



SPRIGS
OF
HEATHER

OR

THE RAMBLES

OF MAYFLY

WITH OLD FRIENDS



Wm. Ballantyne
SPRIGS OF HEATHER,

OR,

THE RAMBLES OF "MAY-FLY" WITH
OLD FRIENDS.

BY

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&c., &c

"A poor thing, but mine own."

--Shakespeare.

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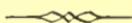
DEDICATION.

THIS little volume I beg leave to dedicate to the Members of the "PERTH ROYAL GOLFING CLUB," of which I have the honour to be the Chaplain, and in which I have long enjoyed much pleasure among a set of genial men, who are keen sportsmen, and rare good fellows.

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P R E F A C E.



IT has been my endeavour to make this volume something more than a *mere tackleshop in type*, wherein Thornton and Phin are the "Genii loci," and the Muses of the natural world are rarely consulted. My sketches are descriptive, historical, autobiographical, piscatorial, and lyrical—and thus I have sought to drape the subject of Angling in a literary garb. How I have succeeded in my aim it remains with the reading public to determine. But one thing at least is certain—that, if I have failed to entertain others, I myself have received a varied entertainment at the bounteous banquet of nature, where the trees and the flowers, the clouds of the sky and the songsters of the grove, the lochs and the streams, have been the ministering spirits. As all my rambles have led me into the moorlands, my first title is associated with the "sprigs of heather" which there beautify the solitude—each *sketch* denoting a "*sprig*"—and, as I wrote for many years in the *Field*

under the *nom de plume* of "Mayfly," I am induced to retain that word in my second title. Many know me by that name "for better or worse."

Charmed with the forms of Nature, let me sing
What simple joys from simple sources spring.
Ope but the ear, what strains of music roll !
Ope but the eye, what visions bless the soul !
Look where you will, what matchless pictures shine,
Their colours borrowed from the hand divine—
Where the white lilies on the lakelet float,
Each flower, to fancy's eye, a fairy boat,
Where the shy trout, beneath the alders cool,
Lurks in the crystal caverns of the pool—
Or, in the gloaming, wandering through the grove,
We hear the cascade's song in glory far above.

No dearth of pleasure e'er can starve the mind,
Disposed to seek what well-tuned souls may find—
The bliss that blooms in every wayside flower,
Breathes in the breeze, and sparkles in the shower,
Floats in the cloud, and laughs in every beam,
Sings in the wood, and murmurs in the stream.
At every door the hand of God hath strown
"Manna," that rich and poor can call their own !

SPRIGS OF HEATHER;

OR

The Rambles of May-fly with Old Friends.

SPRIG I.—THE BRAAN.

THE friend in question, let the reader know, was neither a bright merry girl, nor a jolly young fellow,—both good in their way,—but a brown mountain stream, well known to tourists and anglers as the Highland Braan. And why not an improving companion? Have we not a high authority for the fact that there are “books in running brooks?” Aye, and better books than many that talk in large type. The streams have a word for “the hearing ear,” and have been preaching a gospel of their own kind ever since their soft liquid tongues made sweetest music through moor and woodland. We invite the reader, especially if Waltonian, to go with us for a ramble among the broomy braes that are made bright and cheery by the waters of the Braan. This picturesque stream flows from Loch Freuchie, a lonely sheet of water nestling among the heath-clad hills of Western Perthshire. After a brawling course of about fourteen miles, it loses itself in the “lordly Tay,” opposite the hoary Cathedral of Dunkeld, near to the somewhat classic hamlet of Inver. Here lived and died the famous Neil Gow, of fiddling

and fuddling reputation. Wending his way home one fine evening from a social gathering, where the artistic hand of Neil had "put life and metal in the heels" of the lads and lassies, he was accosted by a friend, who remarked sympathetically, "Ye hae a lang gaet to gae the night," to which the jolly old fellow replied, "It's no' the length but the breadth that bothers me." Comment on the fiddler's condition is quite unnecessary. John, Duke of Athole, had a great liking for the company of this musical worthy, and meeting him one day about the hour of noon, nearly as tightly screwed as his own fiddle, said with much seriousness, "Man, Neil, I'm sorry to see a clever fellow like you in such a state at this early time of the day. If ye will drink, can you not wait till after dinner?" "Weel," said the toper, "if I were just as sure of my drink after dinner as your Grace is, I would be glad enough to wait." A little way above Inver we come to the well-known scene of the Hermitage, where, by the help of mirrors, the Braan was seen tumbling, as it were upon the tourist's head, as he stood within the walls of a pretty, fantastic, little summer-house, beautifully placed amid fern-clad boulders and pendant birches. This romantic cot was blown up by gunpowder during the period of the raid upon the Dunkeld pontage. The perpetrator of this act of Vandalism remains undetected; but, whoever he was, or is, we wish him no better fate than to be sunk up to his neck in the Braan for twenty-four hours. About a mile above what was the Hermitage, we are brought to a scene of mingled grandeur and beauty—the Rumbling Bridge—where "the voice of many waters" booms upon the ear, and reminds us of one of Millais' well-known and most successful renderings of Nature's handiwork. Here, as the river begins to sober down and gather itself into dark-brown, dimpling-pools,

we put up our tackle, and see what luck awaits us on this balmy day. Our first cast was with the "red hackle" and the "Francis," but for some reason known to themselves the trouts seemed to differ in opinion. In vain did we try long-casting to be out of sight, and short-casting to be ready to strike. To no purpose did we try the rushing waters at the throat of the pool, and the shadowy stretch well under the tree-clad bank. Fruitlessly did we resort to the dodge of sinking the flies, and allowing them to float gently down like dead insects; or bringing them to the surface and causing the dropper to bob, bob, fly-like, on the foam-flecked surface of the stream. Not a fin broke the water, not a tail flashed in the sunlight, and twenty minutes of this work showed that "something was wrong." "Off with the old love and on with the new" in the shape of a Derbyshire bumble and a black midge! Happy thought! Trouts, like men, need a little coaxing, and in an instant two speckled beauties dash briskly at the cunning deception, and one of them is gasping on the dewy turf. He is a big one, too, but perhaps only a stray alderman eager for his feed. No, the black midge beguiles another, and the bumble goes in as quickly for a third, each proving that he is "the right fly in the right place." With "pleasure oft renewed," we pursue our sport from pool to pool, by bank and brae, by rock and scaur, and when we reel up near the hamlet of Trochery, we find that about four dozen have found their way into the first creel of the season.

THE BUMBLE.

"'Tis passing strange!" not a fish will rise,
As the hooks o'er the stream are hurried,
And although I am sure they are deadly flies,
The trouts seem in slumber buried.

“Why,” quoth the angler, quite in a fix,
 “’Tis enough to keep one humble ;
 But I’ll try you with one of my knowing tricks,
 And see how you relish the ‘Bumble.’”

Scarce had the charmer left the book,
 When a fish on its barb did quiver ;
 For I’ve always found it a killing hook—
 A regular fail-me-never.

Then here’s to the “Bumble,” the best of flies
 That e’er was afloat on a burn,
 And whenever the trouts are “dour” to rise
 I think he will serve your turn.

MORAL.

In the Book of Life, like the angler’s book,
 There is—and be sure you mind it—
 For every man *the suitable hook*,
 If he has but the wit to find it.

“Cauld winter” is now forgotten as a bitter thing of the past, and we feel as if we had renewed our youth, and “taken a new lease” of the old, pleasant life. We doubt not that some are taking a quiet laugh at our schoolboy-like enjoyment of a homely and unpretending pastime. But let them laugh so long as we feel the benefits of a recreation, healthy alike for mind and body. An alderman over his steaming turtle, a jaded blackleg on the turf, that “green cloth” of his infernal majesty,—where souls are staked and honour is lost,—what are these to the natural and well-toned spirits of the man who loves to tread the springy sod by the brawling stream, whose eyes are gladdened by the fresh dewy flowers, whose ears are delighted by the melodious voices of the woodlands, and who, after a day’s invigorating sport, walks quietly to his evening quarters, feeling that he has done

“something to earn a night’s repose.” Meantime we stretch out for a little on the mossy sward, where the wood anemone is just putting forth its first starry flowers, while the primrose peeps here and there from behind a sheltering stone, or beside the root of an old decayed tree, and let our thoughts drift back into the far-receding vistas of memory. Feelings of a not unpleasing melancholy begin to steal upon us. How deeply and touchingly true is that fine saying of dear old Wordsworth, that there are times and moods

“When pleasant thoughts
Bring sad thoughts to the mind.”

No contradiction there. Here were we, after a pleasant day’s sport, growing unconsciously sad over that fragile anemone which our hand had carelessly plucked. At first it served to recall pleasant hours in the dim-described past,—hours of youth and irrepressible gaiety,—hours still gilded by the reflection of sunsets long since sunk beneath the horizon. But by degrees shadows of more sombre aspect mingled with these rose-coloured visions, and we thought of those who had trodden with us over the elastic turf, cast their flies upon the same sparkling waters, and startled the cuckoo and the cushat with their merry laugh. Now they are things of the buried past, those once blythe and bright and hearty companions—gone, like those bubbles that break at our feet—faded, like those fleecy vapours that a moment ago were floating in coloured beauty over our head. Aye, the “pleasant thoughts” have wandered forth and returned, bringing the “sad thoughts” along with them—and we recline, heedless now of the dreamy murmur that rises gently from the Braan, and long

“For the touch of a vanished hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still.”

But we awake from our dream of other days, and take to the road that lies before us ; for we are far from our destination, and the shadows of the evening begin to close around us.

Where the Braan makes a sweep beneath the wooded braes of Drumore the eye is arrested by a relic of the far-away past. It is an ivy-clad fragment of the ancient Castle of Trochery, one of the hunting seats of Alexander the Third. He is said to have been a man of ability and judgment, both of which were much needed in those turbulent times. His reign was a stormy one, caused by the invasion of the Norsemen, and the well-known contentions of his own rude and unlettered nobility. His death was sudden and melancholy. Shortly after his second marriage his horse fell with him from one of the precipitous sea-cliffs on the coast road near Kinghorn, in Fife, and the rider was killed on the spot, leaving a tangled web for the hands of his successor. The Braan at that time flowed in a different channel, being on the south-east side of the stronghold, instead of the north-west where it now runs, and thus forming a natural barrier between the King and his restless subjects of the Lowlands, who sometimes threatened him with a hostile visit. Here we curiously meet with that strangely ubiquitous wizard, Thomas the Rymer, who appears everywhere, and who, in one of his prescient moments, is reputed to have predicted the sad fate of the monarch. No doubt, like all our Scottish kings, Alexander was a mighty hunter, and very likely he shot game on the heathery mountains of Drumore. If he looked up now, how he would be astonished by a sight of our breechloaders, so much more facile and destructive than the clumsy weapons of those rude days. I wonder if his kingship ever condescended to take a cast

in the stream that engirdled his abode, and with what kind of lure would he beguile the finny tribes? The red-hackle, the black midge, the doctor, and the bumble were not then in all probability in vogue, and we suspect that the royal angler would be reduced to the ignominious dodge of "the early worm." Imagination cannot help peopling this historic spot with gentle dames and gallant knights, with gay courtiers and deep-throated wassailers; but now there is the silence of desolation all around, and no sounds are heard save the bleating of the sheep, the rustling of the wind-shaken ivy, and the hoarse murmurs of the Braan as he wanders on his erratic course. A stiff but pleasant walk of half a dozen miles brings us to our welcome resting-place, the snug hostellerie of "lone Amulree," and from its hospitable threshold we see Loch Freuchie gleaming in the last rays of the setting-sun, and long for the morrow, when we shall try our luck among the lovely trout that tenant its quiet bays. What a precious little lake this once was. We remember of creeling, during two consecutive days, about 22 dozen of its speckled beauties. But now, "*Tempora mutantur*," for that fresh-water shark, the pike, found his way somehow or other into this angler's paradise, and six or eight trout now make a fair catch—the size, however, being increased fourfold. Here for the present we pause amid the hush of the pleasant vernal night, and hope with the opening day to go forth to "fresh fields and pastures new."

Turning over the somewhat faded leaves of an old angling diary, we open up faint glimpses into the days and doings of the past. On a certain day of "Auld Langsyne" the trouts seem to have been more than commonly "dour," and must, therefore, answer for the following lines in simple verse:—

SPRING.

It comes, sweet morning of the year,
 To waken sleeping things—
It comes, to quicken and to cheer,
 With healing on its wings.
I see it in the freshening grass,
 I feel it in the breeze :
It glows among the clouds that pass ;
 It whispers in the trees.

A secret but a mighty power
 Thrills Nature's every vein,
And there springeth here and there a flower
 In the glade, and on the plain.
Again the pensive snowdrops
 Their gentle tidings bring,
And lay on Nature's altar
 The first offerings of the Spring.

The crocus lifts its golden cup
 Above the dewy sod,
As if it offered incense
 All-glowing to its God.
The brook has burst its fetters,
 And is warbling o'er the plain,
As if it sang the ecstasies
 Of liberty again.

The lark its soul is pouring out
 Beside the gates of morn,
And the blackbird carols merrily
 From yonder aged thorn.
There's a stir on every meadow,
 From every grove a voice,
And in Nature's blessed accents
 They bid the heart rejoice.

Nor is it in the air alone,
 Nor on the teeming earth,
 Glad change is felt—for in the breast
 We hail a kindred birth.
 Like fountains opened by the sun,
 Old feelings gush anew,
 And the heart grows fresh and young again,
 Like a plant that drinks the dew.

Yet alas! there is a springtime
 That never more returns,
 When the cheek with ardour kindles,
 And the eye with rapture burns—
 When the freshness of a morning dream
 Is felt in all its power,
 Giving melody to every stream,
 And beauty to each flower.

We may not be as we have been,
 Nor feel as we have felt ;
 For many an Idol lies in dust,
 Where once we fondly knelt.
 But shattered shrines and withered leaves
 Can holy lessons bring,
 And tell the heart that wisely grieves
 To wait for Heaven's own Spring.

As it is scarcely time to go to roost, we feel the inclination to ventilate a grievance of the legitimate angler. Last year we drew attention to it in the *Field*, and venture to reproduce it in these pages, in the hope of pouring upon the *nuisance* an additional torrent of publicity. The Braan is by no means a first-rate trouting stream—hardly second-rate—but it is at least comparatively sequestered, and you are not utterly balked of your day's sport by a perfect outpouring of those who

call themselves *competitory anglers*. At the opening of last season we found the year's work and worry beginning to tell, and by means of rail and mail-gig promised ourselves *a quiet day among the hills* that stretch away in their barren grandeur towards Braemar. But alas! "man proposes," and a *quiet day* we had with a vengeance. Selecting a fine stretch of an oft-tried stream, the little rod was soon rigged, and we prepared for work, when, lo! what may that figure be, splashing round the bend that hides the next stretch from view? It is too large for a stalking heron, and too small for a mad bull—what creature of earth can it be? The murder is soon out. In reply to our anxious inquiries, a lazy Celt, tending some cattle about as shaggy as himself, informs us, with a grin, "That's the *fushin' club*, and there would be anither the day after the morn." So here we are, stranded between the Scylla of to-day and the Charybdis of to-morrow, and no wonder we were flogging the despoiled and desecrated waters to no purpose. In short, we were among a lot of unsportsmanlike Waltonians, with leggings, gramashes, and hob-nailed shoes, armed with wriggling worms, fœtid maggots, and other piscatorial abominations. In vain did we turn the corner of this headland, and then make a detour round the edge of that wood, seeking, like the wanderer "in dry places," a spot of rest, but finding none. The members of the *fushin' club* were all-pervading. Like the plague of flies, their name was legion, and we soon were glad to beat a retreat, finding that we were not "the right man in the right place." What these locusts are pleased to call a day's fishing is a stretch from one midnight until nearly the next! All is fish that comes in their way, pigmies no bigger than a finger-joint being put into the creel; *for everything weighs*. What stream could stand this

abuse? The other day we read a flaming account of one of these piscatorial raids, in which one degenerate Walton was proud to carry off the first prize with about 400 trout, weighing about thirty pounds! That is, about thirteen to the pound, or one ounce a-piece. He was walloping a small stream with a cast of seven flies—a thing resembling the tail of a small boy's kite—and greatly exulted in a feat deserving no better name than *sprat-murder*. Verily, once more “the slaughter of the innocents!” Were we proprietors of rapid, broken Highland waters, we would insist on the combatants angling with fly alone for the period of six or eight hours, and returning to the stream everything under 7 inches. These regulations would ensure something like a trial of skill. These two rules are laid down by the Earl of Breadalbane, in whose magnificent stretches of the Tay above Aberfeldy we have more than once had the privilege of fishing. And there, with black midge and other flies, we have often taken trout over 2 lbs.

And thus ended our *quiet day among the hills*; returning home in a state of utter discomfiture, and sadly saying to ourselves, “He must be a clever fellow who, in these railway times, can find a secluded spot even in the far north.” Here, however, we have at least something like a fisherman's solitude, and we shall now turn in to dream of summer rambles with our old friends.

SPRIG II.—THE MAY.

MANY a pleasant, and I hope not unprofitable, hour have I passed beside the flowery meadows and the birch-clad braes of our Scottish streams. Angling is something more than angling, for it leads to a communion often more improving than the communion of crowded rooms and bustling cities. God's commonest blessings are also his best; and the heathery hill-side, the dimpling pools of the burn "wandering at its own sweet will," together with the health to enjoy them, are things to be remembered with the deepest gratitude. We are told of Wordsworth's hill-bred boy, that Nature was his teacher, that "the tall cliff haunted him like a passion," and for me there has always been an irresistible magic in the "babbling brook" or fretted burn, whispering over its pebbles, gliding through its "emerald meads" and singing its slumberous song, as it steals half-hidden under the pensile branches of the "lang yellow broom." A day spent with Nature is a day spent with God.

The friend of this summer ramble is a very old one—much older than even the Braan—for the first ten years of my happy childhood were passed beside the wandering Earn, the brawling Farg, and the rock-hemmed reaches of the winding May. There I was led by my honoured and indulgent father to gather the wood-anemone and "the pale primrose," and to learn the art of casting the alluring fly. Now, getting old, I seem to renew my youth when holding converse with these old friends; and when I forget them, or fail to enjoy their

company, strength must have decayed, and the bright pictures of memory faded away.

Now, my dear reader, confess it frankly at once, notwithstanding the great poetical authority against us, there is not only *something*, but *much* "in a name." Perhaps you chose your wife all the more quickly on account of her pretty name, not Girzy but Alice. I have no doubt in my own mind that you decided on giving an extra thousand for that lovely property of yours on account of its sweetly-sounding name. Think how much prettier it is to see "Sunnymead" at the top of your letters than "Docken Den!" And you never fail to give that gentle little rosebud on your knee an additional kiss when she looks up and answers with a smile to the bright name of "Lucy." All true, whatever you may say; and, therefore, I tell you that there is something musical and suggestive to me of flowers, and sunshine, and bees, and birds in the lovely word that heads my rambling remarks—the "May"—and brings before me, in one magic instant, visions of pleasant days that whisper from the past, and, I hope fervently visions of happy hours in the advancing future. It was in the May that the trouts of my boyhood sported in the summer sun like fairy things; those trouts that looked so big then, and grew bigger, I suspect, upon every fresh occasion when we "slew the slain." I recollect an old gentleman, loving and racy as Izaak Walton himself, whose pounder—his greatest victory—waxed into two pounds and a half before death wound up the good man's reel. Well, as to our acquaintance (for is he not to many of us far more real than some of those ungenial beings with whom we exchange words every day, and yet never come nearer?), Izaak did not more idolise his Dove than I quietly rejoice in my flowery and winding May. Flowing from the heathery bosom of the

Ochils, the May pursues a very devious course through pastoral sheep-dotted uplands for about seven miles; and after a race of other three among "bosky dells" and old grey crags, where the whin scents the air with its blossom,—not, I think with Goldsmith, "unprofitably gay," for whatever gives pleasure to reflection blossoms not in vain,—and the harebell hangs over the swirling pool, then it quietly drops into the River Earn, its murmurs at length hushed and its vagrancies brought to a close. In its progress this romantic stream intersects a number of picturesque properties—among others Invermay, rendered classic by the bard in his song of the "Birks of Invermay," almost as famous as the "Birks of Aberfeldy," where the rocks ascend like "lofty wa's." For the last mile it loses its voice and its sparkle, just as we often witness a vivacious youth settling down into a sober, but neither sad nor unlovely, old age.

Having been enabled, through the kindness of one of the proprietors, to fish his waters, I started on a balmy morning for my first ramble of the year along the banks of the May. Birds were singing, primroses were laughing in the sun, and I had no doubt that the trouts would also "show" in their own fashion. Having walked leisurely up to a spot which rejoices in the euphonious name of Craigendivits, where the stream is rent and tortured in the inaccessible labyrinths of an awful gorge, I got out my hackles, red and black, and set to work. My first dozen casts were rewarded by half as many trout; and if I had not had some little experience of trout habits, I should have said, chuckling, "it never rains but it pours," and expected the "rise" to continue in the same exuberant fashion. But my little friends soon got shy, and for half an hour not one would raise a fin. By and by one of those climatic influences, felt by *them*, but

hidden to *us*, came over the face of nature, and again the hackles were drawing blood. This sort of see-saw went on from time to time, until it became inwardly apparent that the hour of lunch had struck. Vulgar appetite being appeased, let us light up the "bird's eye," and, as the incense floats in the air, give way to reverie. But that rookery over against us will not admit of any such dreaminess; and all things being early this season, I declare they are at it already among the fledgling rooks? How queer is association! I never went there to think of Dickens, and yet the first caw, caw, of these black innocents has called up a vision of the fat boy, Joe, and rook pie that the young gourmand loved but too well. Mr Winkle, too, affecting the sportsman, although in mortal dread of a gun with its "charge," which he rather thinks ought to be "mixed," the bland Pickwick, with his benevolent eccentricities, and the jolly squire in the country, all heart and soul and fun—all come up before me, and carry me away from the banks of the sylvan May. But holloa! there was a glorious splash in that pool, under the alders, and once more the real business of the day demands attention. So at it again; and the frothing pool, the rushing stream, and the swirl behind the grey stone, each contributed its share to the creel, that was beginning to look respectable. I feel certain that where the water wheels darkly under that brae a patriarchal trout must lie—one who, like a robber-chief of old, has made it his stronghold, and who will only vacate it for a successor when black-gnat, bumble, or spider has cut short his aquatic experiences. If I can only pitch my tail-fly over his old nose, he will snap; but that sort of wary dodger will not quit his haunt to pursue it, leaving that to the inexperienced of the tribe. Well, there it goes, and here he comes, with a spring

that takes everything down stream full six yards! But he has swallowed his last fly, and I have him out on the turf before he has time to try some of his ancient tricks; and time too, for the fly falls from his mouth, broken at the barb. He is a "head-centre" no doubt, yellow as gold between the spottings, and over a pound. My substitute for the red hackle, so lost, was a yellow body with a teal drake wing, and right well did he fill his place. He proved the killer of the day, and I gave him a high place in my book for the future. But angling, like all other sublunary affairs, must have its crosses, and only look at that half-pounder bobbing and somersaulting from that branch, like Blondin over the foaming mysteries of Niagara! Shall I try main force? Shall I wade, with that old rheumatism not yet laid? While I ponder, he acts, and cuts the connection.

This episode leads me to say that the May, like many other flowery things, tries one's patience. Some of its best pools are under the alders; some of its finest streams are overshadowed by the willow, where the burn is seen dimly "stealing under the lang yellow broom." "Why not wade," says one, "up middle stream where no trees molest?" "My dear friend, why not dive? This is one of my pleasure days, and I have got a railway carriage to sit in before getting home." "But you might carry wading stockings," &c., persists my mentor, or rather tormenter, for why not let a man be happy in his own quiet way? "Well, I do wade, when so disposed; but I repeat this is one of my pleasure days, and, like Cæsar, when he went somewhere in Gaul, I travel to-day as much as possible free of the *impedimenta*. I know, my conceited friend, that you took that prize last week, encumbered with half the stock of an angler's shop—boots a stone weight, wading stockings inside, besides

'gramashes' half an inch thick, a landing net, a water-proof strapped to your basket, and that basket of capacious size for the purpose of containing lunch, flask, hook-book, and a pair of dry boots and fresh stockings! Was the play, let me mildly ask, worth so huge a candle?"

"But why don't you get bait," cries out Smellfungus, "brandlings with a fine fresh flavour from the 'midden,' or, better still, maggots from a carcase? You could then lift your fish in the midst of a forest." "My dear dirty adviser, don't let me hurt your feelings in the very least, but I fish for amusement, and have no desire to transplant reminiscences either of the dunghill or of the tanyard into the precincts of the May, which is sacred to sweeter and holier things."

The legitimate lure, in our brawling Scotch streams, for the denizens of the flood, is the effigies of the denizens of the air, that still purer stream that floats past over our heads. But I must pull up, or I shall have all the "bottom fishers" of the land upon my top. Yet I cannot help regarding worm and maggot among the trouts as I regard the "gin" and the "trap" among the "footed game"—a device for the "pot," but not the true lure of the true sportsman. Be it noted that I speak of those rapid streams, all foaming pool and rushing shallow, where there is no excuse whatever for anything save the fly. But let us "reel up," for the day wanes, and, like all pleasant things, this one must have its sunset. At the bridge of Ardargie—a romantic gem that might tempt one into a breach of the Tenth Command—let us turn out the contents of the old battered creel, and see what we have. Three dozen and four lovely speckled trouts, a few of them nearly $\frac{1}{2}$ lb., two of them nearly double that size, and all in as good condition as the June trout of 1867. And now, wearing down the water-side

towards the station, we pass through the picturesque grounds and under the stately trees of Invermay, pausing dreamily for a few minutes by the fall of the Hummel-Bummel, where the water booms and hisses and boils, and wondering what patriarchs of the stream have long defied the angler in that seething cauldron. Bait might be so dropped as to beguile the wary seniors of the tribe; but, in the name of all that is poetical, would it not be a monstrous shame to drop worm or maggot in that haunted sylvan paradise of Nature, where the leaves seem whispering some weird secret to the spirit of the May?

In travelling by rail to my pretty, flowery friend, I pass an old ivy-covered house, in the suburbs of Perth, invested for me with a deep interest. There I spent the first seven years of my married life, before there was one cloud on my summer sky. The storm must break sooner or later; but we must not forget our seasons of blue, sunny calm. That old house is draped by two plants of ivy, one taken long ago from Southey's residence, Greta Hall; the other from the rose-covered cottage of Wordsworth, on the grassy slopes of Ridalmer. Like the hearts of those two great poets, these plants have entwined, till blended in one wealthy mass of verdure, seeming to grow denser and greener with the flight of years—watered with dews from the fountains of immortality.

THE TWIN PLANTS.

Two ivy plants grow kindly on my wall—

One from the leafy nest by Ridalmer;

The other drank the dews of Greta Hall,

Where Derwent spreads his mirror, calm and clear.

