

DOMINIE DELIGHTED.

GRANT.—Why, sir, you are quite as great as a story-teller, as you are as a critic.

CLIFFORD.—Homer or Maro could never have held a candle to you! Why your floating island would beat a steamer. But, joking apart, we are really much obliged to you for the very interesting story you have told us.

DOMINIE (*bowing*).—I am yespecially proud and happy that you are pleased with it, sir.

AUTHOR.—We are all very much indebted to you indeed, for you have helped us very agreeably over the most dreary part of our road.

The good man rose an inch or two higher than he had hitherto appeared, and his cheek glowed with satisfaction.

We had now come to the pass of Craig-Bey, where the Grantown country opened to us. A rocky hill arose on our right, wildly wooded with tall Scottish pines, whilst, on our left, the ground declined into a hollow, through which the dark streamlet that drains the extensive peat-bog, whence the villagers of Grantown are supplied with fuel, throws itself into a deep rocky ravine, along which our road skirted. At some distance to our left, and on the farther side of the glen, a beautiful smiling portion of Highland country arose in swelling grounds, simply cultivated, amidst natural birchen groves; whilst every now and then we had a transient view directly downwards, where the stream threw itself into a fairy little holm, surrounded by tall castellated rocks, richly tinted with warm coloured mosses, and rising picturesquely from among woods of golden-leaved aspen and birch.

CLIFFORD.—Is there no story connected with that beautiful spot below?

AUTHOR.—The place is called Huntley's Cove. It has its name from some cavity in the crag, which is said to have been the place of conceal-

ment of George, Second. Marquis of Huntley, in the time of Charles I.

CLIFFORD.—I forget his history at this moment.

AUTHOR.—He was married, if I remember rightly, in 1609, to the Lady Anne Campbell, eldest daughter of Archibald, seventh Earl of Argyle; and he was, therefore, brother-in-law to Archibald, the eighth Earl of Argyle, who so strenuously exerted himself in the cause of the people against King Charles I., and who, as you may recollect, was appointed by the Convention of Estates, 16th April 1644, commander-in-chief of the forces raised to suppress the insurrection of his brother-in-law, this very Marquis of Huntley of whom we are now talking. The Marquis, you know, rose in arms for the King in the north, but Argyle marching against him, dispersed the royalists, and obliged Huntley to fly to Strathnaver, in Sutherland. Huntley again appeared in arms in 1645, and refused to lay them down even when commanded by the King, who was then under the control of the Parliament of 1646. He was exempted from the pardon granted on the 4th March 1647, and he was that same year taken prisoner. I remember the peerage account

of him states, that his capture took place in *Strathnaver*,—a blunder occasioned by the circumstance of his having fled to that district of country upon the first mentioned occasion. It was in *Strathaven* that he was taken, and the similarity of names assisted in producing the confusion. Before his capture he lay concealed in *Strathaven*, or as it is very commonly called *Stradaun*, and when more than ordinarily alarmed by an increased activity in the search for him, he used to come over to hide himself here for greater security. I think it was an ancestor of the present Sir Niel Menzies of Castle Menzies, who took him, but the legendary circumstances have escaped me, if I ever knew them.

GRANT.—Thus it is that some of our most curious and valuable traditions are lost.

CLIFFORD.—It is truly provoking that it should be so. As we have Roxburghe, and Bannatyne, and Maitland Clubs for the preservation and printing of old writings, would it not be a meritorious thing to establish a Legend Club, the object of which should be, to proceed systematically throughout every part of the British dominions to collect and write down all the legendary and traditionary matter which may yet remain?

GRANT.—There is no doubt that an immense mass of materials might thus be gathered together for the use of the novelist and play-wright.

