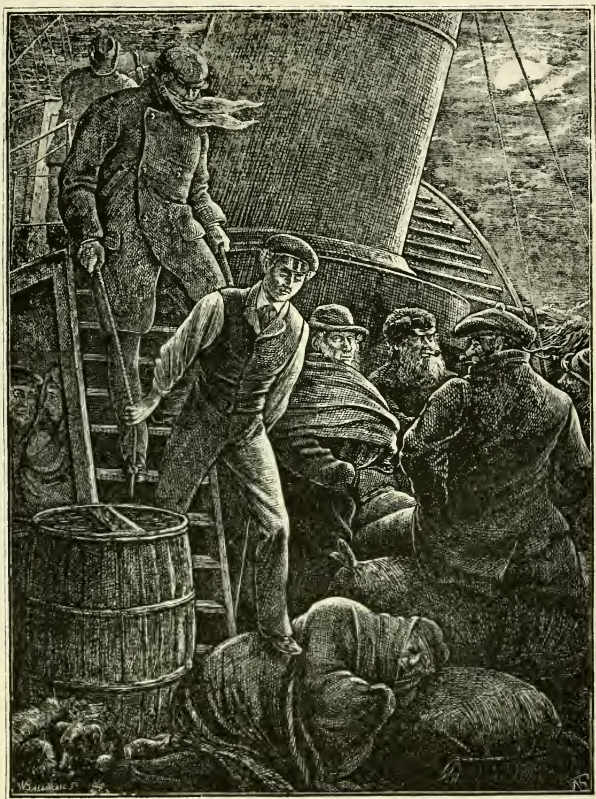
“Goot room (rum) is apout the pest thing I know,” said a third.

“If ye tak my advice,” said a gaunt old fellow, with a pair of threatening eyebrows, “ye’ll gie a rub to the pit of your stamach wi’ a little turpentine and vanagar.”

“Weel, chentlemen,” said a round-faced jolly little Celt, “I wadna gie a drap of good whusky for them aal put together.”

“Ferry goot observation, sir,” responded on all sides.

At this time a fine old man, with a shrewd intelligent face, came quietly up to me, and advised me to lie down on the sofa, and keep very quiet in whatever position I felt most free from the intolerable feeling of sickness and nausea I had. The good old fellow, God bless him, helped me to the vacant sofa himself, and made me snug there. I lay flat on my back, and was greatly relieved; but the least



"I SAW HIM MAKE A STEPPING-STONE OF THE BODY OF A RECUMBENT CELT."

movement brought back the sickness. My feelings and faculties were in a preternatural state of vigilance and susceptibility, and a mouse could scarcely move in the cabin without my hearing her. Under these circumstances, none of the sayings and doings of my fellow-passengers escaped me, and for a time they nearly drove me distracted. As the sickness went off, however, I became more reconciled to them, and by and by I was for a time almost unconscious that there was any one in the cabin, though I afterwards remembered every word that was uttered, as well as every thing that was done.

"I think, chentlemen," suggested a sober-looking young man, with dark hair and a lively twinkle about the eye, "that we would pe the petter of something warm aifter our tea."

"Ferry goot observation" was repeated simultaneously by the whole company, who with astonishing unanimity seated themselves round the table.

"What will ye pefor, chentlemen?" asked the first speaker; "will we have prandy?"

"Prandy is a fery goot trink, there is no toubt," answered a round-faced drochy, with very broad shoulders and large whiskers, "and I like it fery well."

"So do I," and "so do I," was repeated by several.

"Weel, chentlemen," said an old man of immense stature, wearing a very broad hat, "I have nothing particular to say againest prandy, altho' three or four smaal tastings that I took of it the other morning pefore preakfast at Falkirk did not agree with me. Put to tell ye the truth, I would rather whusky; the real Talisker is the thing for me."

This brought down a shout of applause, and the Talisker was accordingly ordered.

"It's a fine speerit, the Talisker," said the stout gentleman, looking round.

"Ou ay," said a dozen voices, "a fine speerit."

"There's no a petter made. That is the real right thing, chentlemen, I would know it anywhere," continued the stout gentleman, "and weel I might, for many's the trop of it I have drank. No man knows goot whusky petter than Talisker himself; tacent man, Talisker."

"A goot man," sententiously pronounced a leathern-jawed middle-aged man, dressed in home-made shepherd's plaid clothes.

"A goot man and a goot whusky is goot company," answered the gentleman that suggested the brandy.

"Chentlemen," said the stout man, in a voice that all understood to preface a toast, "chentleman, I see aal your classes are filled; I think, after the Falkirk we have had, we may trink goot markets."

"Goot toast, Glenbogary;" "excellent toast;" "no one can object to that toast;" "aal feels interested in goot markets;" "the whole country is the petter of goot markets," were the various remarks suggested by this toast, which was drunk with much good-will.

"I heerd," said the abominable old fellow that wanted me to burn myself up with turpentine, who turned out to be a stray Lowlander that had settled in the North, "that ye got a lang price for yer queys, Glenbogary."

"What did ye hear, Mr. Chaik?" (meaning Jack.)

"I heerd twenty punds for ane."

"Forty for two, and fifty was got for them the next day, but the queys was goot."

All expressed astonishment and admiration, which greatly flattered Glenbogary.