And, like the souls of their two bards entwining,
 Entwine these sister-plants through shade and sun,
 Till, o'er my porch in glossy verdure shining,
 Sprung from two stems, they seem to spring from one.
 Southey and Wordsworth who in thought may sever?
 In fame and love they bloom in brotherhood for ever.

And now let me say, at the close of a day whose value can only be felt by the man who has wandered through it, if the weary spa-hunter, who goes about carrying his miserable stomach in his miserable face, would only exchange his fœtid waters for the sparkling waves of the crystal stream or the nut-brown burn, and take the rod in his hand in place of the invalid's campstool, he would find that he had found at length the fountains of health. Dyspepsia would drown itself in the foaming pool, and the vagrant would come home to eat, like me, a jolly supper, fearless of nightmare, and thereafter enjoy

The slumber purchased by an active day,
 When dreams are banished, and the busy soul
 Rests with its mate, the body, and renews
 Its strength and freshness in the realms of night.

Connected with the subject of angling there are, perhaps, no two more repeatable things than those which derive their parentage from Johnson and Byron. The former defines, as all the world knows, angling to be "a stick and a string, a fool at one end and a worm at the other"; while the latter splenetically writes—

"And angling, too, that solitary vice,
 Whatever Isaac Walton sings or says,
 The quaint, old, cruel coxcomb in his gullet
 Should have a hook, and a small fish to pull it."

Both undoubtedly mighty men in their way; but the one great in his prejudice, the other in his bitterness and bile. The Doctor refutes himself out of his own mouth;

for he says that we should never "pass over any ground that has been distinguished by wisdom, bravery, or virtue," in an unmoved and indifferent spirit. Now, the rod often leads its votary through classic scenes which remind him of the brave, the wise, and the good; and, therefore, the pursuit of the angler, according to the surly moralist himself, is not without its worth and its meaning. The recreation of the angler is also of a salutary character, imparting health both to body and mind, and, therefore, cannot partake of the nature of a "vice." Indeed, if a thing be judged by its wholesome results, it must partake of the character of a virtue. Our friend, Don Juan, would have been all the better for an acquaintance with rod and stream. Perhaps they would have restored him to that state of fresh and simple feeling which he enjoyed when he sang of Loch-na-gar and the natural beauties of his much-loved Highland home.

Think of the mental results of angling days, and then confess that they have not been unwise or unfruitful. The rod, in truth, has acted like a magic wand in certain hands, and has proved not seldom a suggestive and even a creative power. It was while fishing in the Tweed, amid scenes rendered immortal by the pen and residence of Scott, that the late Andrew Thomson, of celebrated debating power, sketched the outlines of one of his most notable and telling speeches. The subject was "Continue or discontinue the preaching of Gaelic" in a parish upon the banks of that very stream, the Braan, beside which we have lately been rambling and musing. The opposition argued "Discontinue, for this parish is just in the mouth of the Highlands." To which Thomson promptly and wittily replied, "And where would my friend expect to find a *Highland tongue*, if not in a *Highland mouth*?" This went far to settle the question

in a way that would have given delight to the soul of Professor Blackie. Sir Humphrey Davy, in gathering materials practically for his *Salmonia* and *The Last Days of a Philosopher*, conceived some of those brilliant scientific inventions by which the world has been astonished and benefited, human life preserved, and society enriched. We have lost our much-valued copy of the last-mentioned work, rare in every respect, and sorry are we for the loss; for the little volume contains beauty, feeling, and wisdom of the highest order. How many thousands of readers, too, have been entranced by the great Christopher North "in his fishing jacket!" One never tires of following that prince of anglers in his rambles by loch and stream. With what thrilling tales and gorgeous word-painting do *The Recreations* abound! We reviewed these in *Fraser's*. He had a passion for sport and nature. The angler meets with his poetic spirit in many a Highland glen, and beside the glorious Loch Awe especially, under the sombre shadows of the double-coned Ben Cruachan, he is vividly reminded of some of the noblest and most subtle delineations of romantic scenery by which our Scottish literature has been enriched by a bright-souled and large-hearted man. One of our last meetings with this son of genius took place on the banks of Loch Lomond, our queen of lakes. We rambled by its varied shores, where shifting scenes of beauty met us at every turning, like the changes of a panorama. We supped at the hotel of Tarbet, which commands a noble view of the towering Ben casting his broad shadow over his picturesque islands. Christopher wandered from theme to theme, now in graphic and again in touching language, till "the wee short hour ayont the twall" warned us to retire. Parting for the night, he said, "I have been rather flat to-night, but on another occasion I

hope to prove a more entertaining companion." Retreating thoughtfully to our roost, we could not help thinking, "If that be his flat mood, what on earth will his brisk one be like?" And who, of any natural taste and feeling, does not rejoice and render thanks for the gentle teachings which old Isaac received from the flowery meads and the whispering streams, stealing, like dream-children, under the bending willows? His quaint heart-breathing words act like a balmy emollient, or a soothing strain of low-toned music to the weary world-worn soul. Many dreary commentaries on the Book of Grace might be lost to the world, and the world no poorer. But not for money would we lose those simple and delicious commentaries on some of the lovely pages of the Book of Nature, for which the old angler is so deeply venerated and so dearly loved.

In our own humble fashion we, too, have been often indebted to the kindly, reviving influences of the natural world, which proves a gentle nurse to all man's better feelings. When perplexing problems are distracting the brain, and we fail to see clearly amid the shadows of vague thoughts, that flit phantom-like before the eye of the mind, we have felt more than once the benefits of wandering among sylvan retreats, and listening to the whisperings of the voices of creation. Somchow we have then found a light poured upon dark matters, mental pain assuaged as if by the touch of a healing hand, and ere an hour passed away a capacity growing within us, by which we were enabled to look at many things in a more hopeful spirit, and to perceive the field of our life glowing with tints of brighter and holier beauty. Such is the mood in which Tennyson says—

"A livelier emerald twinkles in the grass,
A softer sapphire melts along the sea."

There are times when it is good to follow the example of him who, in old world times, was wont "to meditate in the fields at even"; for surely it is salutary to be with the things of a creation, which is full of that Divine Being who bestowed upon us all our powers and faculties, and added the means of providing these with a simple and suitable education. Under the spell of such teaching many a wanderer in solitary places has felt as he never felt before what the Lake Poet meant when he traced these pregnant words—

"To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears."

Before closing this ramble, I cannot dispense with saying that one charm appears to have vanished from the flowery banks and braes of the May. Where is my pretty old friend, the kingfisher? Long ago I was wont to count three pairs of the lovely piscator. Then they dwindled to two pairs—thereafter to one—and now the lovely *genius loci* is nowhere to be seen. Of course the keeper's gun loudly tells of its murderous folly; and the poor kingfisher is now relegated to the glass case of a city museum. But never will he look in any glass case of any museum as he looked, when, amid the greenery of the grand conservatory of Nature, he went glancing by in the sunbeam, like a *winged emerald*, every feather instinct with life and loveliness. There are two special sins for which the sons of Britain must be called to account. Brown, Jones, and Robinson feel bound to scratch their classic and euphonious names upon the first "stock or stone" that arrests their vagrant feet—and Hamish and Donald, the keepers of M'Dunder and M'Hoolachan, are constrained, by some singular element of destruction, to exterminate every rare bird that flits

across their prowling path. Against this most abominable practice we indignantly protest in the names of our noble eagles, ravens, and falcons, which in a few years more are doomed to be as extinct as the dodo of Bourbon and Mauritius, or the mighty New Zealand Moa. Poor little kingfisher, as I shoulder my creel, have I seen the last of thee by the leafy "May"?

There are other modes of killing, and a common one is "killing with kindness." It is very pleasant to have in one's private room a song-bird warbling sweetly, yet plaintively, from its cage; but does not the bird feel it to be a *gilded prison*? If it could speak in our language would it not say, "Your tender mercies are cruel? you give me food and water and shelter, but what about the free sky, the green forests, and the scented blossoms of the woodlands? They are everything to a born gipsy like me." So thought and felt I as, passing a cottage on my way home, I saw a little boy tending a bullfinch in a pretty cage—a pretty boy and a pretty bird—yet a keeper and a captive.

THE BOY AND THE CAPTIVE BIRD.

OH! give it liberty!
 Canst thou not tell
 The blessings of the free?
 No! for the captive's cheerless cell
 Hath never closed on thee.

Who pray for *health*?
 They who have felt
 Disease's weary bed.
 Who pine for *wealth*?
 They who have knelt,
 And vainly begg'd for bread.

Then give it liberty!

Blue sky and balmy breeze,
And shelter of the greenwood tree—
Oh! how it droops for these!

True! thou hast made its home
Of gaily-gilded bars;
But what are these to heaven's free dome,
With all its twinkling stars?

Think ye the captive's brain
Could grow to slavery cold,
Though every limb might wear a chain
Of brightly burnished gold?

Then give it liberty!
For thee 'tis well
Thy glad young life is free.
Pray that the solitary cell
May never close on thee!

FLOWERS.

THE flowers are children of the soil,
Arrayed by Nature's hand,
They "spin not," neither do they "toil,"
Yet what a lovely band!

The gems they wear are drops of dew,
Fresh from the fount of heaven,
While beams of light and skies of blue
To them bright hues have given.

A more than regal glory paints
These nurslings of the sod,
And, holy as our holiest saints,
They preach to man of God.

Of Him, who is the God of Love,
 These wordless preachers tell,
 And say, "The hand that rules above,
 On earth 'does all things well.'"

THE FIRST PRIMROSE.

FAMILIAR flower ! once more I greet
 Thy beauty in this shady place,
 Where whispering leaves and waters meet,
 And lend to solitude a grace.

Thou bringest back the happy hours,
 When, children, through the meadows roaming,
 We wove in chains the dewy flowers,
 Till gently fell the summer gloaming.

Thou speakest of the faded Past.
 Where mingled common joys and sorrows,
 Of days that were too bright to last,
 Of cloudy nights and glad to-morrows.

Thou tellest of a heavenly Power,
 A God of Wisdom and of Love,
 Who watches o'er the simplest flower,
 And lights the golden stars above.

'Tis thine to whisper humble trust
 To hearts whose blooming hopes have perished ;
 For they, like thee, though doomed to dust,
 By the same kindly Hand are cherished.

So not alone to bloom and fade
 The primrose to the Spring was given,
 But, like some altar in the glade,
 To waft the soul from earth to heaven.

SPRIG III.—THE EARN.

IN one sense, I was born on the banks of the Earn ; for there, soul-taught by its grassy holms and rippling waters, thought began to stir within my infant breast. The true place of a man's birth is the spot where the light of intelligence begins to dawn. My worthy and much-loved father was minister of the parish of Dunbarney, where a good friend of mine, Mr Kirkwood, now tends the flock ; but as, I suppose, the then rickety manse was not to be trusted with such an important advent, I first saw the light in Newburgh, a flourishing town in Fife, from which circumstance I claim compassion of my readers if they happen to find anything "Fifish" in these reminiscences.

My father always, in his mind, designed me for the Church ; but for some time it seemed doubtful if such a special nugget was destined to enrich the treasury of the dear Auld Kirk, against which at present so many rash and bigoted hands are raised ; but they will find that the weapons, which they wield with such transparent folly, will never "prosper." It seemed that I was not to become a stone in the venerable fabric ; for, if water could have drowned, I gave the Earn a very fair chance of putting an end to my boyish existence, being always either on its banks trying the worm, or amid its waves seeing how far I could swim, or diving in its depths and groping for pearls. I have at the present moment a rare beauty fished up by myself, and set in a chaste surrounding of gold and blue enamel. My parents—although possess-

ing only one hopeful—dropt by degrees their anxiety about the young vagrant ; for at the age of seven or eight, I could swim like an otter, or a water-ousel. Connected with this aquatic accomplishment, I may be allowed to mention one incident. Trespassing on a certain day on the grounds of Sir David Moncreiffe—a kind friend of our family—a surly keeper came down upon one or two little fellows and myself, *like another Sennacherib*, and made his approach cracking his dog-whip with cruel anticipation. My poor little co-mates shivered with dread, and their small souls sank into the toes of their shoes. I told them to go off to the right as fast as they could streak, which they did with a will, while I, like a lightning-conductor, drew the fire of wrath from them by walking leisurely to the left. On came our tormentor cracking his whip, and grinning with the first forestalment of a flogging satisfaction. I quietly let my fine leather-leggined gentleman advance until he was close to the river, on the brink of which I now stood. He concluded I was done—but “the Rubicon” can’t stop a Cæsar. Putting the thumb of my left hand to my nose, and the thumb of my right hand to the little finger of the left, I took to the stream, jacket, breeks, and all, and the keeper stood upon the bank, a miserable specimen of discomfiture and degradation. Arrived at the opposite bank I shouted, “A bonnie keeper that canna follow up his game!” He went with his “pitiful story” to the bluff Sir David, who told him that he was a “muff,” and the minister’s laddie a “trump.” - Another escapade well-nigh deprived the “Auld Kirk” of a small “buttress.” A good, generous lady lost her venerable mother, and in the churchyard of Dunbarney raised a tombstone to her memory. The erection assumed the graceful form of an urn, topped

by a torch of fine white sandstone. An expert swimmer, I was a "blind gunner," and was always far from hitting the mark. One day, however, a little imp challenged me to try a cast at the top of the urn, and I recklessly agreed. My first throw cut the torch clean off, and we took to our heels. My worthy and justly-incensed father reckoned the parish disgraced, and offered a reward of £5 for the finding and exposure of the sacrilegious culprit. Silence! Day after day went past. No one came. One afternoon, however, when the much-loved pastor was brooding in his study, and thinking, no doubt, of the iniquities of the world in general, and his parish in particular, the door opens, and young hopeful enters. "Well, boy, what do you want—I'm busy—go away and play." "But, father, I want £5, for I can tell wha broke the tombstone." "Ah! my boy, that's good—come, who was it? and here is"— My hand was on the handle of the door, and the study table was between us. Grammar, somehow, was forgotten, and I shouted out—"Father, it was me, give me"— Over went the study table, bang went the door, and I was invisible for the next two days. My kind-hearted mother kept me under lock and key. My father forgot his wrath, but the affair got wind, and I need hardly tell my indulgent readers, that, when the old lady who erected the tombstone died and required one for herself, your humble servant was not remembered in her will. The broken torch was fixed on with cement, and may, in token of my veracity, be seen to this day.

The sons of the manse have earned the name of proverbial "Pickles," and the writer of these lines, I greatly fear, was closely allied to that family. My "schooling" began under the kindly care of good old Tom Scott, who died not long ago, the minister of Shapins Shay, in

the far-off misty Shetlands. It was no fault of his that his boy failed to become a star, but, like the geese of Lady Macfarlane, I suspect I was rather fonder of my "play" than of my educational "meat." However, in one way I made my "mark"; for, if I had not a pair of handsome black eyes once a quarter, some other fellow was certain to wear the sable livery. These things I can afford to write, keeping nothing back, being now a grey-haired man, much sobered and subdued by the stern realities of life, and gazing with a placid sadness down the sombre far-stretching vista of more than half a century.

Connected with the manse, in which so many happy days were spent, there is a reminiscence of the celebrated Dr Chalmers, which ought not to be omitted. He was residing at Kilgraston, and came to preach for my father one Sunday. Well do I recollect the occasion, for my memory goes far back into the vivid past. I think I see the large-headed and equally large-hearted divine as he stood gazing from the pulpit with his dreamy grey eyes; and I think that I yet hear the rolling thunder of the "old man eloquent." After dinner he and my father began to talk about botanical subjects, when the latter spoke of a plant which grew on the glebe by the margin of the Earn. "Impossible!" exclaimed the Doctor, "quite impossible, for it is a salt-water flower, and requires to breathe the sea air." "If it were not the Sabbath," said my father, "I would in five minutes convince you by ocular demonstration." "The Sabbath!" cried out the Doctor, "study God's works on God's day—send that laddie to fetch it this very instant." Away I trotted with the speed of another Ariel, and was back in no time with a specimen of the contested plant. The worthy divine of course at

once gave in, and bestowed on me his blessing, together with a shining half-crown piece; but as I was at that time much in love with Jamie Deas's black and white rock, I rather suspect that the coin made the deepest impression of the two. The Doctor stayed over the night, and returned to Kilgraston next day. However, in the afternoon, down came a boy with a note, saying, "Look on the toilette-table of the room in which I slept, and send back the little copy of Butler's *Sermons* which I left there. It has long been my *vade mecum*, and I would not lose it for the world." The volume was found open, and there was the Doctor's subject of the previous day. He was in the habit of preaching Butler's ideas, but set in his own peculiar and impressive style.

One other reminiscence, and I turn my back for a season on the dear old manse. My father had a younger brother, bred, like himself, to the Church—a man of striking appearance and amazing talent. He had stood at the head of the College of St Andrews, the Principal of which, the well-known Dr Hill, wrote to my uncle's father a letter, yet in possession of the family, in which he confidently predicts the speedy fame of Alexander Anderson. But, alas! the hand of death was upon him at an early age. He came to Dunbarney, seeking health, but found a grave. On the evening before he died the sun was setting in summer glory behind the rocky crest of Moredun Hill, and the dying youth requested to be lifted up, so that he might see the orb of day go down once more. Propped on his pillow, he watched with wistful intent the declining king of heaven, and, as his last ray sank slowly behind the hill-top, the sun of a human life set quietly for ever. This touching scene I have endeavoured to pourtray in my earliest publication, *The Pleasures of Home*, and will be par-

done, I hope, for giving it a place in this rambling sketch.

THE LAST SUNSET.

“OH! raise my head,” said the dying youth,
 “That setting sun I fain would see ;
 For a voice is whispering the words of truth—
 ‘That setting sun is the last for thee.’”

They raised him up as the orb of day
 Was sinking behind the pine-clad hill,
 And his breath with the light ebb'd fast away,
 Till all was silent and dark and chill.

The moon looked in through the lattice-pane—
 It streamed on the pallid brow of the dead,
 And it silvered the tears that fell, like rain,
 O'er a blossom of earth, untimely shed.

But clear your eyes of their bitter dew,
 Let not a drop their light bedim ;
 For what was a setting sun to you,
 Was a sunrise of life and love to him.

My first trouts were caught in a small burn that plays itself, like a gay, thoughtless child, through the beautiful park of Kilgraston. That domain can boast of a notable family—among others, Sir Francis Grant, the late distinguished President of the Royal Academy, and Sir Hope, the famous “Sabreur” of Indian warfare. The “brush” ran strongly in the family, and the late John Grant, Esq., besides many other sketches, executed a most characteristic one of his gamekeeper, Davie Luke, as grizzled an old fellow as ever handled a ferret, or carried a game-bag. The present proprietor is also a cultivator of the fine arts, and I heartily wish that “the

old stock " was back again, to live on ground where it flourished so well, and was so much loved and honoured in the bosoms of the people.

When I grew a little bigger I took to the Farg, and, advancing apace, at length aspired to cope with the "finny tribes" of the beautiful River Earn that washes the glebe of the bonnie parish of Dunbarney. There my first "whitling" was secured,—to me, at that time, a monster of consideration,—and up that stream, winding its way through holm and meadow, like a silver snake, I now invite my readers to ramble with me, and take a "cast" as we wander onward. The noble demesne of Dupplin is the first place of note, and in "The Minister's Pool," and other famous salmon "lies," thanks to the kindness and courtesy of the present Earl, I have "brought to grass" the most lordly of all our river fishes. By the water-side, a very little, somehow or other, sets the brain a-working, and here, stretched at ease, after a day's good sport, the following fanciful lines took to themselves "a local habitation and a name":—

THE FOAM-BELL; A RIVERSIDE RHYME.

A BRIGHT foam-bell on the waters rose,
 On the ripples it danced away,
 And from time to time a brief repose
 It found in some fairy bay.

Then around and around on the eddies it spun,
 Then it shot on the shooting tide,
 And, lit by the rays of a glorious sun,
 It gleamed and it laughed in pride;
 When lo! in a golden flash it sank!
 But the sun shone bright as ever,
 And still as of old, from bank to bank,
 Swept on that rippling river.

'Tis thus, methought, with the great and gay—
 A gleam ! and their glory's gone ;
 Bright and brief was their earthly day—
 Pleasure and pomp for an hour had they ;—
 But over the spot where they passed away
 The sun still sheds his warmest ray,
 While the river of Time rolls on !

Onward we wend our leisurely way, and soon find ourselves beside the tree-dotted lawn that slopes gently upwards to the "House of Gask." There is a modern house now of handsome dimensions, but it is to the "Auld House" that all our associations go back, and nestle there in the dim fairy-land of reverie.

And now, my friendly reader, I am about to wax more prosy and more egotistical. A certain Mr Stuart went "out" on a most uncertain venture—the *luckless* '45. I have the honour to be descended from this more valorous than prudent old soldier, who allowed enthusiasm to run away with discretion, and paid for it dearly. I am not going to drag the reader through the mazes of the old sad story that ended at "bloody Culloden." My purpose is with the "Auld House" of Gask. When their lords were away on their adventurous campaign, several of their ladies took refuge with the hospitable Oliphants. The dismal tale of Culloden found its way to them, like all bad tidings, with woeful celerity, and in down-heartedness they awaited the sequel. By and by some "broken men" came hurrying to the house, bearing proudly along with them the rescued "colours," red with more than one drop of their patriotic blood. But the sleuth-hounds of Cumberland were on their track—the "Auld House" was in no state to stand a siege—and where to hide the battle-rent colours became the anxious question. "Give them to me," said Mrs Stuart,

with a spirit worthy of "Duncraggan's Dame," and with ready resource she hid them down the shaft of the *moss-grown pump*, where they remained secure. The pursuers came, the house was ransacked from floor to roof-tree, the men were roughly handled and the ladies insulted; but the precious relic of olden fights was never found. What became of it I cannot remember. Meanwhile, what about the fugitive Prince, and seven comrades in arms who stuck to him through good report and through bad report? Stuart was of the number, and they wandered from moor to mountain, hiding in cold damp caves, and never, for safety, remaining long in one place. I have seen two of these dismal dens, one near the Fall of Foyers, the other on the bleak side of giant Ben Alder—and wretched lodgings they must have been for a Royal guest. Long after those vagrant days Stuart was wont to tell how he often made "crowdie"—oatmeal, cold water, and a little salt—in *the heel of an old shoe* for the half-starved Prince, and how he lulled him to sleep, like David with the gloomy Saul, by playing on an old Jew's harp, which was then a commonly-used instrument among the Scotch. We all know—to the honour of the devoted Celts—how the bribe of £30,000 could not sap the fidelity of even one bare-legged Highland gillie, and, after running the gauntlet, through innumerable perils by land and sea, Stuart was one of the *staunch seven* who saw the French lugger carry away the ill-fated Prince from these hostile shores, amid whose bleak sea-beaten rocks the sun of the gallant Stuarts set for ever. A strange magic still hangs around the story of "Bonnie Prince Charlie." His was once a "name to conjure with," and has still the power to stir the heart that loves the heather and beats beneath the tartan. Although our justly-respected

Queen has no more loyal subject than the author of these reminiscences, I at once confess to the spell of the Stuart name, the very mention of which sends a tingling through my veins. I cannot explain it. I simply state a fact.

I know that Stuart secretly fostered the conviction that he was a twig, at least, of the Royal Oak, but for myself I am quite satisfied with my descent from the *first man*, who has left us a legacy which may well serve to keep a rational person humble. Mr Stuart got down to the Lowlands, when the war-tempest blew past, but never lived "to enjoy his ain again."

And now, it may reasonably be asked, "How and why did this romantic story never find its way into print till so late in the day?" Easily answered. The late Dr Stuart—minister then of Newburgh, and an honour to the "Auld Kirk"—drew up such a statement as I have now given to the public, and sent it to his friend, John Home, author of *Douglas*, who was at that time publishing his *History of the Rebellion of 1745*. However, the statement reached the historian too late, as his history was finished, and given to the world; but he confessed himself satisfied with the veracity of the narrative, and promised to insert it in his second edition. Death stepped in, Home laid down the pen, and the tale of old days now sees the light for the first time, from the pen of one who is proud to claim as a near relation the late learned and eloquent Dr Stuart.

The chief associations of Gask are with the names of two ladies, whose poetic effusions have long delighted the world. The Baroness Nairne, one of the "Auld House," and Caroline Oliphant, her niece, who was also born there. All readers are familiar with the poems of

the former; and the verses of the latter, less widely known, are characterised by a winning simplicity and a child-like purity. Delicate in frame as in spirit, over Caroline there hung the presentiment of that early grave to which she was doomed. Hence a touching melancholy pervades all her poems, and the shadows of the coming night cast over all her effusions a sad and "tender grace." I cannot resist enriching this ramble with two of these exquisite productions, unsurpassed in their earnest wording and gentle pathos.

OH, NEVER! NO, NEVER.

OH, never! no, never!
 Thou'lt meet me again;
 Thy spirit for ever
 Has burst from its chain:
 The links thou hast broken
 Are all that remain,
 For never, oh! never,
 Thou'lt meet me again.

Like the sound of the viol,
 That dies on the blast;
 Like the shade on the dial,
 Thy spirit has passed.
 The breezes blow round me,
 But give back no strain;
 The shade on the dial
 Returns not again.

Where roses enshrine thee,
 In light trellis'd shade,
 Still hoping to find thee,
 How oft have I strayed!

SPRIGS OF HEATHER.

'Thy desolate dwelling
 I traverse in vain,
 The stillness has whispered,
 Thou'lt ne'er come again.

I still haste to meet thee,
 When footsteps I hear ;
 And start, when to greet me
 Thou dost not appear :
 Then afresh o'er my spirit
 Steals men'ry of pain—
 For never, oh ! never,
 Thou'lt meet me again.

HOME IN HEAVEN.

A WIND-BOUND exile far from home,
 While standing near th' unfathomed main,
 My eyes the far horizon roam,
 To see the land I long to gain.
 Though dim with mists and faintly blue,
 The hills of bliss e'en now I view ;
 Oh ! when will heaven's soft breezes come,
 And waft the weary exile home ?

Let those who know no lovelier shore
 Their shells and sea-weed idly heap,
 Then mourn to see their paltry store
 Dispersed and sinking in the deep.
 My storehouse lies beyond the wave,
 My treasure fears no wat'ry grave.
 And oh ! I wish fair winds would come,
 And waft me o'er to that blest home.

Already some I held most dear,
 Have safe arrived on yonder strand ;
 Their barks afar like specks appear,
 The exiles now have gained the land.

Their parting signals wave no more,
No signs of woe float from that shore !
And soon the skiff for me will come,
And Heaven's own breath will waft me home.

