Near Inverness the soil is so loose, being composed of gravel and sand, that, in pits sunk for trial, the water rose and fell with the tide, and considerable apprehension was entertained that a proper foundation for the locks, and other necessary masonry, would not have been found; but, at length, one place was discovered of sufficient solidity to answer the purpose. The canal then proceeds through Loch Doughfour, a little loch, which, like some inconsiderable person in society, who is frequently very troublesome, presents the greatest difficulty to the navigation on account of its shallowness, and the quantities of gravel which are carried with great velocity into, and through, this tiny lake: the navigation then continues to Loch Ness, a distance of about seven miles, the advantageous length and form of which, no doubt, determined the undertaking. It is a noble piece of water, twenty-three miles and three quarters long, and in breadth varies from a mile and a quarter to three quarters of a mile, and is nearly straight from one end to the other. Its shores are bold and commanding, and on each side rise lofty, rocky, and rugged mountains, irregularly cut into deep gullies, with frightful precipices. The depth of its water, which has erroneously been said to be unfathomable, is from one hundred and six to one hundred and twenty-nine fathoms (a fathom is six feet) in the middle parts, to eighty-five, seventy-five, or less, near its end, to the east. The sides, except the bays, are very steep, the

rise being a foot in height, to a foot and a half in breadth. This excessive steepness has suggested the propriety of laying down mooring-chains with buoys in the bays, for the use of merchant-vessels intending to anchor in the loch, instead of letting go their anchors in so great a depth of water, as otherwise they would be obliged to do. The convenience of such a project will be very manifest when it is considered that a merchant-ship carries no more hands than are barely sufficient to weigh the anchor, so that, all hands being employed upon that service, the ship is left to drift to leeward, from the time the anchor quits its hold of the ground, until it is brought up to the bows of the vessel: for this reason, in Loch Ness, where the water is so deep, and so little room for drifting, a ship riding upon the lee side, with a wind blowing at all across the loch, would drift upon the shore before she could get her anchor up and make sail. Besides these advantages from mooring-chains with buoys, the expense that would be saved in anchors and cables would be considerable.

It has been ascertained that the bottom of Loch Ness is soft mud, of a dark brownish colour when wet, apparently consisting of the lighter parts of the soil of the surrounding mountains, which innumerable torrents have for ages washed down their sides; and, independently of the mooring-chains, it will afford good anchoring-ground in all

parts. From a journal of the winds and weather, kept from the 1st of May, 1806, to the 1st of May, 1807, the irregularity of the wind in this mountainous region is proved, and will be satisfactory to those who apprehended, as has been generally believed, that so great a valley, rectilinear throughout, would almost constantly draw the wind into a current, traversing it from end to end, a circumstance which would have been highly unfavourable to the navigation of the lakes. By this journal it appears that the wind is not only irregular, but that it is frequently different during the same day at Corpach, at Fort Augustus, and at Clachnacary.

The people in these parts, accustomed only to see the agitation of boats and small vessels in stormy weather upon this lake, are generally of opinion that the squalls and unsteadiness of the winds, which occasionally prevail among the lofty mountains which border this and the other lakes, would be dangerous to the navigation of large vessels, than which nothing can be more erroneous. In proof of the error of the opinion, a small vessel, of fourteen tons burden, was launched on Loch Ness, for the purpose of carrying timber purchased in Glenmorrison and near Port Clare, and this small trader, although undecked, usually completes two voyages a week, including loading and discharging, without interruption; though, being built

for the stowage of timber, she does not make progress to windward so well as a sharper-built vessel, although, in this constant employ, this vessel must very frequently beat to windward the whole length of the lake. Of course, if an imperfect vessel can navigate the lake against the wind in safety, larger and decked vessels can have nothing to apprehend from its squalls and waves.

At the western end of this loch stands Fort Augustus, where the foundation of the lock near this fort, and on Loch Ness, is twenty-four feet below the level of the summer surface of the lake, which, varying in its height ten feet, renders it necessary to cut a new channel for the river through the rock on the north side, in order to get at a solid foundation of rock, the soil being too open to warrant the cutting to so great a depth. The canal from Fort Augustus will ascend about five miles to Loch Oich, which is about three miles in length, and one quarter broad, and is, in some parts, twenty-six fathoms in depth, and in others only five. This loch will be the summit level of the canal. It is intended to reduce this loch to a greater regularity of depth. From the western end of this loch the canal is continued for about two miles, when it falls into Loch Lochy, a sheet of water ten miles and a half long, and its breadth, at the east end, near three quarters of a mile; from thence it increases, until, in the Bay of Arkeg,

it spreads to about a mile and a quarter, and is from seventy-six to seventy-four fathoms deep in many parts. On one side of this loch are high ridges of rocks and ground, descending abruptly into the lake. At the east end of this lake is a complete little harbour, in which there are from ten to five fathoms water, admirably adapted for giving every protection to the canal, and safe and commodious for ships to lie in. Mooring-chains, with buoys, will be as necessary here as in Loch Ness.