"Tell us aal apout it?" demanded several voices.

Glenbogary took a deliberate gulp out of his tumbler and commenced,—

"Chentlemen, since it is your pleasure, I'll tell you aal apout it. I thought I would take a turn to Falkirk as usual,

although I had nothing to sell there, and when leaving home it came into my head that I might take some peasts with me to pay my expense. So I sent away the two queys, one of them is pranded and the other plack. People looked at them as they went along, and I heard them saying, 'Fine animals,' 'goot peef,' and observations of that kind; and when I got to the toun of Stirling, out comes a fat short pody, and says he to me, 'Are them queys yours?' 'Ay, they're mines yet,' says I. 'Will ye sell them?' says he. 'Yes,' says I. 'What are you seeking for them?' says he. 'Forty pounds,' says I. 'I'll gie ye thirty-six,' says he. 'I'll no take a penny less than forty,' says I. He then took another look at them, and pressed me to take thirty-six pounds, then forty with four pack, put I would not, and went on my way to Falkirk. The night pefore the tryst, who comes up to me put Peter Lamont from Atholl. Ye'll aal know Peter. He took a goot long look at the queys, and then he turns to me and asks my price—'Forty pounds, and no a penny less.' 'They're mines,' says Peter, shaking my hand, 'and I'll take them off your hands in the morning, and pay the money now or then.' 'The money any time you likes, Mr. Lamont,' says I, 'and the queys now or never.' 'Say ye sae,' says Peter; 'now then be it.' Peter is a sure hand. Weel, chentlemen, I sees Peter next evening, and asks him if he had sold the queys. 'Oh yes,' says Peter, 'I sold them, and made of them too.' 'How much, Mr. Lamont?' 'Ten pounds.' 'Ten pounds! Peter, you're choking. Fifty pounds for my two queys! that was a price.' 'That is just the figure I sold them for to an Englishman that wants to gain a prize wi' them, and I wish he may.' Now, chentlemen, that is the whole story. Put the queys was goot, and the price was goot."

"And the story is goot," answered Mr. M'Craw. "I'll pe pound there wasn't a pair of queys like them at Falkirk

this many a day. Twenty pounds for a quey! that is a price."

"Forty pounds for two queys, and fifty the next day," said Glenbogary, as setting the matter in a clearer point of view, "put the queys was goot."

"Ye maun hae gien them oil-cake," said Mr. Jack.

"I did not, sir," replied Glenbogary very decidedly. Mr. Jack still looked dissatisfied.

"Tell us their age, and how reared, Glen," demanded Mr. Finlay, who wanted the brandy. Before doing so, however, another supply of Talisker was placed on the table, and the tumblers were promptly replenished.

"You want to know their age, and rearing, chentlemen. You will know it then, chentlemen. The mother of the plack came from Barra, out of the Colonel's fold, and the mother of the pranded from Harris, old Tonalt Stewart's fold, poth as goot preeds as anywhere. Weel, the plack; no, it was the pranded;—no, but it is no matter; the one was three years old on the 3d of April, and the other fourteen days later. Then as to the rearing of them. Chentlemen, they got their mother's milk, every trop of it, and they never were hungry again. 'Deed, chentlemen, I don't like hungry man or peast apout me."

"Ferry goot observation, sir," was repeated here with much emotion.

Mr. Jack did not join in this mark of confidence, but mumbled something between his teeth about oil-cake, and shook his head sceptically.

"Pless me, Maister Chaik," said Mr. Finlay, "ye wat refuse anything. Glenbogary has told as plain as any English how the queys was porn, pred, and prought up, and ye look as if ye thought that he wat cheat people as the old Carles of Achanadrish tid when they used to went to the market."

"Mr. Finlay," answered Mr. Jack solemnly, "I am no

gien to cheatin' mysel', and I dinna like folks that is ; but for a' that has cam and gane, I think the queys maun ha'e gotten oil-cake."

"It matters ferry little, Mr. Chaik," said Glenbogary with warm dignity, "what you or the like of ye thinks. Put my advice to you is, when ye py accident find yourself among chentlemen, to pehave yourself like a chentleman, and no like an ill-put-thegither low-country nowte as ye are."

"Weel, Glenbogary," answered the impervious Mr. Jack, "whether ill or weel put thegither, I maybe will haud thegither as lang as yoursel'."

As Glenbogary was about to make a suitable reply, the vessel gave a plunge that made the glasses tumble about, and a good deal of liquor was spilt. There was considerable commotion, and the warmth that began to manifest itself was cooled, and the embryo quarrel forgotten by the time things were got into their proper places, and a new supply of Talisker was on the table. When the glasses were once more charged, a short squat man, with a lively pair of grey eyes, large whiskers, between a yellow and a grey, and a sharp hooked nose, got up. He seemed to be liked by the rest of the company, and no wonder ; his laugh was the loudest and merriest, he had most to say, but principally to those immediately around him, and there was none among them that took his tipple with more scrupulous fairness. He no sooner stood up than there was a general cry of "Scoodarach." I wondered what was meant, and thought if I had been hailed by such a cognomen, I should be very angry. He however bowed, as if flattered by his reception, from which I correctly divined that Scoodarach was his patronymic.