CLIFFORD.—Nay, nay, Grant; but joking apart, I do think, that although the great mass might be rubbishy enough, and, perhaps, much of it fitter for the compounder of melo-dramas than for any thing else,—*croyez moi on doit cependant trouver des perles, on plutot des diamants dans ce grand fumier*. And then when you think that the numerous fitful beams of light which might proceed from these recovered diamonds should be concentrated into one focus, it is not very impossible that history itself might receive some fresh illumination from the flame that might be kindled.

AUTHOR.—Your scheme is amusing enough, and by no means undeserving of attention; but I conceive that the utility of such a society as you speak of would very much depend upon the efficiency of its secretary.

CLIFFORD (*with an arch look*).—Why, no doubt, it would so. And therefore I should propose to confer that important and distinguished post upon our new acquaintance Mr. Macpherson here, seeing that he is so much given to searching out the truth

of such things, and that he has, moreover, proved himself to be so able a narrator of them after he has found them out.

DOMINIE, (*His eyes glistening with pride and delight, as he again advanced to fill that place in the line of march which he had occupied during the time we were listening to his tale.*)—

What could be more to my mind than such an occupation! And yet, sir, seeing that I am already planted as a teacher of youth in a comfortable house in Caithness, with a small garden and a cow's grass appended thereto; to all which there falls to be added a salary, which though small, yet sufficeth for my maintenance, who have no wife or "charge of children," as Lord Chancellor Bacon hath it, save that of the children of other people, whence there arises to me not expense but yemolument, it would be well to know what sum of money by the year might be incoming to the holder of that secretaryship, of which you have spoken; seeing that prudence bids us be sure that we move not our right foot until our left be firmly set down.

CLIFFORD.—As to the matter of revenue, I fear there would be more of honorary dignity than

of edible income attached to the situation. I would, therefore, earnestly advise you, since I now learn that your lot has already been so pleasantly cast, to hold your right foot fast in Caithness, where, were the society to go on, you might be appointed one of its honorary corresponding members.

DOMINIE.—Thank you, sir, your advice is good. I could by no means afford to throw away my cow's grass and potato-yard to the dogs, to say nothing of my salary, without something better. I shall therefore e'en hold as I am.

CLIFFORD.—What mountain is that which I see rising blue and grand yonder in the eastern distance ?

GRANT.—I have now a right to step forward as your cicerone, Clifford, for this is the country of the great clan to which I belong. Yet I must confess that I have no great knowledge of its history. I can at least tell you, however, that the mountain you are inquiring about is Ben Rinnes, the hill which rises over the ancient house of Ballindalloch, at the junction of the rivers Avon and Spey. Ballindalloch belongs to an old family of the Grants.

DOMINIE.—I could tell you a curious legend

about the building of the castle of Ballindalloch, were it not deemed presumption in me to tell of the Grants in presence of so accomplished a member of the clan.

GRANT.—Sir, I shall cheerfully trust to you to do justice to the Grants, and especially to the Grants of Ballindalloch, for since the Macphersons are now engrafted on the family of that house, I think you will be disposed to say nothing that may be in any wise to their disparagement.

DOMINIE.—God forbid that I should. They have always been kind friends of mine.

CLIFFORD.—I protest against any more stories till after dinner. I presume we shall find an inn at Grantown, and I therefore beg leave to move that all lengthened communications be adjourned until we are fairly set in to be comfortable for the evening.

GRANT.—Agreed. Now then follow me in at this gate that opens to our left here, and through this plantation, and I, as your cicerone here, shall show you something worth looking at.

We had no sooner burst from the confinement of the trees, than a wide, and extensive, and grand prospect opened to us. From the immediate fore-

ground, the eye ran gently down some sloping cultivated inclosures, till, passing over the wide-spread woods by which these were surrounded, it swept with eagle flight across the wide valley of the Spey and the endless forests of Abernethy, and rested with joy and with a feeling of freedom on the blue chain of the Cairngorum mountains, rising huge and vast above these minor dependant hills that were congregated about their bases. To the left our view was bounded by tall groves of timber-trees, chiefly beeches, and after penetrating these, the lofty bulk of Castle Grant presented itself within an hundred yards of us.