Few things can be more melancholy than the decadence of youth ; but some allow themselves to grow old too soon, while others have the faculty of keeping age at arm's length as long as possible. The recipe for doing this is to keep up the sports of your younger years. Don't permit yourself to believe that you are growing old ; wield the rod and the gun as long as possible, and never suppose yourself incapable of out-of-door exertion. We are not old, nor yet very young—something between the two—and nothing gives us more pleasure than the whirr of the grouse, or, above all, the flash of the trout, as he dares the deceptive fly, and tries the skill of the hand that casts it gently on loch or stream. Let us tell our readers of a pleasant passage lately on Highland waters, and let us induce some of them to visit one of the loveliest places of a lovely country. After a winter that seemed interminable, we were glad to find ourselves, rod, and creel, by the side of Loch Earn, and comfortably installed in the well-known hotel kept by Mr and Mrs Davie, where the fare is excellent, the charges moderate, and the attention of the "staff" all that angler can desire. There are some good boatmen ready "from early morn till dewy eve," and one of them persuaded us to fish through the night, when sensible people have assumed their nightcaps. Among others there is "The Admiral," who, like all "ancient mariners," has no objection to a drop of mountain dew ; John M'Gregor, a steady old oar, who takes no "whusky ;" and M'Ewen, a strong young fellow, who does all in moderation. We

were often afloat, and generally successful. The loch requires a good capful of wind, the waters being spring-fed, and as clear as crystal. The trout are not as a rule large, but very numerous, and game to the backbone. For a time we used the "Loch Leven" size of hooks, but were not successful, and began to think that our "right hand had lost its cunning." Suddenly it flashed upon us that the extreme purity of the water accounted for the fact; and, on putting on gossamer tackle rigged with midge flies, we killed hand over hand, and returned to our quarters with a basket of nearly five dozen, weighing twelve pounds, after little more than four hours' fishing. One angler on the same day, after nine hours' work, brought to creel twenty-one pounds of pretty trout. Let those who either can't or won't fish fly, try the phantom, or better still, the natural minnow, and they may chance to light upon a ferox, or even a salmon. That salmon are there cannot be doubted, for we were pestered with smolt fry, sometimes a pair at once, which we returned to the waters to grow to the legal years of discretion; but the loch is not a salmon reservoir like Loch Tay, and the old boatmen assured me that they had seldom seen "clean fish" killed, all being spent, and therefore the time employed in trying for them being time thrown away. Let the angler use fine tackle for trout, and he will have no reason to regret his moderate desires. Why is this loch, with such a beautiful river flowing out of it, not a sea-trout and salmon loch? Facts are facts. It is notorious that, for their own reasons, the sea-trout seldom ascend the Earn, but on reaching the mouth of the Ruchil, which joins the Earn at Comrie, head up that brawling stream in vast numbers; and as we said already, the salmon makes not the loch a favourite haunt. We believe the reasons for this reserve to be

these: Loch Earn is the crater of an extinct volcano of extreme depth, with a stony bottom and little feeding, and, above all, has not, like Loch Tay, a fine spawning stream rushing in at the head. But it is a delightful loch for trouting, the fish being lively, and sometimes reaching a pound; and those who have once made proof of the merits of Mr Davie's Hotel will have no difficulty in finding their way back to that most pleasant retreat.

The journey from Perth to St Fillans at the foot of the loch, is very agreeable, and the scenes through which the way lies varied and beautiful; from the "Fair City" to Crieff by train; then from Crieff by coaches, very roomy and comfortable, with fine teams of grey and brown horses that do their work well. On the way several lovely seats are passed—Ochertyre, so famous in the verse of Burns; Lawers, the abode of the well-known Col. Williamson, whose stock is worth inspecting; Dunira, mentioned in the exquisite ballad of "Bonnie Kilmeny"; and other residences of equal attraction. Near the roadside rises the conical hill of St Fillans, on the top of which sainted eminence there is a well, whose waters the saint has endowed with the power of working miraculous cures; but, beyond helping to cure our thirst by means of a horn of grog, we found no virtue in these far-famed waters. Here we are at home once more; but although, according to the song which Grisi sang so well, there be "no place like home," we long for another cast on the beautiful loch that washes the base of the lofty Ben Voirlich. One day, Loch Earn being too stormy, we made our way up the steep hillside to Loch Boltachan, which lies buried deeply among the mountains, and, after little more than two hours' fishing from the shore, secured twenty trout—not one of them under a quarter of a pound, and a

pair of them fully a pound each. A larger size of fly may be used on this loch. To those who are not disciples of quaint old Isaak Walton this country offers many delightful walks. About the best leads upwards through the oak copse to the Muckle Stane of Glentar-chin—certainly a giant, in shape somewhat resembling the Sphinx, standing out on the bleak heath in lonely grandeur, and surpassing in magnitude the famous Bull Stone on Loch Lomond side.

Loch Boltachan is a lone sheet of water, like “dark Loch Skene,” sung by Sir Walter. The silence becomes oppressive, broken only by the bleating of a sheep, the hum of the heather-bee, and the splash of the “leaping trout that sends through the tarn a lonely cheer.”

SOLITUDE ; A MOORLAND RHYME.

DEEP in the mountain solitude,
 Where shadow, mist, and silence brood,
 The tinkling of a far-off rill
 The stillness seems to make more still.
 'Tis like a whisper in the air,
 That comes and goes we know not where ;
 And then we listen—oft in vain—
 To catch that phantom-voice again.
 The summer sigh, that wafts yon cloud,
 A white-winged, fairy ship of heaven,
 Amid the tender hush of even,
 Would seem to make a sound as loud !

The bleating of a wandering ewe
 In some wild hill-recess,
 Or shrill note of the grey curlew,
 Are sounds the soul will bless ;
 For solitude thus deep asleep
 Becomes oppressive when so deep.

And then, as we too catch the gloom
That settles sadly on the scene,
The lost glide from the silent tomb,
And speak of loves that once have been.
Familiar faces round us rise—
The loved and lost of other days—
On us they bend those mournful eyes,
That once were lit with sunnier rays.
We see the flowers, we hear the streams
By which we wandered side by side.
Then back those ghostly shadows glide
Into the sleep that knows no dreams.
And peopled thus in musing mood,
It is no longer solitude
 In which I stand,
But cinctured by a well-known band,
Raised from the Past by Memory's mystic wand.

SPRIG IV.—LAGGAN LONG AGO.

ON a pleasant summer afternoon, many years ago, three of us found ourselves by the birch-fringed and heath-clad shores of this lovely loch. My friends were two as cheerful fellows as ever cast a fly, or made the hours go lightly by with song, story, and jest. The one was the late Mr Brown, of the *Field*, the other a young preacher of decided professional powers. We travelled to Dalwhinnie by rail, and then posted across country fifteen miles. After a night's rest in the quiet little inn, where all was unpretending comfort, we took to the water to try our luck with the brown trout and the ferox, for which Laggan is rather famous. Brown was an accomplished artist, no less than a knowing angler, and after three miles of good fishing, we landed, under his guidance, to see something which hitherto he had kept profoundly secret. Laggan has many attractions, but perhaps the greatest lay, not in the loch, neither on the mountain, but inside the old house of Ardverikie. It boasted of no architectural grandeur, but there are—or rather were, the place having been most unfortunately burned to the ground—the original sketches of five of Landseer's famous pictures, executed upon the walls in coloured crayons, and life-size. Among these I may mention "The Challenge," "The Stag at Bay," "The Children of the Mist," "The Sanctuary," and "The Dying Stag." These sketches were truly wonderful, possessing at once softness of execution along with a bold free energy, which must have been seen to be at all

realised. About the middle of the lake are two beautiful islets, one bearing aloft upon its crags the scanty remains of the castle of "Fergus, the first of our kings," while the other exhibits the ruins of the house where the monarch is said to have kept his staghounds. The first-mentioned islet is called Eilan-na-Righ, or the King's Island; the second is called Eilan-na-Conn, or the Dog's Island. Upon the first our Queen planted a silver-fir, which is thriving well, and is seen at a great distance above the ruins.

But this loch still has attractions for the angler. It is well stocked with the common *fario*, running, in the best places, two to the pound; and upon every favourable day the angler may have a run or two with the ferox, the great lake trout, which attains the weight of thirty pounds, although such a specimen is seldom taken. Along with my pleasant companion, Mr B.—one who was not merely an adept at the slaughtering of fish, but also thoroughly up to their history and habits—I fished Loch Laggan for seven days, and had reason to be satisfied, killing as we did between us about 140 lbs. weight of trout, our two largest being respectively 12½ and 6½ lbs. Let me detail the capture of both, as they afforded very fine runs. On the third day of our arrival we were trolling with artificial minnow opposite Aberarder bay, and I was in the act of saying that the ferox must be a myth in these parts, when, to punish my infidelity, my large Brown's Phantom was eagerly seized. On raising my rod, however, the line came too easily towards me, and I was reeling up to see that no damage had been done to my tackle, when the minnow was again boldly seized by the pursuing fish, within ten yards of the boat, and away he went at racing speed, cutting my fingers with the rough hair line. In an

instant he had out from seventy to eighty yards, and his burst was not yet over; but the boatmen, up to their work, were giving him chase with all speed. Soon we began to overhaul him, and I recovered line; but again and again I was compelled to let him run. We all pronounced him first-class from his energy and pluck. To wind up both story and fish, he led us a mile, and was then gaffed neatly by my friend, when he turned out to be $6\frac{1}{2}$ lbs., but foul-hooked by the outside of the gill cover, and had thus all his powers at full liberty. He resembled a beautiful grilse, and was perfect in shape, colour, and condition. Having "wet our whistles," we were soon at it again, when my friend, whose fly-rod was in requisition, cried out that something heavy had suddenly, but quietly, "come on." Having reeled up all the other rods, Mr B. cautiously put a little strain upon his slender trouting tackle, when up started a monster ferox, springing three feet above the water. This he did six or seven times, and but for my friend's skilful handling, must have broken tackle. On we went in a very exciting manner, and still the game was doubtful. "Get him to swim past the boat," said James, a powerful, handsome young Highlander, "and I'll do my part." This accordingly was managed with some judicious finesse, when James, guided by the back dorsal fin, got the gaff quietly under the fish, and, striking him dexterously through the belly, brought him into the boat. A more lovely ferox I never saw— $12\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. good—short, thick, clear-skinned, and spotted like a picture. Next day came my luck, and also my disappointment. Twice did I raise another monster, casting, and hooked him at the second rise. A repetition of the previous episode took place, with the exception of the leaping. Instead of that we had

“sulking,” and in one of his deepest sulks he found time to bite my gut with his file-like teeth, after a twenty-minutes’ fight. All, however, was not gone. On the top-bob, the only remaining hook, up from the “vasty deeps,” came a young pound and a half ferox, which was creeled for want of his tricky grandfather, who gave us the slip. Our average take during seven days was 20 lbs., our lowest being 13 lbs., and our highest 45 lbs. Ferox fly, green body, gold spangle, with teal wing, and red hackle; common trout fly, red, with same dressing. I am very fond of loch fishing. Changes of the wind don’t bother, for the boat can meet them all. There is some lack, many may think, of the poetry of stream fishing. But, while you miss the sparkling stream and the swirling foamy pool, in their places you have the pebbly bay and the ferny burn-mouth, the rocky headland and the lovely islet, around whose grey boulders the waves chafe pleasantly. We had the coarsest weather imaginable; but it is superfluous to say that, while our days were spent amid mountain rain, our evenings settled down amid mountain dew.

The weather becoming too bright for angling during the day, I bethought me of a white moth fly, dressed for me by a gallant old sportsman, the late Colonel Campbell, of Perth, who had fought with tougher foes than Highland feroxes, having faced the French on most of the Peninsular battlefields, shedding his blood more than once upon those classic spots which no true Briton can hear mentioned without a flushing of the cheek and a quickening of the pulse. No sooner had I cast the moth on the wave, where the soft summer dusk was falling, than I felt I had to deal with much larger trout than those enticed by the common fly during the burning day. On the following evening I repeated the

experiment, and came in late with a dozen yellows, some of them up to a pound.

If the weather be too stormy to fish the loch, let the boat drift over the sand-bar into the mouth of the Pattaig, and there float quietly under the alders. The green-fly, always good, along with the worm-fly, will here do "yeoman's service;" being taken for the green grub and the caterpillar, which are blown from the over-hanging trees. Very large fish are secured here, and thus a day, otherwise unproductive, has not been lost.

I was once induced to cross the hills and conduct Sunday service in a modest kirk among the glens;—not quite fair-play, however, let me say, to a hard-worked fellow out for a holiday. I know that my much-esteemed friend, Millais, when away from his important labours in the great city, and rusticating in the country with rod and gun, would not be induced to paint a portrait of even His Holiness the Pope's nose; and decidedly right, for man was made to rest as well as to labour in due season. Well, I officiated, but found that human nature was much the same here as in the parish of Kinnoull; for the *Sunday cough* was loud and long. I am not, like most of my clerical brothers, easily put about by church noises, and am not much distressed even by the squalling of a restless brat whom a fond mamma should have relegated to the nursery, or the snore of a ploughman, heavy with brose and butter-milk, and fit only for the bothy. Sabbatical coughing is a bad habit; for it matters not whether the day be warm or chilling—there it goes! But, if it cannot be suppressed, then let the performance be kept for the house and not for the kirk.

THE SUNDAY COUGH ; OR, THE RIGHTS OF
SCOTLAND.

COUGH ! Cough ! Cough !

Oh ! but the weather is cold.

Cough ! Cough ! Cough !

'Tis the right of the young and the old.

Cough ! Cough ! Cough !

And now the weather is warm ;

In vain may the parson plead or scold,

For a Sunday cough has a wondrous charm.

Cough ! from the battered old man

(A most unearthly note)

To Tommy, who seems to try if he can

Make similar fun with his throat.

Cough ! from the elder's pew,

Guttural, steady, and deep ;

The beadle would try the luxury, too,

If he were not so fast asleep.

What though the sermon prove

The very best of the year,

A thing that the dullest fool might love

With his heart and his soul to hear !

When the passage, so powerfully written,

Is thrilling so touchingly off,

Some reckless throat, by the frenzy smitten,

Goes Cough ! Cough ! Cough !

What though a friend's devotion

Is ruffled, or something worse,

Till I sadly fear, in the mind's commotion,

His prayer is changed to a curse !

Who can stifle a cough ?

Have we not paid for our sitting ?

And our neighbours are very well off

If we ape not the Yankee in spitting

You say 'tis a custom vile
 Which a gentleman might suppress ;
 But live we not in Liberty's Isle,
 With the freedom of Church and Press
 To speak and to write as we may ?
 Our *Cousins* are scarce better off—
 They may spit every hour of the day,
 And we have our Sunday Cough !

Weather warm or cold—
 Weather freezing or warm—
 In vain has the druggist's pill been rolled,
 In vain is the parson's weekly scold ;
 For a Sunday cough to the young and the old
 Has a most peculiar charm !

An old College friend of my father's—"a stickit stibbler"—told the *coughers*, one day, in the church of Newburgh, that they stood more in need of the *doctor* than of the *divine*. He was a character, in truth. I heard him treat the "Pharisee" thus :—"I pay tithes of all I possess."—"No thanks to you, my holy friend ; the law would have seen to that." "I fast twice a week."—"Don't believe it ; but if you did, I'll lay all I have, that you had a 'blow out' the next five days !"

This worthy divine, like many of his class, was given to be prolix. Once, when delivering a trial sermon before Principal Hill, his preface drew itself out to something like a quarter of an hour. "Very good," said the kind Principal, "but come to the body of your discourse." "Exactly, sir," said the cool probationer, "but give me just *ten minutes* more to lay down my *heads* !" The worthy Doctor, tired of the exordium, feared the *body*, and dispensed with the *tail*.

Being a "little, round, oily man," my friend disliked tall men ; and once rather snubbed a clerical son of

Anak, who called him a "small shaver." "All right," said he, "all right, Mr W—tt; but I have always seen that the upper storey of tall houses, called the attic, is very ill furnished!" This queer creature—full of anecdote—told me a story that would have delighted the heart of Dean Ramsay. A certain barrister, in high practice, went down to the country on the Saturdays to pass the time of leisure with his aged mother. Family-worship was then in vogue, and the barrister played the part of fireside divine. "Robert," said his mother, one night after devotions, "I'm really much distressed with you." "Why, my dear mother, should this be the case?—tell me how I offend." "Well, Robert, I'll tell ye. I notice that your prayers are every night growing shorter; and I saw in yesterday's paper that the learned counsel, Robert ——, addressed their Lordships of the Court of Session in an able speech of *three-quarters* of an hour, but last night your offering to the Lord of Hosts was barely *three minutes!*" "Ah! but, mither, the Lord up there is no sae dull in the up-tak as the Lords doon here!"

This poor preacher was the best of creatures, yet sometimes could lose his temper. One day he was rather pressed by one who had secured "the loaves and fishes," which would neither toast in his oven, nor come into his net. "Let me tell you, sir," said he, "you may bless a kind Providence, for you have not one particle of *talent* or *common sense*." "Oh, man," replied his good-natured friend, "how could you expect anything of the kind, when you consider that I am my father's *thirteenth bairn?*" Poor, worthy, luckless soul, "*Requiescat in pace.*"

But there are other preachers than those of our Divinity Halls, and they receive their license direct

from the Creator. Voices of Nature's own training are ever sounding the praises of One who "has never left Himself without a witness." And never have I felt more impressed in spirit than, when wandering home in the hush of a summer even, I listen with all my soul to

THE VOICES OF CREATION.

"The Lord reigneth ; let the earth be glad."

I LOVE the woods, the ever-whispering woods ;
 There summer rears a leafy colonnade,
 Where sweetly-pensive meditation broods,
 With nought the dim seclusion to invade,
 Save a lost sunbeam wandering 'mid the trees,
 Or the leaf dancing to the piping breeze.

I love the flowers, the brightly-blooming flowers,
 For they restore to me the sunny past,
 When varied pleasure winged the flying hours,
 Too pure to happen twice, too sweet to last ;
 How many hopes are scattered on the gale,
 While a bleak stem repeats the common tale !

I love the streams, the softly-gliding streams,
 For they can sing to rest the fretted mind ;
 And if they speak of fountains, bright as dreams,
 Left on the path of travel far behind,
 They tell the soul of that mysterious deep,
 Where Life's chafed waters rest—yet never sleep.

I love the stars, the clearly-shining stars,
 Priests of the night and Prophets of the morn ;
 Now pouring balm upon affliction's scars,
 Now speaking of a glory to be born,
 Like faith, that sanctifies our mortal night,
 By pointing to a dawn of never-setting light.

Yes! scenes of nature! beauty is your dower,
And eloquence beyond all human speech;
Your language blends a sweetness and a power
Each heart to soften, and each mind to teach;
Your tones persuasive breathe of Eden still,
Of peace and love, of mercy and good-will.

O Nature! Nature! one brief hour with thee,
At golden eve, or under dewy morn,
Might shame the Scoffer's heartless sophistry,
And light with faith the Atheist's brow of scorn.
Though man hath fallen, his earthly home is fair,
And every running rill proclaims that God is there.

His tender mercies o'er His works are spread;
With his benignant smile the sunbeam glows;
Flowers at our feet, and stars above our head,
Each wave that wanders, and each breeze that blows,
Cry to the labouring soul, the spirit sad,
God reigns supreme; let all the earth be glad!

Faint heart, be strong! this earth is not thy goal;
A future, bright and lasting, smiles for thee;
These scenes are fair, but fairer wait the soul;
Eye hath not seen thy glories yet to be;
Man's home is Heaven—that kingdom of the blest;
The wicked come not there—the weary are at rest!

SPRIG V.—AMONG THE HILLS.

AMONG the hills! What is there among the things which concern man so powerful and magical as words? Steam is not a more marvellous chariot than a simple sound. Electricity wafts not intelligence more swiftly than the breath of a word. Pronounce the three words which head this paper, and the mind is away beyond my control, far in the bosom of the heathery wilderness, where city smoke and commercial din must ever be strangers; where the eagle wheels and the curlew screams; where the dun deer shakes the dews of morn from his shaggy sides; where the river brawls over his rocky channel, and the lake spreads her gleaming bosom to the sun; and where, amidst the stillness of nature, deep but not dread as the stillness of death, Echo is from time to time awakened from his cavern, as the stone is dislodged from the mountain side, or some "leaping fish," flashing up among the ripples, "sends through the tarn a lonely cheer."

Well, once more have I been among the hills, and, as usual, the sight of the heather brought up the past from the depth of bygone days, with its lonely rambles by the mountain stream or the moorland lake. Bowling along from the handsome Perth Station, upon the Highland Railway, a drive of about sixty miles brings you to Dalwhinnie, situated at the watershed of the counties of Perth and Inverness, and right over against the gloomy gorge of the magnificent Loch Ericht, deepest of Highland lakes, over which the mighty Ben Alder

hangs his cavernous precipices (in a dismal den of which poor Prince Charlie found shelter), and in whose limpid waters the lively fario and the predatory ferox maintain their abodes. Ben Alder is a northern giant of 4000 feet. He forms part of an extensive deer forest, stretching between Lochs Laggan and Ericht; and often in the stillness of "dewy morn" or pensive even, as my boat was skimming over the surface of the sombre lake, have I seen the form of some noble stag mirrored in the waters as he drank, or a whole regiment of his antlered kindred for one moment motionless against the sky line, and the next, with a haughty toss of their branching crests, gone like the mist of their native hills.

A party of us recently fished this splendid stretch of water for three days, but did not find it in its usual trim. This was owing to two reasons. First of all, we were too early by a month, Loch Ericht, lying 1400 feet above the sea-level, and being, therefore, a late lake, as one might discover from the snow clothing the summit and sides of Ben Alder on the 10th of June; and, secondly, we encountered most tempestuous weather for the first two days, and of course the fish on such occasions take to the depths for the sake of quiet. The storm having gone down on the third day, we expected a good take, as the trouts would be getting hungry after their fast; but the angler has to contend with many obstacles; and although a fine steady breeze was rippling the surface of the lake, the sky that bent overhead was of a clear cold frosty blue, with far too many "wool-packs" floating silently onward. However, we killed upwards of forty pounds of excellent trout, a couple of them being young feroxes of about two pounds each—one captured in trolling with a small trout on

spinning tackle, the other having been captured by a small professor fly. A month later, and our take would have been double at least.

Seldom are the gloomy glories of Loch Ericht seen by any eyes save those of the lonely angler or wandering shepherd. The common tourist passes along the beaten track, and catches only a distant glimpse of the opening of this grand picture gallery of nature, with its sides now tinted by the verdant fern, and now shaggy with the feathery birch, while the clouds throw the shifting charms of light and shade over heath and precipice, and the snows of Ben Alder gleam coldly on high. There is one view of this Highland monarch, with his savage peaks and ice-crueted corries, that almost rivals many of the Swiss Alpine grandeurs; for the eye cannot embrace objects beyond a certain size, and Mount Blanc, when seen for the first time from a distance, seems not a fifth part of his mighty stature. Maculloch compared Loch Ericht to a "huge cesspool!" The old vagabond's mind must have been in a wretched condition that morning. His breakfast had not been like that to which Mr and Mrs Macdonald now treat their guests, or the foul words had been unwritten.

Those, however, who desire to obtain the *crème de la crème* of this fine loch must put themselves to the trouble of seeking its southern extremity. There it empties itself, by a seven-mile stream, into Loch Rannoch, after a brawling course of pool, and rapid, from each of which excellent sport may be had. This end of the loch is paved with fine golden sand, where the trout assume, as usual, the colour of their feeding-beds; and there I have filled my creel with the most beautiful specimens of the common loch trout, averaging three-quarters of a pound each. Here the sportsman must

prepare for "roughing it" in a rude "bothy," and he will find, as I did, that liveliness is not an attribute of the trout alone. If to this privilege you add the nasal abilities of a companion whose skin is "caviare" to the nocturnal "multitude," you will not readily forget the far end of Loch Ericht. The loch being eighteen miles long, it is a whole day's work to reach the southern extremity; and if, as in our case, a roaring blast obstinately meets you as you slowly battle your way down the stormy waters, blackened by the weird shadows of the solemn mountains that, gallery-like, close in upon you with scarcely a break, you will be glad to encounter anything at the friendly bothy. Such was the conflict through which our weary boatmen waded us at no distant date; but the sport that awaited us amply made up, even to them, for stiff sinews and aching backs. Three of us kept ourselves, four boatmen, a keeper with wife and nine children, a domestic servant, and a policeman on the look-out for rinderpest cattle stealing across the marches, for a week in the most curdy and salmon-coloured trout it is possible to conceive. Besides, we kippered no end of fine specimens, and talked over them at home about the plagues and the pleasures of the lonely Loch Ericht. It is a curious thing how interesting and suggestive a creature even a common flea may become, when, like a freebooter, he carries on his depredations amid the sublimities of nature. Emblem of restlessness! I will not forget thee soon, and heartily wish thee fresh subjects for thy midnight practice.

What pleasant sensations does the true angler—which definition includes the love of nature—carry home with him from a scene like this, and lay up forever in the cabinet of memory! Ah! my very good friend, Mr

Millionaire, with your easy carriage and that uneasy toe, there are other treasures than those that figure upon your idolised ledger, which you thumb more lovingly than your Bible. Among the treasures of humanity in a healthy condition are a good digestion and a pair of sinewy limbs, a love of nature in all her aspects, and the sunny or pensive memories of other days. I know, Mr Proseman, that you see more beauty in a web of dowlas than in a patch of blue sky, sleeping like a peaceful islet among the wavy clouds. We are all aware that you never contemplate a running stream apart from the vision of a mill driven by water-power, and only look upon a lake with a view to bring the Drainage Act to bear upon its barren surface, where no corn waves its autumnal gold, and no forests nod their leafy branches—where the only life is the lively trout flashing up in the sunlight, and where the vagrant cloud beholds its image in the grand mirror of nature. And we heard you say last week that you could beat the whole fraternity of crazy anglers by sending Jenny to the fishmonger's with half a sovereign in her basket. Of course ; and why not tell her to bring Ben Alder back with her in the same basket, and the balmy breath of summer days spent among the heather, and the brown cheek that is tinted by hard exercise in the mountain air, and the keen appetite which would enable you, sir, to eat your dinner without any fear of a sleepless night, like the last, when you dreamed that you had swollen into the portentous size of a first-class steam-engine, and was too full of steam. Some men have no past with its hallowed memories, no future with its glimpses of glory and joy, only a sordid present, almost too heavy to be borne. Thank heaven I am not of such, and go homewards with the grandeur of

Loch Ericht deep-mirrored in my soul — glorious picture!—never more to fade till the rod is too heavy for the hand, and recollection dies!