"Chentlemen," commenced Scoodarach, "I pelieve it is pretty fresh weather outside" (he had to hold hard by the table to prevent being pitched off his feet), "and I cannot see the reason why we shouldn't refresh ourselves inside"

(hear, hear, and ferry goot observation). "Chentlemen, we have here a chentleman that is an honor to the whole country, and I challenge the world to produce another man that got twenty pounds for a quey at Falkirk."

"Forty pounds," cried Glenbogary, "and fifty pounds the next day."

"Yes, chentlemen," resumed Scoodarach, "forty pounds, and fifty the next day; altogether ninety punds!"

"Guide us! Scoodarach," interrupted Mr. Jack, "ye're no gaun to say that Glenbogary got ninety punds for his twa queys?"

"I says more, Maister Chaik. They were worth a hundred to any man that took a fancy to them. (Great applause, and Mr. Jack refused a hearing.) Then, chentlemen, as my friend and your friend Glenbogary is so well worthy of our pest thanks for the honor he has prought upon the country, we'll trink his health in full pumpers."

Very great honour was done the toast—*heel taps* were out of the question. Glenbogary got up quite overcome; but as the labouring of the vessel made it difficult to stand, he sat down immediately, and begged permission to return thanks sitting, which was of course granted.

"My tear friends," commenced Glenbogary, affected, "I wish I had the tongue of Donach Ban, the bard, to speak for me. I would then pe aple to do chustice to my heart. Ye have tone me creat honor, chentlemen, and I am ferry much opliged to ye aal. I am getting an olt man now. Chentlemen, I have stoot thirty Falkirks without missing one." (Hear, hear, and applause, which encouraged a young man that had said nothing before, doing every justice to Talisker all the time, however, to say, "My father stand thirty-five, and he is alife yet.")

"Tid he ever get twenty pounds for a quey there?" broke in Mr. Finlay.

"Forty for two queys," persisted Glenbogary, "and fifty the next day ; put the queys was goot."

"Put, Mr. Finlay," said Scoodarach, "how tid the Carles of Achanadrish cheat when they went to the fairs?"

"Eh, Scoodarach! I thought everypody heard of them. The way they tid was this: Pefore they would start with their horses they would put a number of peats round their fires, and turn out their wives and bairns; then one would go to his neiphour and ask him if he was to send a horse to the market. The answer was 'yes' of course. 'I'll puy him.' 'What will ye give?' I will give so much, peing always a pound or two more than the prute was worth. This offer was refused, and the offerer wat hasten home, and wat in his turn pe called upon in the same way, and the same scene pe gone through. After every one that was to send a horse to the market had got his offer, they wat aal go away to the fair. Well, when they got there they asked a few shillings more than they had peen offered at home. 'That is a great teal too much,' the purchaser wat say. 'Oh no,' the seller wat say, 'I was offered within three shillings of it at home.' 'Impossible!' 'May I never again see those I left around my fireside if I was not.'"

"The auld scoonrels," said Mr. Jack, "they should ha'e been banished."

"Well, Mr. Chaik," answered Mr. Finlay, "whether they should or no, and whether they was or no, you'll find none of them in the country now."

"Weel, I am thinkin' it's no a bad riddance. But whar ha'e the rogues gane till?"

"Some of them is in Australia, some in America, some on the sea, and some in their graves. Poor men! sorry they were to pid farewell to the prawn hills of the Highlands; put the times was against them, and they were aal sent away."

"Noo, Mr. Finlay, we'll say nae mair aboot them wi' your

leave," said Mr. Jack, who was warming to the work; "but I am of opinion that a drap mair of Glenbogary's frien' Talisker wad do us nae hairm. What say ye a', gentlemen?"

There is no earthly doubt what they would have said, if allowed to speak. This, however, they were not; for just as a burst of approval was about breaking out, a thin meagre-looking man who had sat the whole evening with his plaid drawn tight round his throat, and enveloping the lower part of his face, only allowing easy access to his mouth, a road travelled very often by the glass which he seldom let out of his hand, started fiercely to his legs. This, however, was of very little use to him, as he as suddenly disappeared under the table from the rolling of the vessel. He was up in an instant, and his temper by no means improved by the disaster he had met with. He looked about him as if he would annihilate all present. His rage prevented his uttering a word for a few moments. At last he blazed out "Talisker! Talisker!! Talisker!!! Who is Talisker that we should pe trinking him? He is no fit for shentlemen to sit upon. I say, Long Shon."

"Preserve us a'," said Mr. Jack in considerable astonishment, "is the man wud? What does the crater mean?"

"I mean," retorted the irate Celt, "that I pe no more a crater nor you; and I mean that Long Shon makes petter whusky nor ever cam' out of Talisker's pot."

Glenbogary struck his fist on the table, and silence ensued.

"My coot friend, Mr. Cameron, it is natural you should pe for upholding your own countryman, and no man has more respect for Long Chon than I have; put pefore we can admit that he is petter than Talisker, I would like to put one question to you. Mr. Cameron, where does Long Chon get his watter from?" This question was put with a solemnity that made the whole company turn up their eyes,

and it quite posed Mr. Cameron, and, after a short pause Glenbogary went on, "Mr. Cameron, Talisker's watter comes over eighty faals pefore it reaches his pot."