CLIFFORD.—I think it will not be considered as any breach of the rule we have just laid down, if you should give us an outline, in three words, of the history of this the feudal residence of your chiefs.

GRANT.—All I can tell you regarding it is, that it has been the seat of the chief of our clan ever since the fourteenth century, when the surrounding lands were taken from the Cumins and bestowed on the Grants by the crown. Another large *cantle* of the ancient possessions of the Cumins came into the family by the marriage of Sir

John Grant with Matilda or Bigla, the heiress of Gilbert Cumin of Glenchearnich.

DOMINIE.—True, true, sir, I have a curious story about that. You see, gentlemen, Gilbert Cumin, whose cognomen was Gibbon More——”

CLIFFORD.—You will forgive me for interrupting you, sir, but you will recollect, that although we allowed Grant to tell us what he knew about the castle, we have just laid it down as a rule, that we are to have no more *long* stories upon empty stomachs. Let us hasten to see the interior of this chateau, and then to Grantown and to dinner with what appetite we may. You shall dine with us, and I shall book you for there giving us Gibbon *More*, or any *More* you may be possessed of.

DOMINIE.—Your pun is most excellent, sir, ha! ha! ha!—your reproof is most just, and your invitation most kind, and readily accepted. And as I can be of little use to you here, gentlemen, perhaps I shall be most benefecially employed, both for your interest and my own, by stepping my ways on to Grantown, and looking to the preparation for your accommodation and entertainment at the inn.

AUTHOR.—No, no, sir, we have already secured

all that by the gilly who has preceded us with the pony. We cannot part with you so, your information may be useful to us.

CLIFFORD.—This huge pile seems to have been built at various periods, and with no great taste. That tower is the only picturesque part about it.

GRANT.—That is called the Cumin's Tower, and it is perhaps the only very old fragment of the building. The most modern part is the northern front, the style of which is quite inappropriate.

CLIFFORD.—Come, let us hasten to discuss the interior;—my appetite at present is sufficiently sharp, yet it is for something more digestible than granite and mortar.

We hurried through the castle, admired the great hall, some fifty feet by thirty in size, and were particularly delighted with some of the old family portraits, which are extremely curious as to costume.

CLIFFORD.—What a fierce old white-bearded fellow that is in the bonnet and tartan plaid, drawing a pistol as if he was about to shoot us. I should not like to meet in a wood with such an one as he appears to have been, unless I met him as a friend.

DOMINIE.—That is old Robert Grant of Lurg. I can tell you many a story about him. He was surnamed old *Stachcan*, or the Stubborn ; and—
a——”

CLIFFORD.—Unless you are determined to deserve that surname, as well as ever the said Robert Grant did, you had better attempt no more stories till after dinner, my good friend. And now, methinks, we have seen enough of these bearded, belted, and bonneted heroes ; and if you have no objections, I think we may as well proceed to march into quarters for the night.

A walk of little more than a mile brought us to the village of Grantown, and a period of time something less than a couple of hours, found us all seated, after a very good dinner, round a cheerful fire, each preparing to light his cigar, and moderately to sip the fluid that was most agreeable to him.

CLIFFORD, (*opening his tablets*).—Let me see what my book says. Ha !—Legend of the Raid of Killychrist—Building of Ballindalloch—Gibbon More—Old *Stachcan* !—The Raid comes first—the Raid stops the way,—so drive on with the Raid if you please.

AUTHOR.—Since you desire it, I shall do so, in

order as you say to get it out of the way. But I must tell you that the Raid of Killychrist does in fact form so small a part of that which I have to narrate to you, that I might rather call it—The Legend of Allan with the Red Jacket.

CLIFFORD.—Pray call it what you please, but *quocunque nomine gaudet*, let us have your legend if you please without farther loss of time.