Loch Ericht can rise in wrath, and once, crossing it, I was quietly taking off my heavy waterproof and strong boots, preparing for the worst, when we were dashed upon the shore. When the weather is wild, I would advise the angler to try Loch Coultree, if he can get permission from the proprietor, Cluny Macpherson, a courteous Highland chieftain. His son is now commander in the Perth Barracks near my own abode—one of the heroes of Coomassie, where he fought under my old acquaintance, the gallant Sir John M'Leod, whose cool intrepidity led very considerably to the triumph of the bloody day whereon that most bloody place was taken. Owing to "stress of weather," Mr Steel of Blackpark, his son, and myself fished Loch Coultree for three consecutive days, and creeled, upon the average, twenty pounds of pretty fair-sized trouts. The loch is beautiful, and is mentioned in the sporting book of Mr Lyall, now, like the streams and lochs, one of my old friends.

One day, before the inn door of Dalwhinnie, I "forgathered" with a battered soldier, with a wooden leg. My heart warmed to the "red rag," which I would have worn, but for circumstances. I gave him a "drink," and led him back to the past. He was stumping on to Fort George, and was a *war-relic* of the deadly Crimea.

I asked him if he was one of those who came under the gentle tendence of Florence Nightingale? His bronzed cheek became a shade paler—the tear welled up in his eye, then rolled over the brown furrow of his face—and, in a broken voice, he exclaimed, "Oh! sir,

she is an angel!" I was touchingly answered. His simple words sank into my heart, and, like his own hot manly tear, my thoughts and feelings overflowed in—

A "WOUNDED SOLDIER" TO FLORENCE
NIGHTINGALE.

AMID the dismal silence
Of this ghastly house of pain,
What voice is falling softly
As a shower of summer rain?

Above this couch, where agony
The human form doth mar,
What angel-visage haunteth me,
Like a pure and holy star?

Oh! is it but a dream of night,
That mocketh eye and ear?
Or can I trust my fading sight—
Is a gentle woman near?

Yes! thou art Florence Nightingale;
I know and bless thee now,
Thy cheek with weariness is pale,
But mercy lights thy brow.

Thou hast left a home of happiness;
Thou hast crossed the raging wave
To shed a blessing o'er distress—
To rob the greedy grave!

For the kindness of that tender hand,
And the pity of that eye,
Who fears to suffer for his land?
Who sorrows thus to die?

This deadly shore is shining
With deeds of deathless fame ;
But the fairest bays are twining
Around a woman's name !

Man ! thou art strong in danger,
To DUTY faithful still ;
But thy nature is a stranger
To the might of woman's will—

To her wealth of self-devotion,
To her love of sacrifice—
Greenest isle in trouble's ocean !
Brightest star on sorrow's skies !

Beneath the CROSS—beside the TOMB,
Was woman's olden place ;
And still there beameth on our gloom
A comfort from her face.

O lady ! if the crown of heaven
Be won by earnest prayer,
A thousand times, from morn till even
Thy crown is purchased there.

'Tis all we have—sad wrecks of strife,
Strewn thick in war's wild vale ;
God bless thee ! Angel of our life !
Sweet Florence Nightingale.

Not far from the Crimean period another woman's name was and is associated with our kilted heroes. The episode of Jessie Brown will never be forgotten while female heroism can still draw forth "the soldier's tear." Moved, like all others, by the occasion to which I allude, I could not help striking a note on my feeble harp. My humble lines were not altogether lost ; for

they got some notoriety by being sung in the streets with nasal energy, and were spouted at Panoramas by fluent gentlemen, who dropped their *h's* like hot potatoes. Let me revive old days by reproducing—

JESSIE BROWN ; OR, THE SLOGAN OF
LUCKNOW.

“DINNA ye hear it ?” the maiden cried,
As she sprang from the gory ground,
Where the dead and the dying, side by side,
The warrior’s bed had found.
“Dinna ye hear it?—the gathering cry !
That speaks of my Highland home
Beneath the clouds of a distant sky—
We are saved ! for the Clansmen come.”

A hush, like death, on the soldiers fell,
And their forms were still as stone ;
But they only heard the foeman’s yell,
Or a comrade’s parting groan.
But still through the gloom the maiden strained
The glance of her kindling eye,
And she cried, while the iron tempest rained,
“We are saved ! we are saved ! they are nigh !”

As the trees of the forest bend and break
’Neath the hurricane’s angry tread,
The ranks of the foemen reel and quake,
And the earth is piled with dead !
For a flashing sickle that never failed,
The claymore, sweeps around ;
And the hopes of our British hearts are hailed
By the slogan’s martial sound.

Oh ! dear is home to the exile's eye,
And sleep to the weary frame ;
But dearer far that gathering cry
O'er the surges of battle came ;
And the eye of God, in that wild hour,
Saw many a temple there ;
For many a babe, like a folded flower,
Was hushed by the lips of prayer !

SPRIG VI.—LAGGAN REVISITED.

WORDSWORTH wrote "Yarrow Revisited," one of his most charming short poems, and why should not I, in humble prosaic imitation, scribble a few lines concerning my renewed acquaintance with Loch Laggan? Truly it is worth many a visit, and all who see it once will nourish a desire to see it again. It is the joint property of Sir John Ramsdean on the south side of the lake, and of the chieftain, Cluny Macpherson, on the north side. Cluny is well known and much beloved all through his Highland regions, and a hale, strong man, verging on his 84th year, may be seen daily walking about in his Celtic garb on his princely estate. Sir John acquired, by purchase, about ten years ago, the deer forest of Ben Alder, with its noble stock of from 10,000 to 12,000 stags, hinds, and does. He has built a spacious lodge—one of the largest in the Highlands—on the site of the old house of Ardverike, which was destroyed by fire, thus depriving the art-world of those wondrous life-size frescoes with which the master-hand of Landseer had adorned the walls of the old rooms in which he was entertained, an honoured guest, by Her Gracious Majesty. Above the mantel-piece of the little upper parlour, in which I have spent many a pleasant day, the great artist painted, in his best style, a splendid old blackcock, proud of mien, and glorious in plumage as any Highland chief in his "war-paint"; but a Goth of an innkeeper—not our present kind landlord, who is both a sportsman and a man of

taste—had the room papered, with a vulgar pattern, we need hardly say, and the grand, stately bird no longer tells of the master-hand that gave it life and beauty. Once, when I was sitting by the fire, a fine-looking gentleman left the coach to have another look at his old favourite, and when he gazed upon the blank, I do not say that his eyes dropt tears, but I know that his tongue dropt something else.

It has been my good fortune to spend a couple of weeks on the bosom and by the side of this most lovely loch, with a set of as pleasant fellows as ever cast a line or creeled a ferox. We had a first-rate time of it, with rods by day, and fireworks and balloons in the evening, thanks to Herr Goetz, who has a splendid knack of making the hours go swimmingly past. He provided also rifle and target for those who possessed the sporting qualifications. How is it that, as a rule, all anglers are jolly, good, open-hearted fellows? But such is the case. You will never find a *blasé* man-about-town character who cares for fishing among the quiet lochs and retiring streams. He cannot carry his club-house along with him, and Nature and he have little or nothing in common. He fears to trust himself alone beside the silent lake, where solitude reigns, or up the heathy banks, “where the burnie steals under the lang yellow broom.” His only rod is the billiard-cue; and he prefers the cigar-scented room to the crisp mountain air, that wafts colour to the cheek, vigour to the limb, and health to the heart that loves to dwell with Nature in all her varied moods. Our sport was good, considering the chill breezes that blew over the vast stretch of frozen snow, still lying deep on every mountain-side, and in every deep corrie, where summer, I fear, will not be able, with her hot suns, to

put it to flight. All were successful. In ten days our party of two killed about forty-five dozen, and the men of the other party proved equally deadly among the speckled tribe. Some fine specimens of the ferox were landed, from five to eight pounds in weight. My young companion killed his first, in a quarter of an hour, on a small trouting rod. It was a rare piscatorial feat, for the fish was in high condition, and scaled over seven pounds.

We were induced to make two excursions on foot, and were rewarded nobly for our pedestrian toil. One was to the upper fall of the Pattaig, and the other to Loch Cor-Arder. The fall is splendidly enshrined among hoary, heath-fringed rocks, and takes a grand leap of 50 or 60 feet. In full flood it must be tremendous. Sir John Ramsdean has made a walk to it at great expense, which embraces a circuit of about eight miles among scenery of blended loveliness and grandeur. Sir John is a benefactor to this part of the country—for he has planted millions of pines, which, in time, will beautify the landscape and mollify the climate. But the other scene, Cor-Arder, how shall I describe it? The thing is impossible—and, my dear reader, you must go and see it. Although we had a stiff walk of two and a half hours going, and two returning, I would not have missed seeing it for a great deal. It will dwell for ever in my memory. I think that nothing in Scotland can approach it, with the exception of Corriskin, in Skye. And it has one feature peculiar to itself. A huge pyramidal rock rises to the height of over a thousand feet, and, like a greater hanging tower of Pisa, beetles horribly over the gloomy styx-like lake—black as ink, and silent as the valley of death. The late Gordon Cumming, to the horror of those present, scaled the back of this fearful peak, and stood on the summit! To add, by

contrast, to the awful blackness that pervades the scene, the wild ravines are chokeful of frozen snow, which descends in some places almost to the still waters of the loch. In one hour and a half we took out of it ten dozen of small pretty trout. Far up among the cliffs, where build the black, grey, and golden eagles, you see an "eyelet," through which you can view the blue heavens beyond. It is an oriel window of God's own making in the grand temple of Nature, where the everlasting hills are the pillars, the fretted roof the cloud-draped firmament, and the organ the pealing thunder, the rushing blast, and the blending murmur of the rocky stream that seems to be fleeing in terror from a home so weird and wild. Reader, go and see it, and you will carry in your soul, all the days of your life, a picture which the hand of God alone can produce.

LINES ON VISITING LOCH COR-ARDER, IN
CORRIE-ARDER.

LONE Corrie-Arder, with thy lake of gloom,
I stand with reverence 'neath thy silent sky :
Thine only flower the scanty heather-bloom,
Thy sounds the blast and eagle's savage cry,
When, roused by traveller's intrusive tread,
He leaves his eyrie 'mong the crags on high,
And sails aloft on sable pinions spread,
Till lost amid the mist-wreath floating by.

Far have I wandered—many scenes have seen,
Where Nature shows herself in varied form ;
Now basking under summer skies serene,
Now darkening 'mid the winter's hurtling storm ;
But never have my roaming footsteps been
Where Grandeur robes herself in sterner guise :

Thy black rocks beetling o'er thy blacker wave,
 And casting shadows dismal as the grave,
 Save when a sun-glint from the troubled skies
 Smiles coldly o'er thy waters—fades—and dies.

God thrones Himself in temples piled of stone,
 That never echoed to the hammer's sound ;
 And man, the pilgrim, musing there alone,
 Feels in his soul he stands on holy ground ;
 And seems to see again the awful place,
 Where God was seen in fire and heard in thunder,
 And, like another Moses, veils his face,
 His heart subdued with fear and awe-struck wonder,
 And, while a spell enchains him to that spot,
 Exclaims, "The Lord is here, although I knew it not."

Wild scene, farewell ! I may not tread thee more,
 But oft I'll see thee in my morning dream,
 And think I hear thy blast's terrific roar
 'Mong the black cliffs where icy snow-wreaths gleam.
 And oft in Memory's mild and moonlight hour
 Fancy will build again that awful peak,
 Where peals the thunder in sonorous power,
 And lightnings cleave the gloom with fiery streak ;
 While through the phantom-landscape of my dream
 Ripples the music of thy one lone stream.

ABERARDER BAY.

FAREWELL, Aberarder, thou fairy-like bay,
 There the trouts in the sunshine so temptingly play,
 Where the bright yellow pounders flash up through the
 wave,
 And play with the fly till they play with the grave.

Many hours on thy bosom I've pleasantly passed,
 And I hope that this season will not be my last ;

For I long once again on thy waters to float,
With Ewen, the skilful, to manage the boat.

Thy green sunny meadows, enamelled with flowers—
The children of sunbeams and soft-dropping showers—
And the clear, merry brook, singing down to the shore,
I hope I shall see *them* and *hear thee* once more.

And farewell kindly Spirits, with whom I have spent
Many days in the sun and the wind and the rain,
To the hours of an angler light wings you have lent—
So a health to you all till I meet you again.

I'll think of the "Pot"* with its savoury fare,
Of which we partook as we lay on the heather,
With an appetite keen as the crisp mountain air,
While our souls and our voices were mingling together.

Then, soft as the west wind that sighs from the hill,
The "weed" sent its incense aloft to the sky,
And, lapped in a dream-land all lovely and still,
The trouts got a respite from rod, reel, and fly.

This composite article I conclude by saying, that while the body is duly taken care of in the friendly little inn of Loch Laggan, the soul is also feasted on the beauties of Nature that are ever fresh and ever fair, and which never pall upon the mental appetite. In the exquisite words of Wordsworth, may I not end—

"Fair scenes for Childhood's opening bloom,
For sportive Youth to stray in ;
For Manhood to enjoy its strength,
And Age to wear away in."

* One of our party, a fine singer, and endowed with the spirit of a second Soyer, brought a box of comestibles, together with a huge Pot, out of which he brought as many dainties as ever were drawn from a conjuror's hat.

SPRIG VII.—OBAN: ITS LOCHS AND
STREAMS.

THE earliest impressions are also the most lasting—

“Time but the impression deeper makes,
As streams their channels deeper wear.”

Well said, thou king of Scottish Bards—a spirit that could skim over the shallows of fancy and dive into the unfathomable depths of feeling—now rollicking in the very boyhood of rhyme, and anon melting the soul with melody of the deepest and most tender pathos. What a gulf between “Willie brew’d a peck o’ maut,” and “Mary in Heaven,” or “Man was made to Mourn”! In the early dews of morning the footprints are plainly traced. When the shadows of evening lengthen, things begin to look dim, and give gentle warning of the falling night. I ask my fellow-ramblers to go back with me to “life’s morning march, when the bosom was young.”

Forty odd years ago I found myself, on a fine summer afternoon, standing upon the pier at Oban, a dusty, weary, footsore boy of sixteen. I had tramped every inch of the way from the banks of the “lordly Tay” to the fairy-like bay, that seems to enjoy a perpetual calm, and is only lulled into a slumberous repose by the music of the billows that race gaily down the Sound of Mull, and break dreamily on the rocky shores of the green-carpeted Kerrara. Then Oban was nothing more than a little fishing hamlet by the sea, with a few coasting vessels of small tonnage, and the echoes of its

heath-clad hills now and then awakened by the rushing steam of some boat from the Clyde or the "Isles." It boasted at that time of one moderately-sized inn—now its bay is circled by more than a score of palatial hotels, and sits enthroned among its cliffs, the crowned Cybele of the western seas. The waters of its quiet roadstead are now ploughed by the keels of countless vessels, steamers of first-class build, and gallant yachts, whose white sails, or red, black, and yellow funnels, make a pleasant picture, and whose twinkling lights in the stillness of the sombre evening seem like a swarm of fire-flies, dancing in the radiance of their own golden light. Since those far-away days I have seen the sunsets of Alpine Switzerland and the blue Mediterranean, but the sunsets of Oban are not to be surpassed. From the lofty "Sylvan Villa," from which I now write these lines, it is glorious to witness the "dim, discrowned king of day" going down to his ocean-bed behind the dark purple mountains of the sea-girt Mull. Such a sight reminds one of the sunsets of the East, where the resplendent lamp of the sky takes his leave of the world, not by a slow decadence, but rapid in his descent, when all at once is night. Let the great "Wizard of the North," whose unrivalled genius cast a halo around all that it touched, describe the wondrous scene—

"Like battle-targe, with slaughter red,
He rushes to his burning bed—
Dyes the wild wave with bloody light,
Then sinks at once, and all is night."

On my first visit to "The White Bay," I was young and ardent, with a copy of *The Lord of the Isles* in my pocket, and small knapsack on my back, all my worldly wealth a light purse and a lighter heart, and seeing

everything through the magic light that is shed over all by robust health and sanguine spirits. My first excursion was to Iona and Staffa, and the guinea fare poked a sad hole in my scanty store of British coin. The silver sand of the Isle of Graves, runic crosses standing out in delicate relief against the foreground of the blue sleeping sea, together with the fane of St Columba, who gave to the benighted west "the benefits of knowledge and the blessings of religion," engraved pictures on the tablet of memory never to be effaced, save by the hand of the universal destroyer. Then came the wondrous Staffa, where Nature, from time immemorial, has 'loved "to raise a minster to her Maker's praise," pealing with the ancient melodies of breeze and billow. Clambering to the summit of that basaltic dome—a feat not easily or safely achieved in those days—what was my boyish delight to find a briar-rose, bedecked with shell-tinted blossoms, scattering their mild fragrance over the billows that chafed and foamed far beneath. Stretched on the scanty herbage, wet with the soft dews of the ocean, I let my untutored fancy wander, and effloresce in the following crude verses. When I carried them home to the dear old manse by the expansive Tay, my father was proud of the boyish effusion. Somehow I was not, and proposed destruction, but it was kept perforce, and enshrined in the pages of a new album. I well recollect my fond parent saying, as he wrote down the stanzas with his large powerful hand, "Keep a thing for seven years, Jack, and you may find a use for it." I have kept it for nearer forty-seven, and now set the bird free from the prison of the book, and can only hope that it may, as the adage predicts, be found to have its use:—

TO A BRIAR ROSE ON STAFFA.

FLOWER of the ocean ! thy desolate dwelling
Wooed me to wander the summer-hushed deep.
Phantoms of fancy, its mystery telling,
Come like a stirring wind over my sleep.
Nursling of Solitude ! here I have found thee,
Smiling through drops of the morn that have crowned thee,
With the gold of the sunbeam all hanging around thee
A garment of glory for Nature's own child.

Lonely enchanter ! fair visions of childhood,
Awake to thy spell from the long-vanished hours,
When I wandered at eve through the glades of the wild-wood.
All beaded with dew and all braided with flowers.
Phantom-like shapes from the dim past are gliding—
Whispering voices around me are chiding,
Saying, "Thy pleasures no more are abiding
Than the wind-scattered blossoms that lately have
smiled."

Haply some lone bee in sunshiny weather
May float to thy bosom o'er yonder blue main,
Then dream of its own mossy cell in the heather,
And give its light wings to the breezes again.
So the cold heart, long abandoned to pleasure,
Warbles the notes of some love-stirring measure,
Then hastens away from the poor, rifled treasure,
Like a blossom all reft by the wind and the rain.

Farewell, dear blossoms, soon tossed on the breezes—
Every mad billow will glory in one—
Spring will renew them whenever she pleases,
Yet never, oh ! never, the same that are gone :
But long when the dew-drop has ceased to weep o'er thee—
Long when the sunbeam has ceased to adore thee,
My heart to thine own rocky isle will restore thee,
And bid thee bloom over the waters again !

A couple of years thereafter I again made a visit to the famous twin-isles of the Hebridean deep. With eager haste I rushed to the top of Staffa, but my poor heart-cherished rose no longer waved its blossoms in the softly sighing summer breeze. Of course, like a thousand other lovely things, sacred to the true soul, it had fallen a victim to the vulgar, grubbing paws of some tasteless tourist. Plague on the sacrilegious robber of Nature's gems! Were I to see him, I would find him, I doubt not, some "fingering-elf"—one who would not scruple to "peep and botanise upon his mother's grave." It was said by some one that, "if you found the North Pole, you would also find a Scotchman astride upon the top of it." And if so, I'll go bail he was busily employed in carving his name upon its timbers with the point of a rusty nail, or the edge of a blunt penknife. The problematic Scot, I am sorry to say, is only one of a class—the Bill Thomsons and Job Jonsons of the touring world—who seem to think they are giving "tongues to trees" and "sermons to stones" when they succeed in the noble ambition of scratching upon them their world-renowned initials.

The sublime and the ridiculous are closely allied, and this truth may excuse the appended anecdote. A friend of mine told me that two years ago the public were "doing" Iona after their wont. The "Cicerone" was droning through the usual routine—"Ladies and gentlemen, this is the cell where the holy St Columba gave the elements of religion to these once savage regions,"—when the voice of a highly-educated denizen of Cognaigne was heard to exclaim to his less-trained brother-tourist, "Jim! You must know that was the cove who discovered America." After such a piece of

information, who could fail to "feel his piety grow warmer amid the ruins of Iona?"

And now, steaming away from "the place of skulls" and the "minster" of "the melancholy main," does it not raise your spirits out of the tender gloom that has unconsciously enwrapped them, to watch those buoyant sea-birds sporting joyously on the wing? Were I a disciple of the Pythagorean doctrine of the transmigration of souls, I would that this spirit, when liberated from the clay tenement in which it has long sinned and sorrowed, might be allowed to take up its residence in the bosom of the sea-bird; for was there ever a child of Nature so free, so fearless, and so happy—at home alike on land and sea, on the bursting billow and the sleeping calm, on the surge-beaten "stack" and the beetling precipice! Pardon me for endeavouring to arrest a picture of this lovely creature, as it floats on the breeze and rides on the wave:—

THE SEA-BIRD.

SEA-BIRD! rocking lightly on ocean's green wave,
To thee but a cradle, to thousands a grave!
How restless thy pillow! how gentle thy sleep!
Pure child of the elements—pride of the deep.

No pearl of the sea-cave so white as thy plume;
Thine eye gleameth brightly as star from the gloom;
On the breeze, like a foam-flake, from ocean you spring,
With the beam on your breast, and the dew on your wing.

Thy nest was the grey cliff that frowns on the deep;
The winds and waves warring first woke thee from sleep;
What being so happy, so fearless, so free—
As thine, winged rider of tempest and sea?

The billow that rends the proud vessel in twain,
To thee is a courser with far-floating main ;
The blast that o'erwhelms the pale pilot with fear,
Is the wild-ringing music thou lovest to hear.

No dream can be calmer than thee in thy rest,
With thy shadow, so star-like, in ocean's blue breast ;
No fancy is fleeter than thee in thy pride,
When the steeds of the tempest invite thee to ride.

Then away on thy courser, thou child of the storm !
The beauty of freedom illumeth thy form ;
Then down, like a meteor that gleams on the deep,
Thou art mirrored—an image of silence and sleep !

But now let us on with rod and reel, and look up once more one or two of our old water-side friends. I think to-day we shall visit the lovely Loch Nell, and the silver link of stream that weds it to the stately Loch Feochan ; for, as the Irishman said, " the breeze is from the *say*," and the sea-trout will respond to the soft cail of the gentle west wind. When the wind is either from east or north, you may as well go a-trouting in the Dead Sea. Let philosophers tell why. I only state an angler's fact. Bowling along behind my obliging friend Macgregor's fleet Celtic pony, a scene is passed that brings a smile into my eye. There, once on a day, a harum-scarum chum of mine determined on " feathering his nest," and, *apropos* to that end, set up a " poultry farm," thinking that the yachtsmen of Oban, with their crew of lady-friends, and the hotels, with their large crop of hungry tourists, offered a fine field for the disposal of the barn-yard beauties. He was not far wrong, but here, as everywhere else, you must have " the right man in the right place " ; and here was

the wrong man without the slightest vestige of a doubt, as his dollars soon had as many wings as his feathered nurslings. The thing proved "a sell" in the way he neither expected nor desired. A mutual friend made inquiries of me concerning our bird-farmer, and I told him that the volatile fellow had at length betaken himself to a respectable occupation. "A poultry farm!" said he, in amazement, "what may that mean?" (I thought, being a son of Mars, he had practised sufficiently long at the "goose-step" to be able to solve the point for himself.) "Why," said I, "in such hands as those of our friend's the thing simply means '*ducks and drakes*'!"

But here we are, after a pleasant four-mile drive, and now, ere we reach the loch, let us have a "try" at that brown, frothy pool, over which "the queen of the meadow" dangles her straw-coloured hair. Down goes the fly, and up comes the trout, like a wedge of silver, and a fresh-run two-pounder, after a spurt of five minutes, has exchanged the water for the land, and begins the creel of the day. Another and another, more or less weighty, enrich the "take," and, coming to our boat, we enter the loch, which the courtesy of Mr Murray Allan has made, like himself, an old friend. "Cutting in and out" by short and varying "drifts," we find that the trouts are anything but "dour" to-day. Opposite the "Serpent Mound," my young companion, whose cast consisted of a large fly for the sea-trout, and two smaller ones for the "yellows," gets on a fine specimen of the former on his most tiny lure; but, being a deft hand at the rod, has him in the landing-net in about ten minutes, and, by all that's lucky, finds him over three pounds, and a very picture as to beauty and condition. We go ashore to interview the "Serpent

Mound," other specimens of which are to be found in the Highlands and islands. Why are these mystic mounds cast in the form of a *serpent*? Because, I think, these, being relics of the Druid age, possess a *religious meaning*, and employ a *symbol* which implies *wisdom* and its *sacred rites*. What strange visions does this old-world relic call up before the mind. Here stood the altar, with its blazing faggots. There towered the Druid priest, with his bare arm, and his sacrificial knife; and near him was the victim of a horrid creed, awaiting the blow, in the calm spirit of a Fatalism that saw nothing wrong in offering "the fruit of the body for the sin of the soul." Urns and bones are sometimes found in these "Serpent Mounds"; but, as I profess not the lore of a Jonathan Oldbuck, I leave conjuring up the past with the rod of the antiquary, and proceed to conjure up another sea-trout with the rod of M'Kinlay. The tackle of this hard-working and skilful worthy does its duty well, and by the time we land again for something more substantial and palpable than visions of the bygone time, our creel is getting heavy, and we are waxing hungry. We enjoy our well-earned "tiffin" opposite the Heron's Isle, and, lighting our fragrant weed, lie among the sprigs of "the bonnie blooming heather," watching with a listlessness resembling his own, a noble specimen of one of Nature's most picturesque birds. What is the creature doing, as he, too, enjoys a *weed*, suitable to his own peculiar taste. Knee-deep he stands among the aquatic plants, hanging his long, lank-necked head, as if he were deep in a haze of dreamland. Did you ever see anything so weary-like and dreamy? He is like a bird in a picture. And, when he rises from his waterside reverie, and sails lazily away to his island-home did you ever hear any sound

so *éerie* as that wailing cry? What a picture he would make, standing beside these white water-lilies, rising and falling on the ripples—a flowery circlet of fairy boats. There the green-robed fairies themselves might steal forth in the mystic moonlight, and float in the boats of these dancing cups.

THE HERON.

LONELY, unsocial bird !
 Brooding by mountain stream,
 Seldom thy note is heard—
 Dreamer ! thy dream ?

Now thou art floating by,
 Mute as thy shadow,
 Traversing silently
 Yonder green meadow.

Now thou art resting thee
 Where the waves war
 Playfully, pleasantly,
 Round the red scaur.

Then with a boding cry,
 Dreamily, drearily,
 There thou art lagging nigh,
 Lazily, wearily.

Coming or going,
 Unmusical bird !
 The better I love thee
 The less thou art heard.

Thou art robed with a mystery,
 Graced with a spell
 Deeper than melody—
 Dreamer ! farewell !