"Eighty faals ! eighty faals ! eighty faals !" repeated by a dozen voices. "That must be goot watter, and make goot whusky.—Eighty faals !!!"

"It maun be gaen weel saddened aifter sic tumbling," remarked Mr. Jack, "that maun be said, and doobtless it maks pleasant drink ; but as Mr. Cameron is so fond o' doin' the thing, I dinna see why we shudna tak his treat of Lang John."

This suggestion proved extremely to the liking of the company, and there was such a cheerful acquiescence on the part of every one that a remonstrance as to his giving the treat died away on the tongue of Mr. Cameron, and he ordered a supply of "Long John" in a way that would make one believe that he was in a mortal rage at the steward. When the tumblers were filled and tasted, he looked round for the company's approval of his taste, and as they were drinking at his expense, he of course obtained it ; and Mr. Jack proposed his health, which was drunk with all the honours.

The applause with which the toast was honoured had not entirely ceased when a small door nearly opposite to me opened, and a round grey head came cautiously out, and then a round short figure dressed in whitey brown clothes of good quality and make. This personage no sooner appeared than a shout of "Welcome Mr. Tops !" sounded from all sides of the table, and the individual so named slowly approached his friends, holding by every available object to prevent his being tumbled over by the rocking of the vessel. "Mr. Tops," whose real name was Dobbs, was an Englishman, and his round smooth ruddy face presented a decided contrast to the shaggy and gaunt physiognomy of the toppers at the

table. "Sit ye town, Mr. Tops, sit ye town," and room being made opposite Glenbogary, Mr. Dobbs was soon seated there with a steaming tumbler of "Long John" before him.

"We were chust drinking Mr. Cameron's health when ye cam in, Mr. Tops," said Scoodarach, whereupon Mr. Dobbs did honour to the toast.

"Perhaps you'll give us a toast yourself, Mr. Tops?"

"I'll be very happy to do so, gents, since you call upon me."

"Mr. Tops' toast—no taylight."

"Well, gents," commenced Mr. Dobbs, "in responding to the call you have made, and seeing that your glasses are filled, I propose the health of the Lord-Lieutenant of the County."

"A ferry goot toast," and great cheering, and no heel taps.

After this there was a short pause, as if the whole party were thinking. At last Mr. Cameron got up like a tiger, and, looking fiercely at Mr. Dobbs, asked him "who the tefil the Lord-Lieutenant is?" This question was hailed with "hear, hear!"

Mr. Dobbs stood up with difficulty, and, looking about him with a pair of large light prominent eyes, said, "Gents, the Lord-Lieutenant is a man that knows his duty, he is the right man in the right place." He then sat down with the air of a man that had done his duty. But Mr. Cameron was not to be so satisfied. He started up again, and, casting a glance all round, as if challenging all the world, shouted at the top of a shrill voice, "Tamn the Lord-Lieutenant—who is he?"

This raised the spirit of the British lion in Mr. Dobbs, whose face got very red. He gave the fiery Lochaberman as hostile a look as he could muster, and said, in a very decided way, "I will not tell you."

This would have brought on a crisis, but Scoodarach

got up and said with great solemnity, "Chentlemen, poth Mr. Tops and Mr. Cameron is right, and when I tells Mr. Cameron that the Lord-Lieutenant is a fine teer-hound tog that Locheil sent as a compliment to a friend of Mr. Tops' in England, he will never again tamn the Lord-Lieutenant." This explanation elicited great applause from the company, and Mr. Cameron got hold of Dobbs' hand, and shook it till that gentleman's eyes watered. Perfect harmony having been restored, Mr. Finlay asked Dobbs if he sold his cast ewes. "Yes," answered Dobbs, who had scarcely slept off the effects of a previous potation, "and got the highest price at the market for them."

"That's pefore the luckspenny was taken off it?"

"I never give luck-penny."

"You never gives luckspenny! Weel, I know ye're a goot hand at a pargain; would you like to pay a fine lot? I'll sell ye the Tomsrachaltney yowes."

"I did not know they were yours to sell." Neither they were, as all well knew, and Mr. Dobbs at first suspected.

"Well! ye can try me, Mr. Tops; I'll give them to ye for 18s."

"I take them delivered in Glasgow in October."

"Tone, Mr. Tops; they are yours."

"That is a fair pargain," resounded on all sides.

"Yes, it is a fair pargain," said Scoodarach, "and we'll make a note of it."

This proposal rather startled Mr. Dobbs, the Tomsrachaltney lot being a heavy one evidently; and he did not imagine that Scoodarach was in earnest, thinking they were not his.

"Between friends it is not necessary to make a note of a bargain," suggested Dobbs.

"Oh, Mr. Tops! oh, Mr. Tops!! you *are* an Englishman," was repeated on all sides.

"Yes, I am proud of being an Englishman," said Mr. Dobbs patriotically.

"Mr. Cameron will make a note of it," said Scoodarach, which made Mr. Cameron look as if he would demolish him.

This was agreed to, and Cameron got hold of a dirty piece of paper, and commenced writing on it with pencil. But it would take a better scribe than he evidently was to make a job of it—what with the drink he had taken, what with the pitching of the vessel. After indescribable exertions, he handed the note to Scoodarach to read and sign. Reading it was out of the question, but both parties signed it—Dobbs with his full name, and Scoodarach with a few scratches that no one could make anything of. "Now, Mr. Cameron, ye'll sign as a witness to the pargain, and you too, Mr. M'Craw." Both signed.