Reader, you have heard of the "Twa Dogs" of Robbie Burns. Let me tell you what I overheard concerning "Twa Kirks":—

Scene.—A public-house on Loch Nellach a year before the Church, with suicidal hand, abolished patronage, a sop thrown to the Cerberus of Dissent—useless, as the event proved—for it was our *endowment*, not *patronage*, that was the object of envy. Donald, the keeper, and Angus, a crofter, enjoying a juicy crack over the "mountain dew."
"Was ye at the kirk yesterday, Donald?"

"That I was, Angus, and it wad hae dune ye muckle good to ha'e been there too, and a' for naething. Mr M'Whittie ga'e us a most improving discourse. He's the billie! No like——"

"Man, Donald, I'm wae to hear ye. His sermons ha'e nae mair sap than a dried peat, or a reisted haddy. He's joost fit to be the *timmer* minister o' a *timmer* kirk. I wonder ye can thole sic slavery as that o' the Established Kirk. The pawtron's a good man, I'll no deny, but pawtronage is a waur yoke than the bondage o' Egypt."

"Deed, Angus, if ye could only see't, it's yersel that's in the hoose o' bondage. We ha'e *ae* maister—ye ha'e *half-a-dizzen*, or *mair*. Ye're joost under the thoomb o' Peter M'Spleuchan, the postmaster; Deacon M'Fuddle, the grocer; Wullie Macgirther, the saddler; Tammie Brush, the painter; and Sandy Lingan, the cobbler. I ca' that the hoose o' bondage wi' a vengeance! And, man, yer Free Kirk, as ye misca' 't, ay minds me o' this public."

"For shame, Donald; dinna treat solemn maitters in that gaet. A public! Wheesht! wheesht!"

"Ay, Angus, man—ye ha'e naething mair to do than pit up a lairge *sign* ower the door of your Free Kirk, and write upon it in muckle letters—PAY HERE! It's a dear religion yours, Angus, as yer pouch kens the day. Yer Kirk's only fit for the rich man. Free! Free! onything but that. But I'll

tell ye, oor Kirk's the rale free article, for we can pit up a sign too, and paint upon it the doonricht truth, '*Without money, and without price!*' We're the puir man's Kirk, and ye ken that brawly."

"Weel, Donald, ye're maybe richt and ye're maybe wrang, but we'll droon a' differences in anither gill. Lucky, bring——"

"Man, Angus, I wonder at a man like you, sensible in other things. Drumwasle's but a silly, feckless body. His discoorses are jist like tailors' thimmles, ye never get at the bottom o' them. Maybe ye'll ca' that deep—I say it's drumlie. Whatever, to do the body justice, I believe they are his ain,—for I ken nae ither that would like to faither sic wakely weans."

"Wheesht! Think shame o' yersel, Donald; it's no' richt, or canny to speak ill o' yer neebor."

"I'm no speaking ill o' my neebor, Angus, I'm speaking the truth, and, if I can read my Bible, the truth canna be ca'ed ill. But, losh keep's! Angus, I maun awa, for I ha'e to go to Loch Scammadale the morn wi' Doctor Mayfly, a friend of Mr Hill's, the shooting tenant, and a raal fine man and a good sportsman! The Doctor's no like your man, the Reverend Amos Drumwasle, that disna ken a 'red hackle' frae a 'blue doctor' Na! there's nae nonsense about *him*, naether in the poopit nor oot o' it. He's the sort! Yer health, Angus, and mair judgment. We had, the ither day, man, a grand grilse and four sea-trout, wi' mair substance in them than Drumwasle's sermons as ye ca' them—I ca' them twaddle—like a 'public' that has nae entertainment either for man or beast." (A noise heard seeking for sticks and plaids where they could not be found, simply because they were not there.)

Apart from its fishing merits, the angler should pay a visit to Loch Scammadale, nestling among the hills, like a shy beauty. The glen, by which it is approached

from the Melfort Road, near Kilinver, is one of the loveliest to be seen in a country overflowing with loveliness. It is not like the other glens of this part of Scotland, but reminds one of the Border dales. No black crags, with shaggy points, but beautiful undulating hills, draped in grass of the most vivid emerald, resting their feet upon meadows of equally bright green turf, and a sparkling little stream, the Euchre, dancing along, like a thing of life, and binding together the whole exquisite scene with its silver links. On the soft herbage, looking as if clipped and rolled by some huge cutting-machine, the sheep stand out like white billiard balls upon the green table; and their mild, plaintive bleating, mingling with the voices of the rills, beside which they wander and feed, contributes to the soft magic of a fairy landscape.

By the time we reached Sylvan Villa, and weighed our "take," we found we had over sixteen pounds of fine sea-trout, and about four dozen of their yellow companions. One of the yellows scaled nearly two pounds. Loch Nell is a very pleasing sheet of water, two miles long, birch and heather fringed, with a stream running in at the head, near to which a feathered fisher was brooding, and another stream at the lower end, by which it empties itself into an arm of the sea, Loch Feochan. Its scenery is on a small scale of beauty, but, in the distance, the towering double-coned Ben Cruachan casts over it a shade of grandeur that arrests the eye and impresses the soul.

On the next day I went on to the pleasant Cuilfail, "The Sheltered Hollow," by the Alpine Melfort Pass, where I always find a peaceful retreat under the genial roof-tree of my jolly landlord, M'Fadyen, and his kindly spouse; and where I am sure of delightful

“cameraderie,” if Hamilton & Co. be there in their shooting and fishing jackets. As “like draws to like,” M’Fadyen sends me, as a rule, to the Parson’s Loch—a beautiful sheet of water—where, at the top, a stream, fed by moss-springs and lakelets, bounds into the loch by a cascade of twenty feet, and leaps out of it at the foot by another over thirty, and meanders, a “trotting burnie,” to the salt sea waves. Robert or young Angus is ready for me, with a will, and away we go for a cast by the *side of the reeds*, where the best brown trouts are known to lie. Reader, fear not to be worried by the oft-told story and the thrice-slain victims of the hooks,—four dozen,—but let us back to the excellent fare which Mrs M’Fadyen has got ready for us, and which is dispensed by rosy cherubs of girls, and not by hobble-de-hoys in dingy neck-ties and rusty black, bearing a close and suspicious resemblance to my friends of the genus “guinea-pig,” who are more successful in emptying than in filling a kirk, when the minister, *puir chield*, is off on a holiday, and is told, when he comes back, minus £5 for an hour’s preaching, that he would have been wiser to have shut the door than to have burdened the “poopit” with a man whose “papers” were as yellow as his ill-ironed choker. We might speak of the many lochs and streams about Oban,—the Orchy, the Awe, the Euchre, and the Feochan; the bleak “Black Lochs,” the grand String, the lonely Trelaig, the expansive Avich, *et hoc genus omne*,—but these have not as yet ripened into “Old Friends,” and we take some time to form a close companionship, and choose to link ourselves to the tried and the trusted.

You may reach Oban either by sea or land—both routes splendid. From Glasgow by the finest river steamer afloat, the *Columba*, thereafter by the *Linnet*

through the Crinan Canal. Tourists are often astonished to find that, instead of travelling in a wide ditch, they are wandering along something composed of lakelet and stream—rocks crowned by fir and birch, and festooned with heather, foxglove, and honeysuckle. The Canal contains numbers of good yellow trout, and at the Gilp end sea-trout obtain access by a small burn. The sail, after leaving the Canal, is very fine, among the Craignish isles, with Jura, Scarba, Shuna, and others towering in the distance—up Kerrara Sound, and into the “White Bay.”

The land route is equally picturesque. From Calander the drive is splendidly panoramic—past Lubnaig, “The Loch of the bend,” and into Strathyre, past which the fiery cross “glanced like lightning.” There are still some fiery things there. A pedestrian once stumped the Pass, and found himself at the little Highland village. Fond of our “mountain dew,” he halted at the first house, or “public.” So refreshing was the dew that he stayed all night. Next day, shouldering his knapsack, he started, but found another “public” about the middle of the “clachan,” and turned in out of pure innocence, just to compare notes. “Struck ile” again, and, out of deep gratitude for the mercies, put up for the night. Once more, next morning, made off, much delighted—but behold! at the extreme end another “ministering angel,” whose wings consisted of a flaming “sign” swinging in the breeze. Turned in to test the *entertainment*. Beat the two last experiments hollow, and again he set up his tent. Curiosity prevailed, and he inquired the name of this barley-corn oasis. “Sir, it is called ‘Strathyre.’” “Stuff! its proper name is Nineveh, a city of three days’ journey!” Lovely Lochearnhead, the Dochart and Loch, the silent Glen Lochy,

the magnificent island-gemmed Loch Awe, the tremendous Brander Pass, the shores of Loch Etive, and then Oban, the Queen of the Hebridean seas.

No scene can be grander
 Than the dark Pass of Brander,
 Who loves not to wander
 Beside its Black lake?
 It is full of large fish—
 I've caught many a dish—
 And I heartily wish
 I were back for a "take."

But there goes a grilse in the air!—yonder a sea trout falls back upon the diamond wavelets with a most enticing splash, and we long to try a cast by the side of those weeds, where the "big uns" lie, and where the skilful angler is rewarded to his heart's content.

And now, before "going to roost," we shall take a stroll down the side of the burn,

Where the green water-cress, with glossy leaves,
 Muffles the foot-fall of each fairy wave.

Somehow the waterside often leads to the pensive, and, although the day passed heartily, and the trouts took greedily, our souls have drifted back to the sombre Past, and we gaze dreamily down the far-stretching vistas of Time,

Where bygone wrecks in dimness are described,
 Floating, in fragments loose, on Memory's ebbing tide.

There is an old grim lion in the bay of Oban, to which most visitors pay their respects—the *Enterprise*, one of the search-vessels of the "Franklin Expedition." Think of the horrid wastes of ice through which it has shouldered its daring way. For me it possesses peculiar attractions. An old companion—Harry Goodsir—shipped

with Sir John Franklin as surgeon, and, of course, has found his lone bed " 'mid wastes that slumber in eternal snow," Last time I saw him he dined with me in my apartments in St Andrews. We had the "Doch-an-dorruiis," and I accompanied him four miles on his homeward route, and then parted to meet no more on earth. He was an able surgeon and a true man. Gazing some years ago on the *Enterprise*, I conjured up the grave in the *desert of the sea*, and touched by the beautiful reflection, suggested by the burial of another, wrote—

THE EXPLORER'S GRAVE.

"He was deposited in his frozen tomb, on which the wild flowers will never grow, and over which his relations can never mourn."—FRANKLIN EXPEDITION.

HE lies beneath the snow
 Where the flowers will never blow,
 Nor friends shed their woe
 O'er his grave ;
 But he died in holy cause,
 That long shall win applause,
 From the hearts of the true and the brave.

The breezes, as they pass,
 Will never stir the grass
 O'er his head ;
 But the snow-flakes, as they fall,
 Will cast a frozen pall
 On his bed.

No monumental bust,
 Long true to sorrow's trust;
 Shall breathe of hero-dust
 Laid below ;

But the hungry wolf will howl,
And the savage bear will prowl
 Round his solitary cell in the snow.

Yet his name shall never die,
Though cold his relics lie
All alone beneath the sky
 Of the pole ;
For his tale will be told
To the young by the old,
 And thus kept alive in the soul.

When the deeds of our kind
Send a thrill through the mind,
 And flash o'er the gloom of the past,
We shall still have a tear
For that unforgotten bier
 'Mid the wastes of the ice and the blast.

Let him sleep ! let him sleep !
For his slumber is deep,
 And the toils of Life's voyage are o'er ;
Though he found not the Lost,
They may meet on that coast,
 Where the tempest is heard nevermore.

SPRIG VIII.—THE CONA.

IT had been my youthful ambition for a year or two to walk across the "Cruagh," the broadest, longest, and bleakest of all the Scotch moors. No other way of doing it, for even a Highland sheltie could not manage the thing among the black bogs and moss-clad boulders of that dreary region. Started on a fine day in June, with a chum of mine rather given to dandyism, my suit a rough and serviceable rig-out of tweeds with strong brogues, his commencing with tile and frock-coat, continuing in a shawl-pattern waistcoat, and tapering off in white-cords and a pair of rather light boots. What a preparation for the wilds of Rannoch! Found ourselves at Kinloch-Rannoch after a "heel and toe" of fully thirty miles. Dressy friend, fond of creature-comforts, turned up his nose at the then modest inn, and vowed that we should find better quarters at the other end of the loch. Twelve good miles before us, moon rising, and vague suspicions on my part that I was lending myself to a foolish and foppish whim. But what cared I then for an additional dozen of miles—so off we went, lighted on our way by the silvery moonshine. Got to the end of the lovely lake—discovered a small dog-kennel of a place, with the thatch-roof, a sanded parlour, a box-bed, and therein, snugly-ensconced, a pair of drovers performing a nasal duet with laudable energy, if not with pleasing melody. Sumptuous repast at "the wee short hour" of oat cakes, which seemed to have been toasted on the hearth-stone,

judging from the quantity of gritty sand which had got engrained among the meal, some very questionable, high-smelling butter, and a noggin of "whisky," which bowed not to the authorities of the land. Would that I could crow-quill my spruce friend, grinding the composite cake between his dainty teeth, and gasping over a diluted draught of the harsh poteen, which was consumed out of a chipped tumbler and a footless glass. Nothing for it but a plaid for sheets, for a bed a floor neither so clean nor so soft as the "bonnie blooming heather," and a pillow extemporised out of an old legless stool. But we slept the sleep of youth, and next morning, leaving the "twa drovers" to settle matters about stots, stirks, and "queys," over the mutchkin stoup, we took to the perils and pleasures of the great, grim, Sorbonian peatland that stretched before us from the upper end of Rannoch to the giant shepherds of Glencoe and Glen Etive, which cast their mighty shadows over the "King's House," nestling at their regal feet.

A walk never to be forgotten—said by the natives, to be twenty-two miles, but in this instance they might have tacked on the proverbial "bittock," and in my opinion a good bittock too. Stopping to take a cast in the Gawr, Lochs Eaigh and Lydoch, the day wore past too soon—and there being neither keeper's lodge nor shepherd's sheiling to put us right, we soon discovered that we had missed the way, if way it may be called where way is none. What a waste wilderness! Stones and bogs, varied by bogs and stones—like the fare in Australia, "mutton and damper, damper and mutton." To-day there rises a continual lament about the killing civilisation by which the fairy bay of Oban is cockneyfied. Granted frankly—but it will be long before the same coronach is cried over the dead and

buried characteristics of the Moor of Rannoch. There, as on a throne, Desolation reigns, and will reign on with nothing to depose the weird queen of the desert. Night came with her cloudy drapery, and my well-got-up friend and I saw nothing for it but to wrap the toga of "Caledonia stern and wild" around us, and make the best of the heather—rather to be preferred, however, in a mild night, to the sanded floor and the "musical drovers." We had nothing by this time to eat, as little to drink, and we sighed for the "flesh-pots" and balmy dew of the invisible "King's House." A brief snooze, like "Kathleen Mavourneen's," "between sleeping and waking," and the moon drifted over the hill, like a fairy ship of heaven. Glorious scene and glorious revealer! What is her serene majesty glinting on, but the lonely hospice, three miles beneath our heathy roost! Up and at it again! Into bogs and out of bogs—shins barked upon boulders, whose primeval age is not accepted as an apology—across the brawling stream that nearly carried us off our feet—and, after a half-hour's storm of the inn door, it opened, to display a "ministering angel" in the shape of a brown toozie-tapped, red-legged lassie, and we floated into a haven of repose. My friend's white pants had become, thanks to bog-land, like the legs of a swan, but they were soon exchanged for clean sheets and fleecy blankets, and in "the land of nod" he was soon dreaming that he was once more "cutting it fat" on the lady-crowded promenade of his native city.

Next day down *the* glen of Scotland, in more respects than one—overhauled Horatio M'Culloch in after years, taking one of his masterly views of the great pass from a point near the Queen's seat, as it is now called. Many's the joke and frolic I have had with the deft

artist, who "mixed his colours with brains," and why not also a little of the "dew" to put spirit into the judicious mixture? While casting a red hackle and black spider on the rushing Cona, I thought of the Ossianic ghosts of other days, and of the ghosts of the noble dwellers of the glen who were foully entrapped in the bloody wiles of the *blackest* of all *spiders* that ever wove the web of a base and cruel diplomacy—the "head of that dark villain-plot," if not "the manly hand"—a plot which leaves an indelible stain upon a name we must admit otherwise great. As this sketch is neither a *history*, nor even an *itinerary*, but an angling ramble, I must refer the reader, first to Macaulay, and thereafter, at a vast distance, to my own *Legend of Glencoe*, which the famous author allowed me to dedicate to himself, although I told him that I could not adopt his views. I had almost made a slip of the pen, and had all but written down, like some others, "my immortal work." However, I find it only truthful to style it "my mortal production"; for like the brave M'Donald, it has died a bodily death, and if there be one man who desires to know where this *Legend* is to be found, I must refer him to a notable firm, *Trunkman's & Co.*, the mausoleum of more than one work over which the poor author toiled and hoped.

Not far from the beautifully situated mansion of Invercoe, the property of my kind friend Mrs M'Donald, the descendant of the murdered chief, a stately cross is raised, marking the bloody spot where the atrocious massacre began. It is in the style of the famous crosses of Iona, the upper portion of red granite, the lower of grey granite, resting upon a rugged rock-work. I was honoured by a request to write an inscription for this cross, which I did in verse—but, forgetting the

hard nature of the stone, it was found too long, and a plainer and shorter legend has been wisely adopted. However, it may not be out of place to present the reader with a copy of my lines :—

HERE Cona pours its wandering wave
 Round many an unforgotten grave,
 And this dumb stone records the place
 Where perished an old Celtic race,
 Slaughtered at midnight's mirkest hour
 By regal wrath and ruthless power.
 It tells a tale of infamy
 Which death itself will not let die,
 When men shall speak, with bated breath,
 Of deeds of darkness and of death,
 The darkest deed of all they know
 Shall be thy massacre, Glencoe !
 And still above thy lonely tombs
 Shall fall the patriot's tear,
 To valour and to freedom dear,
 While thistle waves and heather blooms.

No fitter dirge those dead can know
 Than Cona, wailing through Glencoe—
 A plaintive coronach that thrills
 The bosoms of those rugged hills,
 That hang their heads in silent gloom,
 Like mourners bending o'er a tomb,
 Their tears a hundred trickling rills,
 Pouring eternal woe.

The night beam slept on the cottage wall—
 A hundred homes lay hushed in sleep—
 Oh ! never more that beam shall fall,
 On slumber there so calm and deep ;
 The morn arose from heaven's bright gate—
 Those hundred homes are desolate !

Few scenes of earth might suit so well
 The deeds that wring the soul to tell,
 Nature in sackcloth sitteth there,
 Sad, solitary, bleak, and bare,
 As if she mourned the havoc done
 By man, her fairest, noblest son—
 And still the plaintive dirge is sung
 By Cona's everlasting tongue.

CAVE.

Now guard ye well this moorland stone,
 Or very soon you'll see thereon
 The classic name of some rude clown,
 Called William Jones or Peter Brown ;
 A scratching, scribbling, meddling elf,
 Of manners void, though rich in pelf.

Yesterday I passed once more through the stupendous glen, and as I gazed upon rock and stream, soaring peak and battlemented precipice, the Three Sisters and the Cave of Ossian, memory brought before me the dear old companion of the bleak moor, and I mourned in my soul to think that we can ramble no more by loch and river. A year ago he passed away from the scenes of nature, which he loved so well, and his demise tells me that I too have left behind me another milestone of the varied and precarious journey of life.

I have seen Glencoe in storm and calm, in mist and sunshine, sheeted with the snowdrift, and bathed in the mystic beams of the soft summer moonlight, when the weird shadows of the great cliffs cast themselves in the deepest solemnity over the brawling stream and the dark lake, through which it passes onward to the arms of the sleeping Leven. This is the aspect under which the glen makes the profoundest impression upon the

mind, and if the tourist be not too fond of the warm luxury of his inn, I would strongly advise him to see the pass in its nocturnal garb. All readers are acquainted with the picturesque lines of Scott concerning the Abbey of Melrose—

“ If you would see fair Melrose aright,
Go visit it by the pale moonlight.”

And they also know that the gifted bard never saw what he painted so graphically, steeped in the vivid hues of his wondrous imagination. I have seen Melrose more than once under the mellow light of the harvest moon, the rich tracery of its sculptured windows brought into marvellous relief by the soft influences of the queen of night. Glencoe I have also trodden with the wavering moonbeams for my guides—and for his own sake, I counsel the traveller to go and do likewise. He will hang up in the dim and holy cloisters of memory a picture far beyond the hand of man.

A pleasing reminiscence lingers around this notable locality; for here I met in bygone days a man who has left the world his debtor, John Keble, the well-known author of *The Christian Year*. He and his amiable wife were on their marriage tour, the little humble inn of those days containing few rooms, and my bed-chamber being among the best of them. The landlord appealed to me in behalf of his distinguished guests, and I, of course, was only too glad to give up my apartment to one from whose thoughts I have derived both pleasure and profit. His mortal year has long since closed, but his *Christian Year* will know no end, so long as there are hands to print and heads to peruse the reflections of sainted genius. The work by which he is most widely known has been and will be a fellow-

labourer with the *Pilgrim's Progress* of Bunyan, and *The Imitation of Christ* by Thomas a Kempis. The good it has done, the hearts it has soothed, and the souls it has blest, can never be reckoned up. It is a veritable harp, whose many strings are ever resounding with the sacred melodies of heaven. Man gleans his pleasures from many sources, but his sweetest solace and his deepest consolation are still to be gathered by the brook of Kedron and the slopes of Olivet, among the rocks of Calvary and beside the shores of Galilee—and if it be possible to impart to these spots of holy ground an additional attraction, that attraction is due to the apostolic fervour of the man who has given to the world *The Christian Year*. “Being dead, he yet speaketh.”

THE BLESSED DEAD.

“Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright ; for the end of that man is peace.”

WEEP not for the dead who have died in the Lord,
 Their sins and their sorrows are o'er ;
 They are safe in a land by no mortal explored,
 And are now by the throne of the Lamb they adored,
 Giving glory to him evermore.

Repine not for those who have died in the Faith ;
 Would you bring them to trial again ?
 To the sorrows of life, to the terrors of death,
 To a curse that has power to pollute and to scathe,
 To a body of weakness and pain ?

Rejoice for the dead who have died in the Lord,
 No warfare can trouble them now ;
 The combat is o'er, and the conqueror's sword
 Is laid at the feet of the Prince they adored,
 And His coronet gleams on their brow.

Let us live like the dead who have died in the Faith,
And we shall rejoin them above,
In a land ever free from "the shadow of death,"
Where the curse may not breathe with its poisoning breath,—
A region of life and of love.

Through the tumult and trouble of earth he has passed,
But the woes of probation must cease,
Of the foes he encountered cold Death was the last,
But, falling asleep in his bleak icy blast,
The "end" of that mortal was "peace."

SPRIG IX.—THE FARG ; OR, EARLY DAYS.

“A BRAW mornin’ for a flee, Maister John,” says a well-known voice at my elbow, as I am sitting on a moss-grown stone, and putting on a cast that’s sure to do the trick. How audibly I hear that voice at the present moment speaking out of the far-off past, and how vividly does the characteristic figure of other days rise before me as I write—old velveteen coat, older whity-brown hat, festooned with casts, nether man encased in leather leggings, and a primitive spliced rod, with still more primitive reel and its brown hair line. But it was the rod of a conjuror, and old John Robertson was the man to spin a yarn, put a dram out of sight, and fill a creel where others were at fault and blaming everything and everyone, with the solitary exception of the real defaulter—the man at the but-end!

“Yes, John,” as you say, “its a braw morning—but before beginning, let’s have a crack and

THE MORNING PIPE.

THE morning pipe I relish best,
 And it is far the surest test
 About the previous night ;
 For, if too much to pleasure given,
 I’m certain as there is a heaven
 Tobacco will be no delight.
 But spend the night, as wisdom should,
 Abstemious both in drink and food,
 And I will bet a crown

Your morning pipe will pleasant be
 After a mellow cup of tea
 To wash the breakfast down.
 Then shall the thoughts in channels due
 With steady flow their course pursue,
 And work a pleasure be ;
 For never does the task succeed
 So well as with the fragrant weed,
 And a cheering cup of tea.

'Tis coffee, said the poet, Pope,
 That makes the politician cope
 With questions most abstruse ;
 But I will back the honey-dew
 To quicken mind in me, or you,
 And teach its highest use.
 When temper is about to rise,
 Just let me solemnly advise
 A mild and soothing weed—
 And angry words will be supprest,
 And ire will die within the breast,
 And a better mood succeed.

When Jove a shindy had with Juno,
 He hid within a cloud, as you know,
 Till calmer weather,—
 So, when about to disagree,
 The safest thing for you and me
 Is “blow a cloud” together.
 No man, 'tis said, with all his might,
 Can “add a cubit to his height”—
 A truth I'll not gainsay—
 But any man his joy may double
 With briar-root, or hubble-bubble,
 Or an honest “yard of clay.”

Burn-fishing, though humble sport, is held by many

to be the *poetry of angling*. If sport consist in the quiet enjoyment of the "art," and not in the weight of the creel, then the springy, flowery side of the mountain stream is the scene of much unpretending, but fresh and healthy, delight. Away from the din and dust of the city, with the fleecy sky overhead, the green leaves around with their whispering melody, and the ear lulled by "the pleasant noise of waters," I have spent many a day as free from care as a mortal's hours may be, and have reaped a wholesome delight not to be found under the fretted roofs of the saloon, or to be purchased in the resorts of the "madding crowd." Many who look with admiration on the "crack shot" are apt to treat with contempt the humble burn trout-fisher, and deny him a place among "sportsmen." But only let them "try their hand," and they will find, to their confusion, that to become an expert burn-fisher is no easy matter. Nothing can be more ridiculous to a "deacon of the craft" than to witness a bungler whipping the water with bloodless fly hour after hour, then jerking his *one* long-desired victim up into the branch of a tree, where he leaves his cast, or a piece of his coat-tail, while the spotted beauty has fallen back into his watery haunts. "Catch him burn-grubbing again!" Poor weary, bedraggled soul! he hasn't even begun what he threatened loftily to leave off. Like Mrs Glass' hare, a trout must be caught before cooked, and it is not every city prig who has the art to trap him.

Then of how many beautiful verses has the burn-side been the parent. The song of the "trottin' burnie" has called into being many other sweet and gentle songs. I confess that this teacher of Nature must stand sponsor for more than one of my little poetic offspring. Like most young fellows, I once believed

myself to be hopelessly in love with a dark-haired coquette, who took her fun off me, as girls will. In the phrase of the bookbinder, I was "bound in calf," and relieved my petted feelings in a burn-side song, in which I strove to depict

THE POWER OF LOVE.