"How many tid ye pought, Mr. Tops?" asked M'Craw.

"Why, I bought the whole."

"I tidn't say that," said Scoodarach.

"Yes you did," retorted Dobbs, who was getting "very fu'."

"Was it the whole of the tops, or the whole of the shots, Mr. Tops?"

"It was the whole of both, and no mistake. Come now, sir; no nonsense."

"Nonsense, Mr. Tops! I'll refard it to the wutnesses. What to ye say, Mr. Cameron?"

"I say they are to pe telivered in Clasgow in Octoper."

"Put how many?"

"I tell ye, they are to pe telivered in Clasgow in Octoper," in wrath.

"Yes, but what is?" inquired Dobbs.

"To ye tare to tout my word?" said Cameron, trying to get up, but he was held down by the rest.



'T IS A PITY, MR TOPS'

"I want to know," said Dobbs emphatically, "what the bargain was? You wrote it down, and are referred to. What do you say now?"

"I say," screamed Cameron, "they are to pe telivered in Clascow in Octoper. Can you refuse that?"

"I refuse nothing; but tell me how many sheep are to be delivered to me?"

"Sheep! I ton't care for you or your sheep, I put town that they are to pe telivered in Clascow in Octoper, and that is the pargain, whatever ye may say. I am refard, and that's what I say."

Mr. Dobbs, greatly aggravated and considerably drunk, stood up, raised his clenched fists above his head, and looked as if he had been seized with apoplexy. "I deny it, gentlemen, I call you to witness that he refuses to tell me the bargain."

Mr. Cameron looked at the bottle as if he would fain throw it at his opponent's head, but being half full of "Long John" he thought better of it. "I tell ye, and if ye werena a prute of a Sassanach, you watn't have asked it again, that I wrote town that they are to pe telivered in Clascow in Octoper. To you say that I titn't write town the truth?"

"Damn the truth!" cried Dobbs, at his wits' end.

"Oh! oh!! hoh!!!" sounded round the table in different tones, which perfectly overwhelmed poor Dobbs, who crawled from the table and sat alone in a corner, looking very sulky. By and by Scoodarach got up and went to him, and commenced in a low condoling voice,—

"Well, Mr. Tops, ye tidn't get chustice altogether from Mr. Cameron, who should have told ye the pargain. It is a pity that ye were in such a hurry puying the yowes, as I tidn't intend they should pe more than 15s., and they are scarcely worth so much. There is chust 2000 of them, and your loss will pe about £500. It is a pity, Mr. Tops."

Dobbs' face, drunk though he was, looked so remarkably blank after he received this gratuitous piece of information, that Scoodarach seemed to have difficulty in keeping his gravity.

"What did you say, sir; my loss would be £500?"

"That at least, Mr. Tops."

"Bless my soul," said Dobbs, "are you serious? Why, it was not fair of you."

"Chently, Mr. Tops; take care what ye say. Ye'll no get out of the scrape that way."

"Well, then, how can I get out of it?" asked the unfortunate man in perturbation of spirit.

"Now, Mr. Tops, ye speak reasonable. I'll take £50, and let ye off the pargain."

"Fifty pounds! No, no, that 'ere is too much. Will you take five pounds?"

"Five pounds! Mr. Tops, ye are laughing at me. Five pounds instead of fifty pounds? What to ye take me for?"

"Come now," said Dobbs persuasively, "take the five pounds."

"I'll tell ye what I'll to, Mr. Tops. I have known ye long, and ye're a tacent man, and I'll let ye off for three pottles of wine."

Dobbs grasped his hand as if he had a benefactor, and was so overcome with gratitude that he could not utter a word for two minutes.

The two then joined the rest at the table, and the wine was called for. When it came they all filled their glasses and tasted it, then shook their heads, and quietly took the whisky bottle and put a "smaal drappy o' 'Long Chon' in to make it trink fit for Christians."

"Tid ye settle, chentlemen?" inquired M'Craw.

"Ooh! Mr. Tops is a chentleman," answered Scoodarach, looking all innocence.

"You are a gentleman," said Dobbs fervently. "I will maintain that 'ere in any company."

"Put are they to pe telivered in Claskow in Octoper?" asked Cameron, looking dangerous.

"Yes, yes, Mr. Cameron, they are."

The wine and whisky mixture told upon Dobbs, who soon became unable to sit at the table, and the steward helped him away. He no sooner disappeared than Scoodarach told how he had fooled him, and this brought on a lively conversation.

"To ye mind Tonalt Plack, that kept the public at the Ferry?"

"Yes, yes, Glenbogary; we aal knew Tonalt."

"Weel, one tay I was crossing at night, and Achanduin and me stayed at Tonalt's house till the morning. We were in ped together when Tonalt comes in—he is a shrouwd fellow, Tonalt—and says Tonalt, 'Glenbogary, what am I to do with a Sassanach pody that came yesterday, and stayed aal night? He is up now, and going away, and he is asking me to give him my pill, and he hasna paid for what he cot, instead of his having money on me. He'll never get my pill whatever,' said Tonalt. 'The bodach is wanting to cheat ye, Tonalt,' said Achanduin, 'put we'll stand py ye. 'Will ye?' says Tonalt. 'Then if he tries that, we'll see which is the pest man.' With that Tonalt goes out, and we heard him saying to the Englishman, 'So ye'll pe for getting my pill, for how much?' 'None of your impertinence,' says the Englishman. 'What is that?' says Tonalt. 'Is it another pill? I'll give ye my pills immediately,' says Tonalt, 'and there is one of them;' and we heard a creat tramping as of two men fighting, so we chumped up, and found Tonalt and the Sassanach pusy at each other. They were poth stout and supple, and it was pretty to see them, and we looked at them for a while. Put the Sassanach had

cunning plows, and Tonalt got some pad clours, so we went between them, and separated them. The Englishman was in a rage, and wanted to take Tonalt before a magistrate, but when we explained Tonalt's ignorance, he laughed as much as we did, and gave him half a crown when going away. That Englishman was a real gentleman, no doubt."

When Glenbogary finished his story, he got up, and called for the cabin boy, who seemed to be a *protégé* of his, and after holding a private conversation with him in Gaelic, the boy went off. The old grazier got his broad hat, and stuck it on the front of his head, faced right at the door where the boy had disappeared, steadied himself, and drew his mouth back twice almost to his ears, each time giving a loud aspiration between a grunt and a snort, and made a very ludicrous attempt at a dignified march to the door, from which I saw the tails of his coat disappear as if he had been shot out of a huge cannon, the vessel having given a sudden lurch.

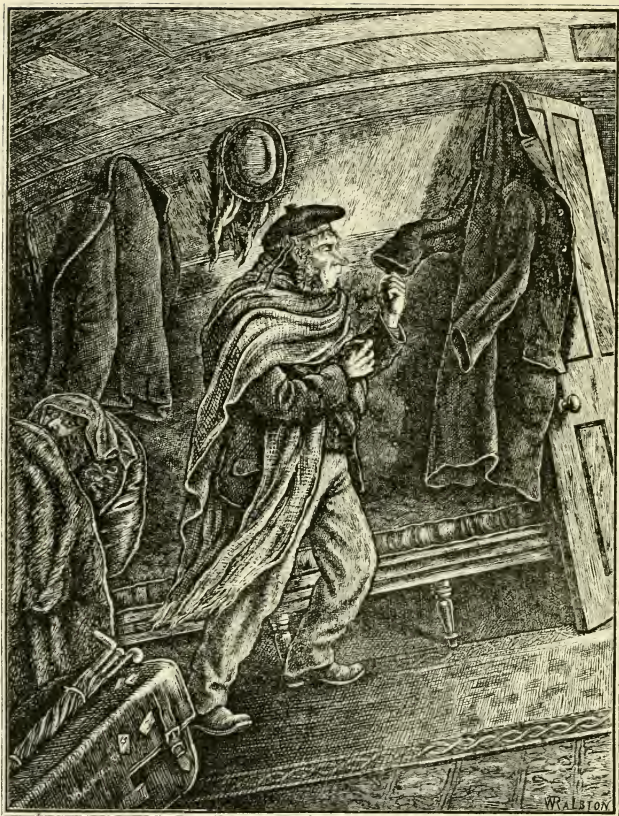
"No doubt Glenbogary is a very taciturn man," said Scoodarach, "and he got a large price for his queys,—fourty pounds for two queys! Very few people did that. You think they got oil-cake, Mr. Jaik, to ye no?"

"Weel, after Glen said that he didna gie them ony, I am bound to believe him. But it's a lang price for twa beasts aff the graiss. I didna think there was graiss in the hielands that wad fetch them up to sae muckle money."

"Tyree wad make them better nor no other place," said M'Craw, "and there's crass there that wad make them as fat as putter."

"Od, Mr. M'Craw," said Mr. Jack, "the only thing I ken o' Tyree is that it's fu' o' witches. But without ony jokes, I have seen some fine fat beasts frae that island."

"Who toes Tyree belong to?" asked Mr. Cameron in a defiant tone.



THE PUGNACIOUS CELT

"To His Crace the Chuke of Argyle," answered M'Craw proudly, "the creat M'Calein More."

"The whole o' Lochaber pelonged to the Tuke of Gordon, who was a petter man than ever a Tuke of Argyle was;" and the irascible Mr. Cameron struck his fist on the table.

This was too much for the defender of the Duke of Argyle, who no doubt would have been very proud of his champion if he had seen his face, and heard the tone in which he replied.

"Mr. Cameron, His Crace the Chuke of Argyle has peen a chuke pefore the Chuke of Gordon was fit for a cateran, and M'Calein More never turned his pack upon a friend or a foe."

The Duke of Gordon's champion was dumb with rage and astonishment, and there is no saying what he would have done, had not Scoodarach, who encouraged his companions to quarrel to the very verge of flying at one another's throats, and then by a few well-chosen words, made them greater friends than ever, taken up the matter. "The Chuke of Argyle," said that individual, "*is* a creat man, and the Chuke of Cordon *was* a creat man—that is the tifference between them; and it is much pity that there is that same tifference, for the Marquis of Huntly was an honour to Lochaber and to Scotland when he was at the head of the Plack Watch, and let them to clory wherever it was to pe found. Put he has cone to his home, and peace pe with him. Your father, Mr. Cameron, and mines too, had many a hard fight with him, and well, well they liked to talk apout him."