THERE'S a glory in summer, a beauty in spring,
 And the laverock the hymn of the morning will sing ;
 But the magic of Nature is lost upon me,
 For the raven-haired Flora has pride in her e'e.

I'm restless by day, and I'm sleepless by night—
 The stream has no music, the sunbeam no light ;
 I'm weary of life as a mortal can be,
 For the raven-haired Flora has pride in her e'e.

I roam through the meadows at gloaming alone,
 Musing sadly of pleasures all withered and gone ;
 Death, often I think, would be welcome to me,
 Since the raven-haired Flora has pride in her e'e.

But now, what a change has come over my dream !
 Each flower has a grace, and a music each stream ;
 All Nature is glory and beauty to me,
 For my raven-haired lassie has love in her e'e.

Poor, dear Tom Hood, as all his readers know, has a pretty, touching poem, in which he simply wishes that he *were once more a boy*. There are some hard things about the period of boyhood,—the early school hours, the Latin rudiments, and, at the head of all, that "bete noir" of childhood, the Shorter Catechism—too long by half for the *young intellect*, and rather too deep,—but, even with these drawbacks, at this moment I am inclined to say with Hood, "I would I were a boy !"

EARLY DAYS.

I LOVE the notes of our native airs,
And the words of our olden lays,
But dearer still, amid toils and cares,
Are the scenes of my youthful days.

I love to sit where the hazels nod
O'er the course of the rippling rill ;
Or, laid at length on the mossy sod,
To dream I am youthful still.

I love to wander at eventide
'Mid the dells of the wilding rose,
For it wafts my soul to the sunnier side
Of a gulf that may never close.

O world ! beloved by the great and gay,
With your pleasure and pomp and power,
You cannot give to my heart to-day
So much as that simple flower.

The things that have been no more we'll meet,
As we roam on our earthly ways ;
But I thank thee, God, for thoughts so sweet
As the thoughts of mine early days.

Like odours breathed from a spice-isle past,
They follow us o'er the wave,
And sweeten the days that are drifting fast
To the haven beyond the grave.

In my boyhood, as I said elsewhere, began my piscatory rambles by the Farg, a lovely little stream, which meanders and leaps through a picturesque glen of the same name, dear alike to the angler and the botanist. There winds the celebrated road with the gap called "The Wicks of Baiglie," from which Sir Walter, in his *Fair Maid of Perth*, describes the magnificent

landscape that includes a distant vision of the "Fair City." How the days come back when the "couthie" old Mrs M'Ewen kept the cosie "Bein Inn," and made the hungry angler supremely comfortable! The glen stretches upwards for about four miles, ending a little below the beautiful residence of General Bruce of Glen Denglie, lately the commander of our forces in Scotland, one of my most valued friends, and about the best read man I had ever the good fortune to know. I wish that I had kept up my "classics" as he has, being able to throw off with masterly ease graceful verses both in Greek and Latin. But I must now be content to "reel off" a few simple stanzas in homely English, and commit my passing thoughts and fancies to the keeping of plain prose.

Every one of reflection has felt, when by stream and meadow and woodland, that the invisible hand of Nature played upon his heart, like the soft fingers of the west wind over the strings of the Æolian harp. The streams seemed to murmur for *you*, the birds to sing, the flowers to bloom, and the green leaves to rustle! Scott, as usual, sings, in *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, more truthfully than any one else about this mystic entwining of mortal mood and Nature's sympathies—

"Call it not vain

They do not err

Who say that, when the poet dies,

Mute Nature mourns her worshipper,

And celebrates his obsequies."

Well, reader, have you not felt this mystic power, and owned how hard a thing it would be to die when the birds of spring, or the blossoms of summer were on the hope-breathing tree? Such was the feeling I seek here to embody—

SYMPATHY.

I WOULD not like to die in spring,
When buds are on the tree ;
When birds begin to prune the wing,
And flowers to paint the lea.

In summer-time I would not die,
When blossoms open fair,
When sunbeams wander through the sky,
And odours through the air.

When autumn leaves are falling fast,
Or wintry tempests rave,
'Tis then I'd wish to breathe my last
And find some peaceful grave.

That valley thro' whose starless gloom
The soul escapes to rest,—
Immortal victor of the tomb,
Companion of the blest.

SPRIG X.—THE MEETING OF THE WATERS.

ALL nature is *gregarious*. There is no such thing as complete unity—or solitary isolation. If it is written that “man was not made to live alone,” the same may be said of everything connected with his place of abode. Nature is inimical to loneliness. The *marriage-tie* is recognised throughout all her departments. The leaves on the branch nestle and whisper together. The flowers of the field gather in clusters and mingle the odours of their fragrant breath. Birds and beasts love to amalgamate in flocks and herds. Old maids summon together their genial chatty cronies, and “without help of man,” dispose of life and character over the “cups that cheer but not inebriate.” Even the miser cannot dispense with the company of his money-bags, and hears in the chink of the goldfinches imprisoned therein a music that touches the very strings of his sordid soul. The man is not without his religion; for he worships an idol.

Why, then, should the streams be an exception to this law of Nature? And what can be more beautiful than two of these nurslings of Nature, after devious windings through glen and meadow, among fern and broom, under cliff and alder, at last mingling their waters, and, like a couple of fond united hearts, flowing on in a *single tide* to the sleep of the great river, or the greater sea? All creation has been ransacked for *similes* concerning that mysterious enigma, Man, but none of them offers such a graphic and touching representation of

human life and death as the course of a stream and "the meeting of the waters."

My meeting of the waters is, I am sure, nested in as soft a scene of beauty as that of Tom Moore's in the "sweet vale of Avoca." It lies in the lovely valley of the Ericht at the Bridge of Cally, where the streams of the Ardle and Blackwater blend their sparkling waves, and flow on as the Ericht, until that river merges in the Islay, which in its turn loses its name in the Tay, and are all in time lost in the great ocean, where they "are mingled in peace," like the lives of mortal pilgrims in the sea of death. Leaving Blairgowrie (famed for its anglers—old Crockhart at the head), "the Montpellier of the North," as some one calls it, you pass the romantically situated mansion of Craighall, throned on its stupendous grey cliffs, and after six miles of picturesque scenery, find yourself at the snug inn of Cally Bridge where peace and comfort await the traveller, and where long presided a first-rate specimen of the classic Meg Dodds. Like other celebrities, she has passed away, and another Tibbie Shiels reigns in her stead. If you turn to your left hand, after crossing the moss-grown brig, where the waters chafe pleasantly among the grey boulders, you are led up the strath of the Ardle, with its emerald meadows and handsome residences, which occupy fine situations either in the grassy holms, or on the sloping hill-sides. After a pleasant journey of about seven miles you reach Kirkmichael, with its modest kirk, its quaint meal-mill, its humble public, and, of course, a specimen of the labours of the all-pervading and expensive "school board," which has swallowed up the good old "parochial system," and spends more money without imparting a more *suitable* education. Here lived three worthies now no more. One of them,

Peter G——, was a poet, and penned a long and loud poem concerning the Deluge. I was called upon to read the same, and having done so, asked the elder brother why the younger did not publish. "Oh!" responded my friend, "we're a quiet family, and dinna want brither Peter to *mak a noise* in the world!" As I am under no such family tremors, I am now scribbling for the public, and I really don't expect that I shall be much accused of vending *literary dynamite*. The slumbers of the neighbourhood will not be very seriously disturbed by the "noise" of my *Rambles*.

This clachan is endeared to me as the residence of a cheery college companion. Jamie Drummond and I were fast friends in the venerable city of St Andrews, the university of which has now, I regret to say, a rival in Dundee, that opposite emporium of jute and whale blubber. Jamie, like myself, was a sore thorn in the sides of the old Professors, who, "good, easy men," did not keep up the best order in their various classes. It was "take it or want," so far as we were concerned. They were men of learning, but quiet-going souls. The blame lay with us, who were led to the waters of Helicon and the slopes of Parnassus, but would neither drink the waters of the one nor gather the flowers of the other. I remember, one cold morning, Jamie coming in to the class-room of Professor G—— half an hour late. "What's the meaning of this, sir?" exclaimed the irate lecturer. "I—I—slipt in, Doctor," said the sluggard in his Celtic brogue. "Then, sir, the next best thing you can do is to *slip out* now." My turn came a few days thereafter. "Well, sir, where were you hiding your genius yesterday?" "Please, sir, I was indisposed." "Why, man, that's no pleasure to me—but you become your *indisposition* extremely well—

your face is a diploma of rustic health." But the best settler was dealt in the mathematical class-room, where the absent teacher used to smear his chin with what he called *calk*, till he resembled a harlequin. He was setting down the figures of a problem on the blackboard, when a shallow goose impudently remarked, imitating the pronunciation of the learned and kind Professor, "There's a *ccepher* wanting, sir." "Is there? I think not; for, Mr L——, there never can be a *ccepher* wanting in this class when *you are here*." We cheered to the echo, and I need not say who looked the fool. Of this worthy Professor a story was wont to be told, which I must here set down. A certain Miss Dorothy, took a fancy for the helpless old bachelor, and thought that he must be very lonely and "ill looked after." So she waylaid him daily, and, being something of kin, he could not be uncivil. Gossips over their cups shook their heads, and vowed that "the designing hussy" would prove too much for the simple-souled mathematician. All wrong. One day the fair one caught him up and walked him on to the Eden Sands. He would say nothing tender, so it lay with her. "What do you think," Professor, "the folk are saying about us?" "Dinna ken," quoth Q.E.D., who was deep in a problem. "They're saying we're gaun to be married." "Ah! but Miss Dorothy," catching his chin according to wont, "we'll gi'e them a fine cheat!"

Musing, one soft summer eve beside the sacred ground of the clachan, "where the rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep," I "forgathered" with the miller, and entered upon the customary "crack." "Can you tell me," said I, "what became of my old class-fellow, Jamie Drummond?—I think he went abroad." A pensive shade stole over the old man's face, and looking

wistfully at me, he gently replied—"Come, and I'll show you where he found his rest after a lang, sair illness." He opened the gate of the primitive churchyard, and, leading the way, paused in silent reverence beside the grassy hillock that marks the last, long sleep. "There he lies, puir laddie, beside his faither and mither, and muckle was he missed, for he aye had the kind word to say to us a'." Something that was not a drop of dew fell and sparkled upon the turf of the "lowly bed," and we turned in silence from the grave of the companion of other days. His requiem is fitly sung by the stream, in which he "paidled" as a bairn and fished as a boy, noisy, bright, and frolicsome as its own sunny ripples.

If you follow up the Ardle you come to another "meeting of the waters," where the Brerachan and the Fernate mingle their merry voices, and lose their respective names—flowing on as the Ardle. Many a good creel is taken from both, and in a long stretch of dead water, when the breeze blows briskly, you will pick up some fine large trout that will afford good play, and send you back to the village inn with a very respectable "take." If, again, going back to the Brig of Cally, you hold to the right, the road will lead you up the "Black Water" to the "Spittal of Glenshee," where fair fishing and good accommodation may be had. In days gone by often did I turn to the right hand on the Shee, and find my way to the romantic little loch of Drumore—then the property of my genial friend, the late Major Thomas. We had rare sport, the trouts running from one pound up to four. Shy in the noonday sun, they come up vigorously in the misty dawn and dusky gloaming, and a creel of these finely-shaped and beautifully-spotted fish is something to look at. I

have also, by the kindly granted permission of Colonel M'Donald, frequently spent the day on Loch Bainie, where the trout are numerous, and of a very sharp and wicked character. At first I was a good while in getting up to the rapid practice of these lovely little fish, but got my hand in at last, and made an example of dozens of the sportive tribe.

Good taste and feeling—for these are twin-sisters—have spared the ancient moss-grown Brig of Cally that spanned the Ardlie generations before the modern one was built—and this is something in an age that only sees in a venerable ruin or hoary fragment spared by time something to be pulled down by sacrilegious man. What a lucky thing it is that the Colosseum is not in the vicinity of one of our plethoric manufacturing cities! It would soon be replaced by a jute-palace or a cotton emporium, or perhaps a chemical manure depot. No longer would it be—

“ Before me I see the gladiator lie,”—

but—

Before me I see the cotton-spinner lie,
 Wrapt in a coverlet of softest down ;
 His dreams of usury and interest high—
 A princely shooting and a house in town,
 A home-bound vessel on the weltering sea,
 Laden with jute, or flax, or rich bohea,
 A “ water-power ” in every sparkling rill,
 And, where a temple stood, a brick-built thundering mill !

Of old Perth scarcely a relic survives—and the reader of *The Fair Maid* gazes aghast in sorrowful amazement.

With what pensive pleasure do I look back to my peaceful days and golden evenings by the “ meeting of the waters.” Byron, we all know, calls angling a

“solitary vice,” and I have no doubt that, if the trouts could speak in his own language, they would give him a vote of thanks. But there is more in angling than mere fish-hooking. Many lasting impressions for good are carried away from the broomy braes of the dimpling stream. There are “sermons in stones, books in the running brooks,” and, at the risk of being accused of vanity, I take upon me to say, that I have brought home to the people, among whom my duty lies, something more than a basket of fish. Heartily do I thank the streams that run among the hills and valleys; for they are all

HEAVENLY TEACHERS.

NATURE is like an open page,
 For man's instruction given ;
 There greenest youth and ripest age
 May read the words of heaven.

Spring tells of seed-time and of toil,
 Bright summer breathes of bloom,
 Brown autumn triumphs o'er her spoil,
 And winter paints the tomb.

The suns that set, the clouds that pass,
 The russet leaves that fall,
 The daisies twinkling o'er the grass,
 Are teachers one and all.

“Glad tidings” ring from every grove
 And stream that warbles wild ;
 For these are God's, and “God is love,”
 And man his favoured child.

'Tis not in vain the snowdrop breaks
 The frozen wintry clod,
 That "still small voice" a "Gospel" speaks—
 It comes—a Priest from God.

Whispering to the icy wind,
 That o'er its blossom sweeps,
 "I come obedient to a mind,
 That slumbers not, nor sleeps."

Sweet flower! thy pale and pensive bloom
 To every soul is dear,—
 A resurrection from the tomb—
 First promise of the year.

Passing those low-roofed cottages nestling beneath the shade of the pensile birches, is it not pleasant to hear the ringing shout and the merry laugh of those sun-browned children, sporting as gaily as the light breezes or the dancing sunbeams? As a set off to his angling heresy, that *blasé* man of the world, Byron, wrote how he loved "the voice of children, and their earliest words." This we heartily endorse; for there is something so pure, spontaneous, and genuine in all the ways and feelings of

CHILDHOOD.

THE merry voice of childhood!
 The music of the hearth—
 No music falls so sweetly
 Amid the cares of earth.
 From happy heart it ringeth,
 And it thrilleth through the heart—
 A melody of Nature,
 Beyond the power of Art.

The cherub-face of childhood !
There's nothing half so fair,
Beaming brightly from its halo
Of golden, glancing hair ;

With the rose upon its cheek,
And the laughter in its eye,
Melting softly as a sunbeam
Along the summer sky.

The holy heart of childhood !
Still ignorant of guile—
The source of many a ready tear,
And many a ready smile.

If Paradise hath left a flower
To cheer this earthly wild,
It blooms amid the sunny thoughts
Of a little artless child.

And now, as I indulge in a farewell ramble by the rushing Ericht, my solitude becomes peopled, and I am no more alone, voices from the far-away past whisper like faint sweet echoes, and kindly faces smile wistfully out upon me from the mists of the bygone time. One above all haunts my footsteps and keeps me company—a gentle and true-hearted spirit, with whom I often wandered by meadow, grove, and stream, in the days of other years. Slowly, as I muse on my homeward way, the phantom voices die, and the phantom faces fade and vanish, and I look forward in calmness and hope to the period when lives, now doomed to flow apart, may once more and for ever “be mingled in peace,” like “the meeting of the waters”—no sin to pollute, no sorrow to disturb, no death to separate.

THE PAST.

WHEN the long farewell is spoken,
And the light of life has fled,
How blest the simplest token,
That recalls the sleeping dead,—
That gilds the dear departed
With the olden smile they wore—
The true-souled, the gentle-hearted,
Who gladden home no more.

When I walk the dewy meadows
Some common flower will cast
On my path the gliding shadows
Of those who long have passed,—
Passed away from home's bright number,
From the earth and all its joys,
To the bed of dreamless slumber,
To the crowd without a voice.

When, beside the glowing ember,
I muse at close of day,
By that light I well remember
The faces passed away.
Then memory loves to greet me
With some familiar tone,
And, though shadows only meet me,
I feel not all alone.

And thus I love to wander
Among the dewy flowers,
Or to sit and gently ponder
Through memory's vesper hours.
O Wisdom ! cold thy warning—
To me 'tis not in vain
To fancy back life's morning,
And to live it o'er again.

SPRIG XI.—AFTER THE RAIN.

WAS there ever a more tantalising season for the angler than that which is fast drawing to a close? Skies like brass and streams like crystal! How it fared with the trout in many places I cannot imagine; but, unless they could pack like the children of the Emerald Isle, where people, pigs, hens, and ducks amalgamate in one happy family, they must have had a tight time of it. The little May nearly vanished—not a pool-head or pebbly rapid singing a summer song to the wild flowers that in vain hung their thirsty lips over their mossy braes; and how the speckled race stowed themselves away it is impossible to conceive. But they did manage somehow in their confined lodgings, and with the first rush of the brown water after the long-wished-for rain, there they were, as usual, up to anything, from the worm to the more artistic red hackle. I longed, however, for “fresh fields and pastures new,” and started for a pretty nook nestling among the mountains of the glorious Firth of Clyde. As it does nothing by halves, the West can do its share of raining, and never at night can you say what sort of morning is likely to succeed. However, this watery tendency has its charms for the angler, and if he is baulked of his sail in one of the countless steamers that plough this inland deep, he can shoulder his rod and creel, and make sure that the sea trout will be “running” up the rivers to the lochs far away among the heathery hills. There are not many of these streams; but what are of them are good, and

during August and the beginning of September many a shoal of sea-trout draws the angler forth to a trial of his skill.

In such weather, and among such scenery, have I spent the last fortnight, very much to my satisfaction; and if my creels have not been heavy, neither have my spirits. As shooting is not merely the killing of game, but a pleasant combination of air and exercise, springy heather, and the constant excitement of beating up your unseen game, whether winged or four-footed, so angling is not the mere killing of so many fish in so many hours. Whosoever happens to be the victim of such an idea, let him adhere to deep-sea fishing, where a lubberly cod, or a skate like a paving stone, will, let us hope, reward his merits. It is one of the true pleasures of fly fishing that it almost necessarily carries the angler into the bosom of picturesque scenery; for the Highland loch and the rushing stream speak of the heath and the craggy shore, the forest crowning the cliffs, and the green banks inlaid with the sweet simple flowers that love to shed their incense, and to display their colours in the presence of solitude. A day passed amid such speaking and improving influences is not lost, although the creel at nightfall may not be plethoric. Can the dabbler in worms or maggots say the same after having been nailed for a whole sloppy day to the side of a swamp or milldam, where only a duck or a snail could be supposed to be thoroughly at home?

But these reflections call to recollection a "regular sell" with which I was "tarred and feathered" a week ago. In a book on angling I found that Loch Greenan, a small loch in the island of Bute, contained many "fine trout of considerable size." Here was a happy chance! By the help of one of the numerous Clyde steamers, and

for the sum of sixpence, I found myself beneath the shadows of that pile, which is ever associated with the name of the hapless Duke of Rothesay. A tramp of a couple of miles brought me to my piscatorial paradise, rejoicing, as most anglers do, to cast my flies upon the ripples of untried waters. But what was my vexation when I gazed upon spots of sluggish water, most completely embraced by a broad and dense cincture of reeds and water lilies! My wonted admiration for the *Nuphar lutea* and the *Nymphaea alba* vanished in a moment, and all botanical fervour died within me. Oh, for firm banks and craggy points, from which one could cast a fly thirty paces, and call up the trouts from the "vasty deeps!" But there was no good standing on the swampy shore "lamenting," like a second edition of the Chief of Ullin. So, to come to the veriest prose, I hailed the miller and his man, who were standing at a sluice gate hard by, with their faces on the broad grin. "Any trout here, can you tell me?" "Ou ay, a guid wheen trout, but they're gey kittle to catch." "Are they large?" "Aye, four or five or five and a half pund." I doubt the miller's knowledge of the odd half pound had been gleaned by help of the net. While we were talking, a large trout, as if to confirm the statement of his friend, the miller, flashed up among the water lilies in a catch-me-if-you-can sort of manner. Twice did I cast over him, and twice did he answer the challenge of the small red spider, but never closed with its barb. In short, it was no go; and, although I had succeeded in hooking him, how could I have killed him, surrounded as he was by a thick network of aquatic plants? Once or twice thereafter I was deceived into a belief that I was raising trout, and that hope might still linger; but these illusions I discovered to be the result of the invasions of braize,

with which worthless fish Loch Greenan is thickly peopled. Let the angler, then, beware of this well-guarded lakelet; but if he can obtain permission to use his gun, let him rejoice, for I *flushed*, in my round of its swampy margin, at least thirty or forty snipe.

For this travel in vain I was amply indemnified a few days after, when I turned my steps towards the Echaig—a fine stream of four miles' run from the romantic Loch Eck to the head of the Holy Loch, where it gleans a liberal tribute of grilse and sea-trout. Loch Eck itself contains good lake trout, besides the powan, or fresh-water herring, and the goldie, a small and delicate fish, which emits, in its last struggles, as many vivid colours as the dying dolphin. I was rather late for the great run of the sea-trout up the Echaig, which generally takes place in the month of August; but stragglers were still about, and I never failed to enrich my creel with several fine specimens of the *Salmo trutta*, ranging from about one pound to two pounds. I never ate more delicious fish than these proved; beautifully pink in colour, and rich in flavour. They were as fat as any trout ever captured by me, more so than our own Tay or Earn sea-trout, which is easily accounted for by keeping in mind that they were just fresh from the sea, and had no time to run themselves lean. The Echaig presents to the eye of the fly fisher a succession of pools and streams which are most inviting. It is not easy to conceive a better distribution of water for the practice of the "gentle art." Such deep, swirling pools; such brown sparkling rapids; such gravelly stretches; while the eye for the picturesque is charmed at every angle of the stream by fresh changes of rock and hill, and meadow and woodland, as the skilful hand of Nature rules the captivating panorama. If residing by

the sea-side, tell your cook to boil your trout in salt-water, and it appears on the table curved like a bow, and a very picture of pink, creamy curd.

By the assistance of the many steamers of the Clyde, the angler can reach a variety of streams, all more or less famous for sea-trout. The Ardine, which falls into a little bay opposite Rothesay; the Ruel, somewhat farther onward along the Kyles of Bute; the Finnart, which ends its rapid race in the waters of Loch Long at Ardentinny; my friend, the Echaig, and others—all will well reward the man who can use his limbs and does not mind a few odd miles for the sake of a good day's sport. There is also at the head of Loch Fyne a first-rate stream, more than commonly rich in the salmo family. These are not open to the public, but the fly fisher will find, as I did, that the urbanity of the anglers, who have the control of these waters, is something like a freemasonry, and is often the means of procuring a stray cast in fertile places. My last day in the Echaig was far from successful; glaring sun, cloudless sky, absence of breeze, and small water, all combining to defeat my efforts. I tackled two sea-trout, but lost both of them, on account, I think, of the small hooks with which I was compelled to operate; but I succeeded in securing about a dozen of the yellow natives. Coming down the stream I had the luck to see a piscatorial sight, worth the remembrance, in a still, deep pool behind a crag, a legion of sea-trout moving to and fro like shadows in the sunny depths, almost as numerous as herrings sailing in a shoal. If that in one pool, what a population throughout the river! Sometimes in my rambles my eyes were gladdened by a different spectacle, a fine specimen of the *Osmunda regalis*, or royal fern, generally crowning some craggy,

mossy knoll under the shade of the copse wood, and shaking his beautiful plumes like the undoubted chieftain of the scene. On a lovely day I was constrained to turn my back upon this magic region—upon the rugged giants of Arran, and the rich woods of Ardgowan—upon the grand mountains of the Holy Loch, and the fantastic summits of Loch Long—and upon the sea stretching forth her beneficent arms to feed the people of remote solitudes.

If the *sunsets* of Oban be gorgeous for rich oriental colour, what shall I say about the soft, clear, yet dreamy *moonlights* of Innellan? Seated in a large bow window, overhanging the dancing, sparkling wavelets, never did I feel anything more subduing than the magic hour “of the soft summer gloaming,” when the day melted by imperceptible degrees into the night, “in sober livery clad.” Then over the opposite woodlands of “Ardgowan” stole the moon, “fair regent of the sky,” casting across the gently-heaving deep a path of silvery radiance, which seemed fit to be trodden only by the feet of white-robed angels. That scene will ever live in the shadowy landscape of my memory, and the ripples of the softly-breathing Clyde will murmur in seraph melody through the twilight of my dreams.

Strange how the calm, sleeping moonlight awakens thoughts, feelings, and memories all more or less tinged with the sober hues of a pleasing melancholy! As I gaze upon that path of silvery splendour, it seems to me as if spirit feet were called upon to tread it, and to join those who have gone before us to the better land, “where the sun shall no more go down, nor the moon withdraw her light.”

NIGHT.

NIGHT ! floating to thy cloudy throne,
Most beautiful art thou,
With the melting star of eve alone
Soft beaming on thy brow.
I never see that holy star,
But I think the eye of God,
With the light of love from worlds afar,
Looks down on man's abode.

Oh ! give to hearts that never bled
The golden beams of dawn,
With smiles upon the mountain-head,
And gleams upon the lawn ;
But to hearts that weep, when others sleep,
The friends who dwell afar,
Oh ! call the night from heaven's blue deep,
With her holy vesper star.

Night peoples the lone captive's cell
With faces fond and dear,
And sings the lays he loved so well
In happier days to hear.
Night thrills the weary exile's breast
With the voices of his home,
And the murmuring streams he loved the best,
Far over the ocean's foam.

Night can restore to aged eyes
The golden morn of youth,
When earth was bathed in Heaven's own dyes,
When life was love and truth.

And oh ! how dear to hearts that weep
 O'er time's unsparing war,
 Night rising soft from heaven's blue deep,
 With her holy vesper star.

The prayer, that shuns the blaze of day,
 Comes with the star of eve,
 And gently steals the load away
 From bosoms prone to grieve ;
 As song-birds, 'mid the glare of noon,
 Sit silent in the light,
 And pour their being forth in tune,
 With the falling dews of night.

Oh ! like a weary, weary child,
 That sobs itself to rest,
 Full many a spirit lays its head
 On night's maternal breast ;
 For oh ! how dear to hearts that weep
 O'er time's unsparing war,
 Night rising soft from heaven's blue deep,
 With her holy vesper star.

WE'LL MEET AGAIN.