Even M'Craw was touched with the devotion with which Scoodarach spoke of the last of the Gordon dukes, who was evidently known by name to, and popular with the whole party.

"Put what made ye say, Mr. Chaik," put in Mr. Finlay, "that Tyree was full o' witches?"

"I'm thinking," answered that gentleman, "Mr. M'Craw can tell ye mair on that subject than I can, for if a' tales be true, there's no lang since he was afore the shirra for callin' an auld wife a witch. Is it true that ye were fined for't, man?"

"It was a wee fine," said M'Craw, looking conscious; "and it wasna for calling her a witch, put for no appearing at the Court when my name was called."

"It was about that cheatery wark o' the stanes coming in through the roof o' the hoose, was it no?"

"Whist, Mr. Chaik, I ton't like to hear ye talk that way."

"Do ye mean to say that there was onything uncanny about it?" said Mr. Jack. "Tell us it, man; tell us it."

"Well, it's no a long story, and I'll pe willing to tell it."

All at table leaned forward with much curiosity, and some awe was depicted in every face, and as the narrative proceeded, even Mr. Jack was considerably influenced by the bearing of his friends, and looked somewhat scared.

"The thing happened at Callum Du's house. He was a tacent man, and had a wife and eleven childer, and what with fishing and making the most o' his pit croft, they were toing as well as their neiphours, and hadn't to make their tinner of shell-fish gathered on the shore and poiled in the brochan more than five times in the week. One tay the whole of himself and his family and wife and pairns were in at their tinner, and a crap which one o' the pairns had picked up at the shore was fished out of the pot, and two of the pairns were quarrelling apout it, when a roun' stone cam in at the top of the house, without leaving a hole aifter it, and came thack town, and struck the crap out o' their hands on the floor. Callum was so pusy at his brochan, that he tidn't notice the pairns till he heard them give a roar. He then looked, chust as a wee pit balachan, two years old, was going to pick up the crap, and what should he see?"

Here the narrator's voice sank to a sort of whisper, and his lips became parched, and so unmanageable that he could scarcely bring them to subjection so as to perform their functions. The rest partook of his emotion, and several asked in the same tone, "*whatt?*" "The crap," continued M'Craw, "moving slowly away from the laddy, although it was well poiled, and had no more life in it than the herring I eat to my tinner to-tay. Callum and his wife and the grown-up childer were tumb with fear, put the wee laddy laughed and went aifter the crap, till his mother got hold of him and kept him pack. Then another pairn went to the pot, with a spoon to get some out of it, and the pot moved off aifter the crap, and another stone came in at the top of the house, and it tidn't left a hole aifter it neither. The whole of them then ran out of the house, making a noise that prought aal their neipours about them, put none of them wat go into the house, till Tonalt Tawlor came, and he said he wat go in. Put if he tid, he tidn't remain long, for water came pouring town upon him, and pefore he could get out he was more like a trooket fox than a Christian. No one wat go in after this, and some one went for a chustice-peace, and he came next tay, and went in quite pold and sat town. He soon heard splash splash on the loft, and up the ladder he went, to a smaal place where there was two peds, and he found one of the peds full of milk, and the other of water. Well, he went town again and called Callum in, and though feared he tidn't like to refuse the chentleman, and went. 'Pretty pusiness this, Callum,' says he, 'to put water in one ped and milk in the other. If you attempt to cheat me, I'll have you put in chail.' 'Och,' cried Callum, 'it's me that's no cheating, as God's my wutness.' 'The tevil is more likely to pe your wutness,' said the chustice, very angry, put he no sooner said so than the pot pegan to move. When he saw this, he looked with his eyes very open, put he was pold

enough, and said, 'This is one of your tricks,' and with that he went to the pot, put he couldn't get near it, for it kept tancing round him till he got afeard, and walked out of the house, and without saying one wort he chumped on his horse and galloped away. I happened to pe in the island at the time, and I went to see if it was aal true I heard."

"And what seed ye, man?" said Mr. Jack, whose leathern jaws lengthened, though long enough before, during the recital of this astonishing story.

M'Craw resumed, "I saw the pot, for I went into the house, and when I was looking at it, a hard peat came in at the side of the house where there was neither toor nor window, and struck my pack, and made me chump till I nearly prained my head akainst a peam. When I looked round at the pot, as I was going out at the toor, for I tidn't remain longer in the unplest place it was tancing round the kitchen."

"Did ye see that wi' your ain een?" asked Mr. Jack.

"Yes, Mr. Chaik, I saw it with my two plessed eyes."

"Then," said Mr. Jack solemnly, "there is mair nor guide graiss grows in Tyree, or I am mista'en."