WE'LL meet again upon that farther shore
 Where breaks no billow, where no tempests roar,
 Lulled by the pleasant voice of that bright main
 With skies of blue for ever arching o'er,
 We'll meet again.

They are not lost—they've only gone before,
 Grief lies behind, and Home laments no more
 Her broken chain.
 There, where new fields invite us to explore,
 We'll meet again.

The vessel nears those green and sunny lands!
Hark to the voices! lo! the waving hands
That bid us come.

They waft a welcome to their long-lost friends,
They call us to the place where trial ends,
And we poor wanderers find at last a home.
There, where there is no words for grief, or pain,
We've met! we've met! to part no more again.

SPRIG XII.—GLIMPSES OF NITHSDALE AND ANNANDALE.

BOWLING along from "Edina, Scotia's darling seat," behind four bay thoroughbreds. Say what you like about the undeniable comforts of the "train," but the "tally-ho" was the real thing for a sporting man, and I often see its well-appointed "team" racing through my dreams—not, be it observed, a grisly nightmare, but a fast-flying vision of sleek-coated "steeds of fire." Away past "Habbie's Howe," scene of that most graceful of all pastorals, *The Gentle Shepherd*, the blithe, winsome child of the Theocritus of Scotland. Onward by "Cleikum Inn," savoury with the pleasing memory of "Meg Dodds" and her steaming "cockie-leckie." By the electric touch of a little "palm oil" we coax the driver to lend us the "ribbons," and another mile per hour is added to our speed. A lurch! caused by one of the leaders setting his foot upon a rolling stone, and three plethoric elderly gentlemen, with ditto stout ladies to match, are very nearly brought to grief, "I say, driver," roars out a red-faced specimen of the aldermanic type, "if you don't instantly take the reins from that reckless boy, I'll report you at headquarters." The "ribbons" were ruefully resigned, the purple-nosed "Mister Weller" resumed the direction, and the foam-flecked steeds—glad of a change of Phaetons—brought us more soberly to our journey's end, without one broken neck. Writing on board of the *Iona*, cleaving the billows at the rate of twenty knots an hour, I think

that I am again "tooling" the nags down the beautiful pastoral "Vale of Dalvene," till I find myself at the hospitable roomy Manse of "Closeburn," now tenanted by a brother of long-lost college friends; and a shade of tender melancholy steals over my spirit, as I recall the days, "to memory dear," when, a vagrant dreamy boy, I wandered along the heath-clad slopes of Queensberry Hill, or cast my flies on the waters of the "winding Nith," the Caple, the Cample, and the picturesque Creehope. This world-known stream bounds, foams, and rushes through the awful, ghastly gorge, where Scott conceals the fanatic Burley, and represents him in his gloomy den, first fighting with the devil, and thereafter seeking to fight with Morton, because he would not aid the "Covenant." Oh! how the days of my boyhood flow back upon me, a grey-haired man, and bring back the clustering locks and rosy cheeks of other times. But, thanks to a kind Providence, I am still possessed of robust health, and the power of feeling the blessing of Nature in her various moods. The mellow notes of the blackbird, the more intricate trills of the mavis, and the ecstatic raptures of the laverock, singing at the sun-gates of the east, have still the same old charms for me; and, if I am, like all others of my kind, getting old in years, I am yet young in spirit, and far from showing the "white feather," although the "frosty pow" of Burns has taken the place of the auburn curls. With what pensive pleasure do I look back to the delightful days spent by the Nith! Sir Charles Stuart Menteith was more than kind to me,—sending his keeper to guide my boat on the lake, over which the shadow of "Wallace's Tower" hangs, and where huge pike were wont to harbour beneath the white lilies and the spiky sedges. Well do

I remember "Wallace Hall," where boys were flogged and fledged under the rod of old Doctor Mundell, and thereafter under the tuition of the accomplished Dr Ramage. Well do I remember the genial, rubicund countenance of the pastor, Dr Bennet, who was "bon-homie" itself, and whose father was one of the finest oriental scholars of his day. Well do I remember reading on the panes of the windows of the bedroom, specially kept for Burns on his excise-rounds, verses which had all his genius, but which were cut out from their place by the baronet, and only exposed to friends, on account of that fierce satire and reckless indelicacy which too often disfigured the poetry of this erring child of genius. Well do I remember the clear, cold well, in which, after a night of frolic, he was wont to cool his feverish lips and throbbing head, as he went his rounds on his stout-barrelled cob.

Without the slightest spark of clerical prudery, I own that the first long poem which dwelt in my infant memory was *Tam o' Shanter*,—a composition of mingled mirth, satire, beauty, and sublimity altogether without a rival,—and I remember that a horrified clerical compatriot of my father seriously warned him about the upbringing of his only child. That prophetic gentleman, I happen to know, was very successful in *emptying a church*, and I am proud to say that the admirer of Robbie Burns has, somehow or other, "by hook or by crook," *filled three "creels."*

And this reminds me of a good anecdote concerning the late Alexander Russel, of the *Scotsman*, and a Free Kirk pastor. Editor whipping the Devon, where I often fished when my friend, Wattie Grieve, the hospitable, lived at the "Castle." Up comes a dapper son of the church, and accosts the angler in wading-

stockings and weather-battered wide-awake. "I believe, sir, that I have the honour of addressing the great Mr Russel, of the Scottish *Times*." Returns the piscator—"I don't know about the 'honour,' as you call it; however, I'm Sandy Russel, of the *Scotsman*, at your service. But don't you do something in this line?" "Oh! no," grimly responds the annoyed divine, 'I have more solemn things to attend to—*I fish for souls*.'" "Well then," quoth the very-ready angler,—greatest journalist of his day,—“You are hardly an expert hand at the trade; for I looked into your 'creel' last Sabbath, *and there were very few in it!*” Exit the disgusted parson, not quite so politely as he entered, and the chuckling joker resumed his sport, and filled his *creel*.

One day, riding near the aforesaid well, a companion asked Burns what he thought was the best verse he ever wrote, when, rising in his stirrups, he exclaimed—

"I ha'e been blithe wi' comrades dear,
 I ha'e been merry drinking,
 I ha'e been joyful gathering gear,
 I ha'e been happy thinking;
 But a' the pleasures e'er I saw,
 Though doubled three times fairly,
 That blessed hour was worth them a',
 Among the rigs o' barley!"

A vision rises up before me of a very different well on the shores of the Solway — "The Brow Well." There, having quaffed a morning quaigh of the sparkling crystal water, according to wont, sits a worn, wasted man, gazing wistfully across the fast-flowing waves towards the majestic mountains of Skiddaw and Glaramara. That wayside dreamer is the dying Bard of

Nithsdale, whose sands of life are fast running down, while his once robust vigour is ebbing rapidly away, like the racing salt billows, upon which he looks wearily for the last time. The cool, clear "Brow Well" is there as of yore, but the pilgrim-poet has passed into the land of seraph-song and "living water." Once, when a boy, passing along a street of the fair city of Dumfries, not unlike the more beautiful city of the North which bears the same well-known name, I expressed a wish to my kind friend, the late Dr Bennet, that I might be able to see "bonnie Jean," the widow of Burns, who was then nearing her ninetieth year. "There she is!" cried out the good Doctor, and, looking up to an open window, beside which she was sitting, there indeed was the aged dame, with her placid face, full dark eyes,—in which the sun of existence was setting,—and her wealth of hair as white as the snow-drift. Perhaps the reader may have heard how she once said to a prying tourist, who paid her an ill-timed visit, and asked for a relic of the bard, "Weel, then, ye maun tak' mysel', for 'deed, sir, I'm thinking that I'm the only relic noo left." He may also know that, when Scotland, in a frenzy of remorse for the lost man whom her magnates once used so cruelly, proposed to raise a noble monument to her famous poetic son, the widow exclaimed—"*Puir Robbie, ye asked them for bread, and they gi'e ye a stane!*"

Not far from the "Brow Well" we come to a scene of surpassing interest—Caerlaverock Castle—the Ellangowan of that most perfect, we think, of all novels—*Guy Mannering*. Those two greatest of Scotland's literary sons, Burns and Scott—the one supreme in song, the other in fiction—once met when Burns was starrin' it in Edinburgh. Scott, then a boy, was

struck with the conversation and appearance of the man, who,

“ In glory and in joy, followed his plough
Upon the mountain side.”

“ I have since then,” he leaves on record, “ seen the most remarkable men of my day, but I never saw such an eye in a human head—it literally *glowed*.” A question arose concerning a ballad, and no one could tell what it exactly was, or to whom belonging. Trembling with modesty, little Walter Scott said :—“ I know it, and it was written by ”—I forget the author’s name—and repeated the first verse. Burns looked at him earnestly and exclaimed—“ Mair will be heard about that laddie yet.” But here, by the double-moated Caerlaverock, which stood the cannon of Cromwell, we conjure up the spectres of Dick Hatteraick, Dominic Sampson, Lawyers Pleydell and Glossin, Dandie Dinmont, and that Gipsy Queen of all time, the weird Meg Merrilees. And, by all that is uncanny, here comes a real, pure Gitana, with step as lithe as the panther, and hair like wing of the raven by tempest wet, and at her heels a boy of the Egyptian blood, glossy of curl, brown of cheek, sparkling of eye, fleet of foot as the “ dun deer,” and singing like the laverock overhead—

“ Winnowing blithe with dewy wings
In morning’s rosy eye.

THE GIPSY BOY.

BLITHELY sings the gipsy boy ;
Care nor sorrow knoweth he.
Blessings on thy brow of joy,
And thy dark eye full of glee !

Bleak the blast, and murky midnight
 Soon shall fold the world in shade,
 Sheltering hedge, or ferny hillside,
 There thy lonely couch is made !

Heaven protect thee, houseless being !
 Father, mother, hast thou none—
 None on earth to bid thee welcome ?
 None to claim thee for a son ?

Sister, brother, is there no one
 With a heart that beats for thine ?
 Stars of heaven ! on such a lone one
 Seldom, seldom do ye shine.

Hark ! again his song is ringing
 On the night-breeze, clear and shrill ;
 'Tis my faith that richer mortals
 Bear a heavier load of ill.

Heaven dispenseth wealth of pleasure
 To the humblest of our kind ;
 One is poor with golden treasure,
 One is rich with peace of mind.

'Mid the blast an Arm upholds thee,
 In the dark an Eye surveys ;
 Brightly, kindly, still before thee,
 Burns a lamp in all thy ways.

He who feeds the wand'ring raven,
 Robes the lily of the field,
 His compassion is thy haven,
 His omnipotence thy shield.

Dews and rains at night may wet thee :
 Churlish man may prove unkind ;
 Providence will ne'er forget thee,
 Tempering to thy strength the wind.

Take an alms—'tis freely given,
 Which is donor, who can tell?
 'Tis perchance the voice of heaven
 Pleads, lone boy! in thee so well.

Mortals, in the days departed,
 Angels unawares have fed;
 Nor in vain upon the waters
 Cast their charitable bread.

Holy Writ proclaims it better
 To bestow than to receive.
 Homeless boy! I'm twice thy debtor,
 For I both accept and give.

There goes a lugger out there, rounding "Warrock-head," and firing a salute. Can it be Dirk and a ghostly crew once more ploughing the waters that closed over the old daring bark? Is that the wanderer, "Brown," pleading for the venerable ruin, which something within tells him is not a new acquaintance? And is that lay, which the swarthy gipsy woman is singing, the mystic rhymes of Meg when she chants that

"Bertram's might and Bertram's right
 Shall meet on Ellangowan's height."

Musing to-day beside that regal ruin, the days of other years come up before me, when I was rich in a dear companion, who will no longer ramble by my side, bearing half of my cares, and enhancing all my pleasures. It was then that I passed so many delightful hours by the banks of the Annan, which, on a smaller scale, reminds me so much of my own native Tay. The proprietors of Dumfriesshire are proverbial for their hospitality, and total absence of that stand-offishness, for which many magnates of the land are more remark-

able than agreeable. I enjoyed the angling-right of about eight miles of the Annan, beginning at the quaint old town, which is redolent of the memories of *Red-gauntlet*, and that most eccentric of eloquent preachers, Edward Irvine, whose house is still pointed out in a narrow street. He had been assistant to Dr Chalmers, and once, when in London, took the great divine to see the poet of *The Ancient Mariner*, Coleridge. Chalmers liked not his talk, denouncing it as too dreamy, upon which Irvine exclaimed—"You Scotsmen wish to grasp an idea, just as a butcher handles a fat ox; while, for my part, I love to see an idea looming through the mist!" "That may be," replied the Doctor, "but Coleridge's conversation, as you call it—I call it rhapsody—would have been pronounced 'buff' by my douce uncle Tammie."

The Annan is good for salmon and first-rate for *herling*—the *whitling* of the Tay—and glorious sport have I had among them. By the friendly permission of the Diroms, and the Murrays of Murraythwaite, I could fish the Annan as far up as the stately pile of Hoddam Castle, with its massive oaken doors, and its grand old tower, which commands a prospect of varied beauty and magnificence. Many a day, too, have I spent on the pleasant banks of the Kirtle, rendered sadly classic by the ballad concerning the murder of "Fair Helen of Kirkconnel Lee," and more grimly by Bonshaw, the "Peelhouse" of Irvine, styled the "bloody Bonshaw," of reiving times. Many a well-remembered hour have I spent amid the grassy holms of that stream, as it meanders through the beautiful park of "Mossknowe,"—the seat of the noble family of the ancient Graemes. The stately old Colonel is now laid low, but is still represented by more than one branch of that goodly

tree, which has flourished in the breath of many centuries, There, also, is the grey tower of Stapleton, embedded picturesquely amid the sumptuous rooms of a modern mansion, wherein I often enjoyed the friendship of Mr Critchly and his most agreeable lady, when, upon several occasions, I was residing with my warm-hearted namesake, John Anderson, in the hospitable manse of Dornoch. Visions of those lightsome days rise out of the mists of the Past, and enwrap the spirit in a soft pleasing melancholy.

THE PAST.

WHEN the moonlight of Memory steals o'er the scene,
 The phantoms of pleasure gone by
 Flit past, and recall the old things that have been,
 When the cheek had a bloom, and the eye was as keen
 As the falcon's that sweeps o'er the sky.

And yet, though the Past must a sadness impart,
 Of its teachings no man should complain.
 The sources of thought are of use to the heart,
 And I feel, through the tear recollection will start,
 There are days we should live o'er again.

Thought hovers still about these twin dales, where much of my thoughtless, but happy boyhood was spent. A lovely glimpse of Nithsdale comes before my vision, and I see once more the ducal glories of Drumlanrig. The stately pile speaks of the classic taste of Inigo Jones—represented in the metropolis by Heriot's Hospital—sits enthroned among groves and gardens of surpassing beauty, and listens, like a queen, to the “lay” of that old minstrel, the wandering Nith. This

noble Castle has for its occupant a noble man in the highest sense of the words—one who sees in his neighbour his second self, and who is always alive to the reasonable claims of a brother—a liberal in reality, for he has the manly candour to own that it is *possible* for him to be wrong, while another may be *right!* Could I meet liberalism of this character, I would take it gladly to my bosom, and vow to “love, honour, and obey.”

Many a time I have roamed through the gardens, fished in the streams, and seen long ago, in my early boyhood, the ponds wherein the late Mr Shaw carried on his experiments concerning the salmon tribe. At this date I am compelled to confess that we have made little or no advances on the discoveries of that sensible and acute experimentalist. We trace the parr to the smolt—the smolt to the grilse—the grilse to the salmon—and there, I suspect, we pause. The vague trash talked and printed about the lordly fish is hardly endurable. Why, look at the fish-ponds of the Old French Châteaux, and you are brought to the confession that pisciculture was known better in bygone days than in these modern times. The French knew how to raise trout—they read us a rebuke concerning oysters—and, if we had not Waterloo to fall back upon, we should be woefully beaten. We are killing the infant lobster, partan, and oyster, and the impatient appetite of the gastronomic Briton is dooming to death “the goose that lays the golden egg.” Johnny Crapeaud is able to give us a lesson or two.

But why am I prosing about shell-fish in these classic regions, where the ghosts of the Covenanters hover around us, and their fiery spirits are abroad on the gale! The murmurs of the Nith and kindred streams

seem to perpetuate those olden strains, that swell in stern melody from moorland and moss-hag,

“Where Cameron’s sword and his Bible are seen,
Engraved on the stone where the heather grows green.”

And I seem to hear the hoarse voices of the waves of the Solway, drowning the accents of praise which float to the throne of God from the pale lips of the girl, chained to the stake by the savage laird of Lagg, and resolved on giving up her young life rather than renounce her dear-loved creed! Dreaming of these bloody episodes in controversial times, we are wafted away to the lonely Kirk of Irongrey, where the moss-grown tombstones breathe of “Old Mortality.” Again we behold the quaint figure, with the ancient white pony, deepening the moss-grown letters on the stones beneath which lies the dust of those who “never feared the face of man.” The “rude forefathers of the *hamlet*” are there; and, if sincerity of purpose, and staunch adherence to a heartfelt cause merit remembrance, the graves of the moorland are noble as the tombs of kings.

No good is unmingled with evil, and in religious struggles more especially the passions of the human heart play their part; but it must be admitted of the sons of the Covenant that, if they *had their opinions*, they had also the *courage of their opinions*, and dignified their cause by the devotion which they brought to its support. They may, as at Philiphaugh and elsewhere, have betrayed the passions of humanity, but let us bear in mind, these passions had reckless provocation, and, in the death of many a humble Covenanter we may discern another spirit, like that of the Prophet Elijah, soaring upward to heaven in a chariot of flame.

We have much reason to be thankful that those days of

intolerance have passed away, like some hideous nightmare, and that we can now enjoy the calm of our Sabbaths and the wisdom of our Bibles "with none to hurt, or make us afraid." It was not always so. A vision of a dark age comes over me, like a lightning-charged cloud, and I see an oppressed man wrestling with foes without and doubts and fears within. No earnest struggle is ever in vain. The throes of that spiritual agony proved the birth of the Reformation.

CHAINED TO THE WALL.

[In the Monastery of Erfurth, Luther discovered a copy of the Bible fastened to a wall of the library by an iron chain. He read till his own soul was free, and determined that the Word should be free also.]

CHAINED to the wall! the blessed Page
 Was long in slumber bound;
 It had a voice for every age,
 Yet gave no sound.

Within it glowed a living light
 Sent forth for all—
 Yet round it closed the deepest night—
 Chained to the wall!

It had a power to touch the heart,
 A ray to light the mind—
 Yet long it burned, a lamp apart,
 In gloom confined.

Thou hast a cure for every ill,
 A balm for every pain—
 But what is thy most *loving will*,
 Bound by that chain!

But now a hand—a human hand—
Has rescued Thee ;
Cast to the dust that iron band,
And thou art free !

Free to proclaim the words that light
The wanderer's way—
Bright stars upon the brow of night,
They speak of Day.

Yes ! long wert thou a prisoner
In dark captivity—
But now, like heaven's own blessed air,
Thy wing is free :

Free as the wind to waft that sound
Which comforts all—
Souls once, like thee, in prison bound
By Satan's thrall :

Free to console the saddest heart,
That throbs with grief,
And to the sinner's sorest smart
To bring relief.

Fountain of Life ! thy living waves
Can never fail ;
For great is Truth—the Truth that saves—
And shall prevail.

No time shall stop thee on thy course,
Till suns have ceased to roll,
And thou hast raised beyond the curse
Each ransomed soul.

Luther ! the world will long confess
Its debt to thee,
And long the fearless hand will bless
That set the Bible free.

A more pleasing vision steals upon me, and I see the romantic Esk (water) leaving the misty moorlands of Ettrick Pen, and seeking its way to the Solway, up whose far-stretching estuary the "white horse" races at headlong speed, and warns the loiterer to quit the sands that are bare one moment and buried the next under the briny surges. Memories of Redgauntlet rush over the mind like the rising tide, and we see the gallant black charger of the stalwart Herries, the "Jumping Jenny" of Nanty Ewart, hear the jolly fiddle of the vagrant blind Willie, and fancy that the evening psalm of the hypocritical Truepenny, after he had "sanded the sugar" and "watered the whisky," is mingling its quavering notes with the wanderer's more pleasing strain. Again we behold the battlements of Branksholm rising on the ferny hill-side, and *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*—unrivalled of all weird border songs—peoples the solitude with the knights and dames of other days. Visions of Border raids take possession of the imagination, and many a wild moss-trooper rides past, driving his "booty"—a rude soul who held with the famous Rob Roy that

"They should take who have the power,
And they should keep who can."

One of the Deloraine type, who

"Little recked of tide or time,
Moonless midnight, or matin prime."

The Esk runs a glorious race over heathery moors, and through bold rocky gorges, until its fretted waters sleep for a season among the grassy holms of the far-famed "Cannobie lea," where we fancy we can once more witness the "riding and racing" of the olden time, when

the "fair bride of Netherby" was danced away on the mettled steed of "the young Lochinvar." Here there are splendid stretches of water, where salmon and sea-trout invite the angler to try his skill, and in the snug hostelrie of the district, shaded by its noble beeches, a good dinner may be had, prepared by the buxom Meg Dodds of the place, and served up by the handsome, dark-eyed Mary, whose lively talk and winning smiles add greatly to the fare, and cause us to vow in our hearts that there is "nothing like angling," and that "Cannobie lea" has not in modern days lost its attractions. But a saddened memory steals over the scene, with the softly-falling night, for no longer do I see the talented minister and his lovely wife, one of those old and valued friends who imparted a grace and a pleasure to life, who sleep beneath the mossy turf of "the silent city of the dead,"— and, loitering pensively beside their place of rest, once more the "pleasant thoughts" of the morning have ended by bringing the "sad thoughts to the mind."

A closing glimpse of Annandale steals upon me through the gloaming of memory. I saw once long ago, I see now, that fine silvery link of the river chain that enfolds in its gleam the emerald meadows and massive pile of Hoddam, carrying back the mind to the fourteenth century, when the family of the regal Bruce was a power in the land. Like the solid structure of more modern days Bruce was a man "who stood four-square to every wind that blew." My reminiscence, however, is with *smaller men*. Two sporting youths, with *full barrels* but *empty brains*, meet a herd laddie, and see in him *fair game* for their chaff. "Well, boy, what is your name!" "Willie Laidlaw, yer honours." "Of course you belong to a Sabbath School?" "Oo aye, gentlemen." "Well, then,

my man, can your wisdom tell us the way to heaven?" "Ay, your honour, just up that brae and past that tower." "Faith," says one of them, who had the only spark of sense belonging to the pair, "that laddie means something, so let us see." Up they go—reach the summit of the hill, and find an old man sitting under the walls of the tower. "I say, my man, what is the name of this tower? or has it a name?" "Ay, gentlemen, that's the tower of *Repentance*." "By Jove," exclaims the owner of the modicum of sense, "that boy has scored one, and no mistake."

I need not repeat the ghastly tale that led to the erection of the tower. A sinner's hands, drenched in blood, led to the act whose every stone breathed of his *repentance*.

And now, standing on this storied spot, with the crimson sunset glorifying the blue slopes of Glaramara on the one side of the Solway and the purple peak of Criffel glowing on the other, with the white steeds of the rushing tide racing to their goal, and the dimpling waves of the Esk, hastening to meet and mingle with them, thou beauteous vale of the Annan! I bid thee good night.

SPRIG XIII.—THE TAY.

MY majestic native river! for by its shores first dawned that light, which, like all sublunary things, is now westering towards its setting.

Reader, were you ever at "Cross Macduff," standing in a "glack" which slopes gently downward to the broad waters of the noble estuary that washes, on the north side, the fertile expanse of the "Carse of Gowrie," well known in Scottish song? The "Wizard of the North," prince of fictionists, paid a visit to this place which his genius has made classic, and gazing, with his deep grey eye, over the magnificent landscape that basks in regal beauty beneath, exclaimed—

"Yon is the Tay, rolled down from Highland hills,
That rests his waves, after so rude a race,
In the fair plains of Gowrie."

Leaning on the rough stone—once crowned by a cross, which was demolished by the lawless rabble that followed Knox to St Andrews, bent on the same unhallowed work which they began in Perth—the gifted bard breaks forth—

"Deem it not a fragment,
Detached by tempest from the neighbouring hill:
It was the pedestal on which of yore a Cross was reared,
Carved o'er with words that foiled philologists—
And the events it did commemorate
Were dark, remote, and indistinguishable
As were the mystic characters it bore."

At one time that Cross formed a sanctuary to which, like a "City of Refuge," the manslayer could retreat,

and, if within the ninth degree of kin to the reigning Thane, obtained pardon and absolution, after paying a tribute to the ruling power. Were it not for the intervening whin-clad hill, the visitor might see, to the east, the "Peel-house" wherein resided for centuries the scions of one of Scotland's most powerful and memorable families, the gifted and gallant Balfours. Sir James was Secretary to Charles the Second, and wrote the famous *Annals* by which he is still remembered as an author. One of his brothers founded the "Surgeons' Hall" in Edinburgh; a second rode over to the Palace of Falkland, at the head of three hundred belted kinsmen, to pay fealty to King Jamie, that mixture of frolic and ferocity, who wrote facetious verse, and did to death, as I hold, the noble and accomplished Earl of Gowrie and his young, blooming brother, jealous of the varied learning and just popularity of the great Provost of Perth. Anything but a blessing on the souls of those pig-headed Bailies who pulled down the grand old "Gowrie House," uprooted the "Monk's Tower," and demolished the spacious gardens, where once gallant knights paid courtesy to lovely dames of "high degree"; and then crowned their Vandalism by erecting on the site of these that specimen of supreme ugliness, the "County Prison." A large building is lately finished on the site of the gardens, prosaically called "The New Public Hall," painfully suggestive of another kind of "public." Why did not the present reigning city magnates christen it "The Gowrie Hall," thus doing something to perpetuate a sacred historic memory, and to atone, however slightly, for the Gothism of the Town Councillors of other days? Doubtless among those defunct "burghal bodies" were some belonging to the family of the "Bob Jonsons"—men who "made

their mark" in their own way of destructive vulgarity. A third, of the "house of Denmiln," the residence of the Balfours, perished at "Cross Macduff" under the sword of a Crichton of Rankeillor, who pleaded and secured "right of sanctuary"; a fourth, a son of the Church, sleeps quietly by the waves of the holy Lindores; and the last of the race rode forth one misty morning on a black steed, and never more returned.

DENMILN; OR, THE LAST OF THE BALFOURS.

IN sorrow and in silence
 I gaze on yonder pile,
 Around whose mouldering battlements
 The beams of evening smile;
 For smile they ne'er so brightly,
 They never can restore
 The lustre of a noble home
 Renowned in days of yore.

Denmiln! upon thy battlements
 The bearded thistle waves;
 Thy halls with moss are carpeted,
 Thy sons are in their graves;
 For one lies low on Flodden field,
 And one, on yonder hill,
 Poured out his life in sternest strife
 With the dark-browed Makgill.

And one, Lindores! is sleeping
 On thy green sequestered side,
 Calm contrast to his living day
 Of chivalry and pride,
 When three hundred gallant kinsmen,
 To Falkland's royal seat,
 He led to kneel, in tested steel,
 At the Scottish Monarch's feet.

And one has left his memory
 Amid the pillared stone,
 Where Science, robed in mercy,
 Sits meekly on her throne,
 Dispensing life to languor,
 And pleasantness to pain,
 And lighting up the pallid cheek
 With Hope's bright smiles again.

Or amid the sunny gardens
 That bloom along the steep,
 Between Dun-Eden's ancient towers
 And the never-resting deep,
 When the odour-laden breezes
 O'er the blossoms lightly skim,
 Some heart, alive to beauty,
 May gently muse of him.*

The mind that loveth olden days
 Will long delight to dwell,
 Sir James! upon the storied page
 Of thy quaint chronicle,
 Where, like a place of burial,
 Amid the past we tread,
 And gather sober wisdom
 From the legends of the dead.

Last of a fated family!
 No marble marks thy grave.
 Say! dost thou sleep on field of war?
 Or 'neath the moaning wave?
 Or did'st thou slowly, sadly fall,
 By want's remorseless tooth,
 Far from the sheltering walls of home,
 The genial scenes of youth?

* The old Botanic Gardens were due to him.

Perchance the base assassin's steel
Laid low a loyal line ;
Perchance his bones gleam drearily
From some long-abandoned mine ;
But no kindred eye beheld him
From that morning, chill and grey,
When, mounted on his sable steed,
He slowly rode away.

Yet, beside the peasant's hearth,
When the nights were long and cold,
And the blaze was bickering merrily,
I have often heard it told,
How, amid the wars of Flanders,
There rode a knightly form
On a steed as black as midnight,
And headlong as the storm !

His story and his lineage
Confided he to none ;
His sword was ever flashing first
Where fearless deeds were done.
No dangers ere could daunt him,
No praises e'er could cheer ;
He seemed to battle hard with Fate
For the favour of a bier !

One evening, when the sunset
Fell gloomily and red
On a cumbered field of carnage,
Piled high with gory dead,
The stranger and his sable steed
Lay rigid on the heath ;
And whether crime or care were his—
The secret slept in death !

I must be indulged with one reminiscence of the dear old manse, wherein I spent so many of those joyous days, which are now bright things of the past. We had an old man-servant—Tom Clow—who took that interest in the family, which now belongs, I am sorry to say, to the olden times. If you rejoiced, so did he—if you wept, he was ready to do the same. In point of fact, he identified himself with “the family.” If he had got his dismissal for some scrape, I feel assured he would have answered in the words of the *Old Joe*, “Deed, doctor, if ye dinna ken when ye have a gude servant, at ony rate I ken when I have a gude maister.” But he was a “fixture.” Tammas was fond of telling stories, but, like many, perhaps myself, was not the right man in the right place. I see him yet when, like “Jamie, he dived in the yaird,” leaning on his spade, and saying, “Weel, Doctor,” or “Weel, John, I’ll tell ye a regular farce—man, it’s laughable.” The story “drew its slow length along,”—the point was carefully missed out,—and, as it would have been a social sin not to have laughed at all, we laughed *at* the oracle of the manse, if not *with* him. Once, however, he hit the nail on the head by sheer force of simplicity. I was licensed! All Fife in a tremble of expectation! Nature held her breath! Driven to Abdie by Tammas—strange enough where my father in the auld kirk, and I in the new, preached our first sermons—came home—and, I suppose, naturally refreshed. Tammas, with curry-comb in one hand and brush in the other, and dun Donald, the Norwegian, getting a dressing for the night, My father—rather inclined to what is called “dignity,” but as worthy a man as ever did justice to a good dinner, a rare bottle of old port, or preached a sermon up to either—standing by. Myself round the corner, well

knowing that something was sure to follow. "Well, Thomas, been a fine day. Pony looking well. Good audience? Excuse a parent's anxiety, but, Thomas, how did my son do?" Thomas looks warily east and west, to see that no one was within hearing of a *fact* which might possibly endanger the equilibrium of the globe, and then, drawing near to my expectant parent,— "Weel, doctor, John's an orator!" Father explodes—a dram called for to reward the discoverer of a new comet in the theological firmament. I draw the veil of Timanthes over the feelings of the new-fledged *orator*.

I once played Old Tom "a plisky." He was wont to drive me to St Andrews, where I was a student, stopping at a little village, Osnaburgh, beyond Cupar, and leaving me to walk the remainder of the way. As we went, being well known on the road, I cried out to the toll-keepers, "Pay coming back." But "a regular farce" *was* in store. Gave Tom an extra toothful. Bade him good-bye, with, I confess, a tear in my eye, when I thought that he was returning to the old manse, and I leaving it behind, for studies—well, the least said about them the better. "The clachan's yill had made him canty," nay, it "sae reamed in Tammie's noddle" that, once off, "he caredna tolls a bodle." On he drove, like another John Gilpin—only Gilpin was *on* a horse, and Tam *behind* one. Toll-men stood aghast—turnpike gates flew open, as if "The wild Huntsman" himself was riding the gale. Cupar reached, "sweetie-stands" bowled over like nine-pins, bulbous Bailies reeling to the wall, old women with fruit-barrows, and young women with children, flee for shelter to the pavement. "Away! away! and still away!" and the modern Tam bade fair to outrival the ancient one of Kirk Alloway. In fact, he was the very "Mazceppa"

of the manse—and Donald and he “away! away!”
“On, on, they dash, torrents less rapid and less rash!”

It was a long ride, but next day my worthy father had a longer bill, and my allowance was stopped, Jehu’s having been extra.

And now, farewell, old happy home, with the fields on which my boyhood sported with the walnut tree once hanging its now vanished branches over the *low-ceiled* dining-room window, with the cherry-trees, also gone, on which I shot field-fares for a pie, as good as that of the twenty-four blackbirds—I bid ye all a warm, heart-felt farewell!

But now let us “take the wings of the morning” and be off to the head-sources of the Tay, which, a mighty giant beneath the shadow of “Cross Macduff,” plays and prattles far away among the blooming heather in all the happy beauty of merry childhood. The infancy of the Tay—emphatically “the water”—is to be found among the moss-hags of the “Black Mount.” By and by his boyhood disports itself among the pebbles of the Dochart, under the shadow of the pyramidal Ben More, and his manhood is attained when he rushes forth from the waters of Loch Tay, like a giant refreshed with copious draughts of “mountain-dew.” Many a glorious day have I spent on the bosom of this splendid Loch, enhanced by the genial company of many valued friends, all brethren of the rod and reel. Last April, at Killin, I enjoyed excellent sport among excellent “old friends,” my largest fish being thirty-seven pounds, and my smallest fully eighteen pounds. The monster was killed by bright Gracie Stuart (she can drive a pair of posters with any whip at Killin), sister of Mrs Stuart, the kind landlady of the hotel, where one always feels so much “at home.” The girl-angler was

fishing our boat, awaiting our arrival, and brought the mighty fish to book in *twenty minutes!* whereas I have seen many a nervous, excitable man who would have taken over an hour, perhaps two, and lost him after all. This, I was told, was the largest salmon killed in Loch Tay since, three years ago, I polished off a thirty-five-pounder in about the same time. This was done when I was at Kenmore, where, in the delightful hotel, Miss Jessie Munro and her attentive sisters make you forget that you are under a roof which is not your own.

One day, when fishing near Bolfracks, and in the act of landing a pound-trout, I heard a voice behind—"Have ye a line for the watter?" Looking back, I saw a stalwart Celt, and said—"Of course, and a very good line it is—how could I be here without one?" "Put have ye a line for fushing?" "Most certainly, and if you wish to have a look at it you will see that it is half-hair, half-silk, although I prefer hair entirely." You know Sidney Smith's joke about getting the same into Scotch brains. I saw the "danger-signal" rising on the high cheek-bone and in the keen grey eye, so handed the questioner the Earl's courteous note—or "line." In one instant the atmosphere changed, and an honest horny fist was grasped in mine. The appreciative reader knows already how the affair ended—was it a "tram"?—and the grant of the *man* was thereafter more unlimited than that of the *master*. An angler accosted me—"You are fishing with too small flies." "Indeed," said I, "let us compare creels." His had one, large, it is true,—mine had nine—one over two and a half pounds—taken with the "black spider." The *size* of the *river* does not, as many think erroneously, regulate the *size of the fly*—the species of the trout does that. The "yellow," whether in little May or "lordly

Tay," takes the same lure, as a rule,—not, perhaps, without exceptions,—but still the rule.

But I must not spin a yarn as long as the Tay. All the reaches of this magnificent river have I fished with more or less success, and now find myself beside the "Linn of Campsie," where the wretched "Conacher" put an end to his burden of existence; and thereafter I stand by the North Inch of Perth, where the sons of Torquil so devotedly perished to hide the cowardice of the man whom they could neither inspire nor save.

The sight of this splendid plain brings before me Sir Walter Scott, in my opinion the greatest poet of *description* and *action*. Our Poet Laureate is a spirit robed in the beauty of graceful and delicate poetry, but the fire of *action* glows not through his verse. In the *Idylls of the King*, beautiful for word-painting, his doughty knights fight like *wooden men upon pasteboard steeds*. There is no *life, fire, or energy*, either in man or horse. But Scott! *all is fire and stir and action*. Take his "Battle of the Clans" on the North Inch—his Flodden Field, in *Marmion*—his Bannockburn, in *The Lord of the Isles*—the lists of *Ivanhoe*—the duel of Roderick Dhu and Fitz-James in *The Lady of the Lake*, most easy and graceful and graphic of all descriptive poems—or the fight detailed to the dying Roderick in his cell in Stirling Castle—and oh! what a reel, and a rush, and a tempest of *action*, wherein you see the *war-horse* with his "neck clothed in thunder," hear "the shouting of the captains," and behold, with a shudder, the "garments rolled in blood." A friend, with more love than wisdom, asked me why I have not written about Loch Leven and the streams and lakes around Callander? "Save us from our friends!" Write about Loch Leven! where the ill-fated—and, I believe, *innocent*

—Mary Stuart rises up before us in all the calmness of regal majesty, and in all the perfection of female beauty. Write about the “Trossachs!” where the band of the gallant Roderick start, like martial phantoms, from the heather, and the fiery cross is carried, on flying feet, from glen to glen and from sheiling to sheiling, till “the heather is all ablaze.” No! were a pigmy, like myself, to make the vain and rash attempt, well might it be said that fools rush in where Scott was wont to tread! And now let us close with

A DAY AMONG THE WHITLINGS.

There is something imposing about “salmon fishing.” The fish himself is the monarch of the stream, the rod and tackle with which he is “brought to grass” are large and strong, the “run” is exciting, and often exhaustive to the angler as well as his prey; and to the man who has been pleased with his “creel” of burn-trout, exulting over a one and a half pounder, the slayer of salmon seems like another Jack the Giant Killer. But, as there are amid the works of Nature quiet walks fully as pleasing and lasting in their pleasure as the bold mountain’s brow or the headlong cataract, so there are humble sports with “rod and line” quite as fascinating as the capture of the lordly salmon. Among these I am acquainted with few more enjoyable than sea-trout or whitling fishing; and I venture to say from experience, that, although these fish are small compared with the *Salar*, to make a “good basket” will tax the patience of the angler and his delicacy of angling almost as much as the slaughter of the other. On the banks of the Tay and Earn the whitling is generally taken from half a pound to one pound; for his size he gives excellent

sport, and of all fish none are more likely to give the angler the slip. If only flesh-hooked it is two to one against your bringing him to creel; for no sooner does he feel the barb than he commences a series of violent somersaults which often end provokingly in his escape. In fishing for the whitling I have never, upon the whole, found a more effective lure than a small size of "Brown's Phantom Minnow"; but when the river is densely stocked with small fry, and the whitling gorged with these to repletion, it will be found advantageous to offer him a variety of food, and tempt him with a moderate-sized grilse fly.

On a fine breezy March morning, the tide being turned (an essential condition in whitling fishing here), I started for a day's sport from Perth Harbour. Going down the Willowgate—the narrowest branch of the Tay, which is split into two streams by a pretty island—I put on a couple of minnows and began operations. One was a "Phantom," the other an imitation of the trout-parr in moulded tin; and the result left me no reason to be dissatisfied with either. Scarcely were the lines fairly in working order, swinging smoothly from side to side of the stream as the boatmen guided his craft, than whirr went the right-hand reel—another "phantom" had met with something substantial. It was not a whitling, which shows itself at once; and, pulling to shore, after some patient handling, I got into the landing-net an uncouth and hungry-looking kelt salmon, which was soon once more in his native element. On again, and speedily another whirr, this time on the left with the tin trout. The fish were evidently in a taking mood; and this was no kelt and no whitling either, but a sea-trout of pluck and size. He fought well, and had nearly given me the slip, through awkward application

of the landing-net ; but, a little care, and he lay before me in the boat, a well-made trout of good two pounds. Down stream again, with the lines working better and better with the slack tide, and in about twenty minutes, where the two streams of the Tay meet, making fine feeding-ground, both rods bent their points to the water, and two silvery little fellows spouted into the air—whitlings beyond doubt ; but we got only one of them, and that with some difficulty, the other having torn himself from the trident of the minnow, leaving behind him a memento in the shape of a piece of his gill-cover. As I slid down stream I got into still better water alongside the parks of Kinfauns Castle. Here the taking qualities of both lures were proved again and again, and it was difficult to decide which was the more effective. After bringing a few more whitlings to book, I got two very exciting “runs” in succession with two sea-trout of goodly size. Both of them, after exhausting their powers in mid stream, I “beached”—a safe practice when the fish are large and wild. One reached nearly three pounds, but was not in good condition. The other was a perfect specimen of his class, short, thick, firm, and beautifully marked, and turned the scale at two pounds easily.

I had now nearly enough of it, and resolved to “reel up,” after a few turns almost under the shadow of the stronghold of Wallace, the noble grey ruins of Elcho Castle. I had no time to indulge in dreams of the *past*, or to think about the great patriot swimming the Tay in his coat-of-mail, with his sword in his teeth ; for the whirr of the reel called me to the *present*, and warned me that action, not musing, was the thing wanted. I had a pleasant bit of sport before me ; it was no whitling that took out line so nimbly, and it was no kelt either

this time ; for the fish took up stream with fresh energy, and ended one of his bursts by springing three feet into the air ; things, both of them, not often done by kelts, these invalids naturally taking the easiest modes of procedure, and going down stream tug-tugging and jerk-jerking as they go. I saw at once that I had a "clean fish" to deal with—an uncommon thing at that place and season ; for the salmon that here escape the net are all travelling—posting upwards to their well-known habitats—and seldom pause to consider the angler's lure. I had a "clean fish" and slender tackle ; but with plenty of line it is a matter of care and patience after all, and, in a quarter of an hour, I was rewarded with a beautiful fresh-run salmon of about seven pounds, with the "sea-lice" upon him—no better certificate of character being required, as these creatures cannot live more than forty hours or so in fresh water. After this capture, I gladly reeled up, and found that both lures had done their work well, and left us in some doubt as to which was the superior. However, from after-trials in the same water, I give the preference to the "Phantom" minnow.

After the nets were off on these tidal waters I once had the good luck to kill a thirty-pound salmon, and again one of twenty pounds, on the waters of Inchyra, belonging to my brother clergyman, Mr Fleming—both fish fresh run from the sea.

The pretty old manse, from which these lines are written, with its picturesque larch, its ancient ivy-clad elm, its stately ash, and its flowering chestnuts, calls up before my mind the figure of the witty minister, whose place I now do my endeavour to fill: He was a man of quaint humour, and played the violin like another Neil Gow. His stories were innumerable, and I cannot resist

setting down one out of many. One day he had a native of the "Green Isle" putting in coals, and told the servant lassie to bring a dram to Pat. The manse Hebe, being matter-of-fact by nature, brought the "dew" in a long-stalked dram-glass, terminating in a very wee Scotch thistle. Pat eyed it with comic ruefulness of visage, tossed off the contents, and holding up the measure said, "a purty glass, your Riverince—how do they make thim things?" "Oh," replied the Pastor, "I believe they blow them." "Och, blow them, do they? Thin, by the powers, your Riverince, the man that blew this one must have been mighty short in the wind!" *A large measure* was sent for.

Not long after coming to my charge in the "fair city," I dined here with some joyous spirits, among others one of my own elders, a sturdy Highlander, of very pronounced Celtic brogue. "Why," said I, "Mr Stuart, did ye not take the son of the late minister to fill his father's shoes?" "Weel, Maister Shon, he was a prood crayter, and what do you think he said about his faither's elders? He ca'ad us a parcel o' blokeheads! Noo, Maister Shon, ye ken, he *nicht ha'e thocht it*, put he shuldna *ha'e said it!*" The old banker little knew that he was giving vent to a piece of Aristotelian philosophy which was largely adopted by "William, the Silent,"—of bloody Glencoe memory. If men would only learn when to be silent, the blunders of the world would be more easily counted.

My worthy friend had a great distrust of the medical fraternity. He said that "he was ready when his time cam—but objeckit to have his pody turned into a drug-shop. He didna deny but the doctors were goot fellows—but they had aye some pad stuff which they wantit ye to tak." How this character would have chuckled over

the following anecdote, lately told to me by a friend. A douce auld carle was ill, but, like my elder, objected to what he called "doctor's stuff." His family at length got him to see "the man of healing," who mildly said, "you are afraid of the doctors, they tell me—what ails you at them?" "Weel, then," quoth the invalid, "to tell ye the plain truth, doctor, I ha'e a strong wish to *dee a naatural* death"! Let me, however, assure my readers, in strict confidence, that those two "hoary fathers" were by no means *social atheists*. They had a creed of their own, consisting of *five articles*, "Scotch parritch, haggis, sheep's head and kail, and whusky toddy;" and they nourished the belief that these, properly consumed, would enable a man to dispense with the whole "Pharmacopœia." Quietly speaking, there may be *worse creeds*. But my creed is one of a more enlarged description. I endorse the above, but I add to it my deep respect for the Medical Profession; and the locality in which I reside entitles me to confide in its members. Perth has always been known for medical men of true science, kindness, devotedness, and great conversational powers. Doctors of the healing art see much, and have furnished to the world many of its deepest thinkers and best talkers. Never can I forget the late Dr Malcom—large of frame and large of heart, the friend as well as the physician of my family—who administered something more than drugs, of which he was sparing, and whose manly, open, cheery face, when he entered a sickroom, *was better than the best prescription*. Stern and severe when occasion called, he could be tender as the gentlest woman, and, when he passed away before the "three score and ten," many of us felt that we had lost a skilful adviser, a fast friend, and an instructive companion. The older part of the com-

munity will heartily endorse my words. A useful life never dies, and leaves the world its everlasting debtor. Good lives are the best wealth of nations.

But now, having "paid out" quite enough line, I must "reel up," and simply "hook it." Yet, ere I say good-night, let me advise the visitor to the "Fair City" to ascend the pine-clad eminence of Kinnoul, where a noble prospect rewards his brief ascent.

Lo! the "Fair City," where a fearless man
 The cause of truth and purity began—
 Knox, the rude instrument of ruder days,
 Unawed by censure and unbought by praise.
 Here rise thy Gothic glories, proud Kinfauns,
 Amid umbrageous elms and swelling lawns.
 There Elcho frowns as grimly as of yore,
 When mail-clad Wallace swam from shore to shore.
 And yonder looms the lonely spectral tower,*
 Round which the clouds of grey tradition lower ;
 While, 'mid the vale, with Earn's wanderings bright,
 The camp-crowned Moredun rears his piny height.
 There Scone, half buried 'mid the ancient trees,
 That speak of regal crowns to every breeze ;
 And near the walls that yew,† so sadly green,
 Planted and trained by Scotia's luckless Queen.
 There hoary Huntingtower,‡ like some grey shade,
 Telling of wassail wild and ruthless raid.
 Lo! green Dunsinnan rises o'er the plain,
 For Shakespeare famous and the murderous Thane,
 And yonder Birnam stands as then it stood,
 When onward marched the dark portentous "wood."
 A glorious vision of the rolling Tay,
 Leaving his mists and mountains far away—
 Like a bold chieftain, gathering from the hills
 His mingling myriads of resounding rills,
 Till, one loud voice towards the ocean hurled,
 He speaks with half the waters of a world.

* Abernethy has a round tower similar to those of Brechin and Ireland.

† Planted by Mary, Queen of Scots.

‡ The "Raid of Ruthven."

And now, as the gloaming is drawing its curtains, and I have tied up in a bouquet my *last sprig of heather*, I cannot help falling into a reverie; for there is something sad about the *last of anything*—the *last pressure of the hand* at parting—the *last word* from lips that are soon to be silent—the *last wave* of the white handkerchief, as the emigrant vessel spreads her snowy plumage to the breeze—or even the last line of a book that has been a pleasant companion, at least to the author. Drifting slowly home in the deepening twilight, I think of all that the wandering Tay has seen since he left his moist heathy bed amid

“The far-off mosses of his Highland home.”

He has seen much, had he only a tongue to tell the varied story. And I muse about a stream of more solemn importance—like himself, far-travelled, deep in experience, and upon whose sea-ward current we are all floating to the cloud-hidden and mysterious end.

THE STREAM OF LIFE.

“The thing that has been, it is that which shall be : and that which is done is that which shall be done : and there is no new thing under the sun.”

STREAM ! thou hast travelled far,
 Tell me what thou hast seen—
 'Mid trouble and toil and war
 Many a day thou hast been.

“Yes ! I have wandered long ;
 Yes ! I have wandered far.
 Ever about me throng
 Trouble and toil and war.

“Strange is the gift I bear
On to the greedy sea.
Misery, mirth, and care
Travel along with me.

“Tears, like a bitter rain,
Melt in my passing wave.
Mine is the crimson stain,
Caught from the blood of the brave.

“Over the wrecks of state
Often my tide hath rolled,
Or wafted a gorgeous freight
Of the glittering idol—gold.

“I have listened to burning vows,
Broken as soon as breathed.
I have witnessed glorious brows
Pallid when newly wreathed.

“I have seen the love of morn
Turn to noon-day hate.
I have heard the lips of scorn
Flatter the wealthy great.

“I have known the rites of Faith
Flourish and fade and change.
Nothing of life or death
Reckon I new or strange.

“Trouble and toil and care,
Battle and guile and pain—
All that my waters bear,
Was, and shall be again.

“Fruit and blossom and bud,
 Spoils of many a tree,
 Hurry along my flood,
 Down to a shoreless sea.

“*Life* is my ancient name—
Death is my ocean-goal—
 Changing, yet ever the same,
 On through the world I roll.”

As we live where neither “*look back*” nor “*stand still*” but “*forward!*” is the word of command, why should I not bring my *Rambles* to a close with a short sermon in verse?

LOT'S WIFE; OR, LOOK NOT BEHIND.

“Look not behind!” the Angel cried—
 “Salvation lies before.
 Betake thee to the mountain-side,
 And speed thy way to Zoar.
 ’Ere night, from heaven a fiery rain
 Will scourge the Cities of the Plain.”

And lo! while yet the Angel spake,
 From that black sky of doom,
 Like the darting of a wrathful snake,
 The lightning cleft the gloom,
 And smote those Cities of the Plain,
 Where Satan held his guilty reign.

Meanwhile along the mountain side
 Lot flees with anxious mind,
 And still he hears the voice that cried,
 “Speed on! look not behind.”
 And now he sees the walls of Zoar,
 And feels that safety lies before.

But, deaf to warning, weak of mind,
 And unimpressed of soul,
 Lot's wayward partner looks behind,
 Where the fiery billows roll,
 Till, caught amid the hurtling storm,
 She stands, a lone and lifeless form !

Mortal ! beware, whoe'er thou art,
 And whatsoe'er thy state.
 Resolve to act the righteous part,
 And shun the sinner's fate.
 To Zion boldly bend thy face—
 "Look not behind," but run the race.

Youth ! bright with hope, and fresh with health,
 Cast not thine eyes "behind"—
 Far in the distance gleams the wealth
 Which all who seek will find.
 Thy day is in its dawning yet—
 Work ! ere in night that day shall set.

Manhood ! in ripeness of thy powers,
 The prize lies not "behind."
 'Tis thine to crown the coming hours
 With conquests of the mind.
 "Fight the good fight" with all thy might,
 And victor stand ere falls the night.

Old age ! thy sun is almost set,
 The day is near its close :
 Yet look not back—press forward yet,
 And win well-earned repose.
 One step or two, and thine shall be
 "Honour and Immortality."

Sinner! cast not thine eyes behind,
Unless, perchance, it be
Food for *repentance* there to find,
And deep humility.
The Past, with sins of crimson dye,
Lifts an accusing voice on high.

And even thou, man of holy mind,
Cast not a backward glance.
Heaven lies *before*, and not *behind*,
And calls thee to advance.
Then run the race till won the prize
That gleams for thee in Paradise.

Mourner! that weapest o'er the bier
Where thy lost treasure lies,
Gaze forward through the blinding tear
That dims thine aching eyes.
The Lost shall meet thee in that land
Where God shall "wipe" with His own hand
The tears of all who onward press,
And seek the home where no distress
Between the soul and bliss shall stand.
There every pilgrim finds a Zoar,
Where Toil is done, and Grief is o'er,
And breaks no billow on that peaceful shore.

L'ENVOI.

THE value of a thing depends on the pleasure it imparts. To one man it appears of little or no value ; for it gives him little or no pleasure ; while to another man it is of much worth, because it pleases him much. In the pauses of an uneventful life I have enjoyed a quiet happiness in looking over the days of the past and putting these sketches together, and, if a few brother anglers have drank even a moderate draught of pleasure from *this little wayside fountain*, to which I have led them, I shall feel that I have not done so in vain—

“ Something attempted, something done,
Has earned a night's repose.”

My humble effort to amuse the leisure hours of others has been a source of simple amusement to myself, and I would advise all, especially the young beginners of life, to set a definite purpose before them, however trivial. It is good for every one to have

AN AIM IN LIFE.

THERE'S nothing like an aim in life—

It bears a holy meaning.

The man who has it, from each hour

Some happiness is gleaning.

The man, who has it not, is like

A road to nowhere tending—

He travels here, he travels there,

And failure is his ending.

Youth ! entering on the path of life,
Some purpose set before thee.
You must have toil—you may have strife—
But angels hover o'er thee.

And soon or late to glory's goal
These guardian friends will guide thee.
They love to watch an earnest soul.
And ever are beside thee.

They fan, with holy wings, the flame
Which ardent aims have given,
And stamp upon the soul a name.
That wakens joy in heaven.

The *man* alone deserves that name,
Who feels in Life a meaning,
And who, from every manly aim,
A recompense is gleaning.

On earth he reaps a pleasure pure,
The joys of sense transcending,
And in the future shall secure
A pleasure without ending.

THE END.