The party became very sombre after this, and I dozed into an uncomfortable state of unconsciousness for some time. I was roused out of this by something tumbling over me, which turned out to be the fiery Mr. Cameron, who was going on deck, and was hurled upon me by the labouring of the steamer, which was straining and creaking in every timber. His temper was by no means improved by his contact with me, and he started up as if mortally insulted, and made for the door. It happened to be open, and a large top-coat was thrown upon it which hung down more than half way to the floor, and might be mistaken, by a person who had been imbibing "Talisker" and "Long John" for four or five hours, for a man. The boat tossing

violently made the arms of the coat swing in a bellicose way that at once attracted the attention of the pugnacious Celt, who steadied himself for a moment, and then made a rush at it with very hostile intentions. The shock of the collision was considerable, and Mr. Cameron was thrown back rolling under the table, carrying the coat with him, which he pummelled most unmercifully, and refused to let go when the steward and others came to the scene of action, until it should own itself vanquished. The last I saw of Mr. Cameron was his being carried, kicking and scratching frantically, up the cabin stair; and when the steward returned his shirt collar had disappeared, and one of his sleeves dangled gracefully about his arm. After this the party did not muster. The tumblers, however, were empty, so that there was no liquor thrown away. How they stowed themselves away for the night I do not know, further than that I heard terrific snoring in all directions, from which I infer that they enjoyed more sound and undisturbed slumbers than fell to my lot.

But I did sleep too—a troubled, uncomfortable, unrefreshing sleep—and when I awoke in the morning, daylight was struggling in at the little round port holes. I heard a friendly chat going on not far from me, and listened.

“Chust a smaal trop, Mr. Finlay, to open your eyes, aifter being aal night on the Moil. It’s a pad place the Moil, and many’s the goot man that found a sore head there.”

“Your health, Scoodarach,” answered Mr. Finlay, and soon after I heard a smack of satisfaction. “Now, ye’ll tak a taste yourself, for what has done me so much goot cannot to ye harm.”

“I have been tasting with Glenbogary when he took his morning, but I will trink your health for luck, Mr. Finlay;” and he did so in a bumper of pure whisky. He noticed that I was awake, and immediately came to me.

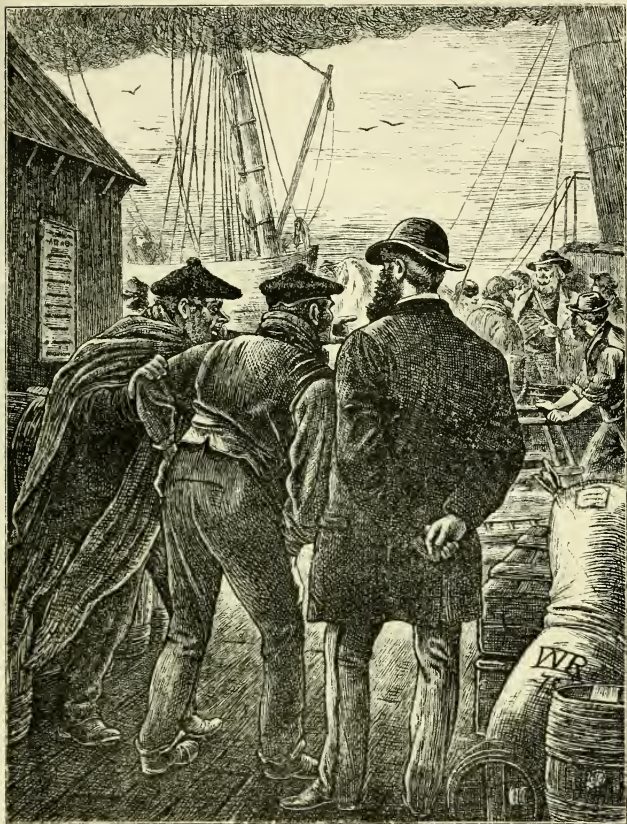
“Ye’re petter now, sir,” said Scoodarach cheerfully,

"and to put aal right ye 'll take a smaal trap out of my pottle. We'll soon pe in Oban, for Kerrera is showing its nose to us, and the 'Arap' is going her pest." I thanked him, and declined the whisky, to his no small astonishment. "Perhaps ye would like prandy or wine petter." I assured him I could not taste either ; upon which he looked at me compassionately, and said,

"Hoo ! I see now,—that's why ye were sick last night."

The steamer was soon all alive, and shortly before reaching Oban, breakfast was served, and most of the boon companions of the night before sat down to it with as keen appetites and as hearty as if they had gone to bed sober at nine o'clock instead of "very fu'" at two in the morning. I did not breakfast until I went on shore at Oban, and I confess I thought it a very pleasant change. I determined, however, to go to the quay as the "Arab" was leaving, to have a last look at the tar barrels, and at the drouthy Scoodarach perhaps ; and to be sure there they were, and Glenbogary's broad hat and broad coat-tail nodding and fluttering in the breeze. He was telling something to a stranger who listened in seeming wonder and admiration. What it was I can only conjecture. I was nearly knocked down by some one pushing violently past me, and on turning round I saw two men rushing along the quay, who I thought had been left behind, but I was wrong in this conjecture. The one got hold of the other by the arm, the better to direct his eyes, and pointing in a very excited manner at the retreating steamer, said, "That's him that sold the two queys for forty pounds !"

"And fifty the next day," I repeated, as I walked away to the Caledonian. "But the queys was goot !"



"THATS HIM THAT SOLD THE TWO QUEYS FOR FORTY POUNDS!"



But the queys was goot.