It is intended to cut a new course for the river Lochy, along the bottom of the bank on the south side, where the canal will occupy the deserted part of the present bed of the river, and to raise the lake twelve feet above its present level, by which, on account of the general steepness of its shores, very little land, except at the east end, will be overflowed; and as there is some deep cutting at the summit, it is proposed to remove back the soil now on the surface of the meadow at the east end of the lock, to bring the ground which is to be excavated at the summit to elevate the low ground at the east end, and, when this is raised to the proper height, to cover it again with the soil which had been removed back, with the addition of that which covered the land to be occupied by the canal near the summit.

The canal will then proceed by Corpach to Loch Eil,

which communicates with the Sound of Mull, and is part of the West Sea. At Corpach it is intended to form a sea-lock, to be cut out of the rock, and to make a small bason within it, capable of admitting a number of vessels with the flowing tide, which, after the gates are closed, may ascend the locks at leisure, of which the whole number will be twenty-five, and the number of lock-gates thirty-eight: these, by being in clusters, as they are intended to be, will be much less expensive than in separate locks, on account of the back of one forming the front of the next, whereas separate locks must be complete in all their parts. Upon this canal it is intended to construct bridges similar to those which are at the West-India Docks, and which have been imitated in cast iron at the London Docks: they swing horizontally to each side of the canal, or lock. At the eastern end of Loch Eil stands Fort William, as far as which there is a safe navigation and harbour for shipping. In this manner the junction of the two seas will be effected.

The Lochs Eil and Doughfour are to be deepened by steam-engines, as the scarcity of provender renders the keeping of horses very expensive. The canal is twenty feet deep, fifty wide at bottom, and one hundred and ten feet wide at top, and will admit of the passage of thirty-two-gun frigates, and of course of the largest merchant-vessels. It was originally intended to have cut the canal

so as to admit of forty-four-gun frigates; but not only would the additional cost have been very great, but it was by no means certain that the depth of water in Loch Beauly, near the eastern entrance of the canal, would safely or conveniently admit the passage of frigates of so large a rate at the ordinary high-water depth. The time of passing a thirty-eight feet lock will be about twenty minutes, a forty-feet lock about twenty-two minutes, and a forty-three-feet lock twenty-five minutes. The smallest size of vessels trading to the Baltic is about seventy-five feet in length, twenty-one feet in width, in draught of water twelve feet, and in burden one hundred and twenty tons. The largest size is about one hundred and thirty feet long, thirty-five feet wide, in draught of water nineteen feet, and in burden six hundred and fifty tons.

Timber, stone, lime, &c. have been found at convenient distances. Since June, 1806, the labourers employed, who, the public will be pleased to hear, are almost all Highlanders, have not been so numerous as in the preceding twelvemonth, when their number fluctuated from one thousand one hundred and sixty-three to six hundred and forty-one, whereas, in the last year, the number varied from nine hundred and sixty to five hundred and eighty-one, a larger number being employed during the summer than in the winter months, and of course their numbers are

lessened in the seasons for potatoe-planting, and the herring-fishery. Upwards of 38,700*l.* was paid for labour, from May, 1806, to May, 1807, whereas, in the preceding twelve-month, only 33,800*l.* was paid, although the number of labourers then employed was considerably greater, and although the price of labour has continued very nearly the same, a circumstance attributed to an increase of skill and industry among the workmen, which is said to be very perceptible. Those who reside in the neighbourhood occasionally depart, on account of their domestic occupations, but readily return upon notice being given for their attendance. This increased assiduity amongst the workmen is attributable in a great measure to their being regularly paid every four weeks, without the delay of a single day since the commencement of the work, by which means they have been taught the advantage of industry, and a confidence has been inspired that has operated to keep down the price of materials and workmanship in a degree not otherwise attainable.

As the canal has advanced, temporary huts and sheds have been erected to accommodate this considerable accession of population, and stores of oatmeal have been sold at prime cost: cows are kept, and a brewery has been established; the latter, most wisely, to counteract as far as it can an

excessive use of whisky, which, however, in proper quantities, I should conceive to be necessary to qualify the raw moisture of the climate.

It has been asserted that this undertaking has had no influence in checking Highland emigration, upon the presumption that those who engage themselves as labourers in it are not of that description of Highlanders who feel any disposition to emigrate, a class generally supposed to be composed of little farmers, descended from chieftains; but the reverse of this seems to be the fact: the labour of digging more coincides with the habits of the Highlander than the sedentary occupation of a manufacture, and it is known, that amongst a body of Highlanders, actually embarked on board of a vessel for America, fifty returned on shore before she sailed, upon receiving assurances of employment in the canal, which, when completed, will rival, if not surpass, the celebrated canals of Trolhætta, in Sweden, and of Languedoc.

To find employment for the dispossessed Highlanders, and to restrain, by occupations at home, the spirit of Highland emigration, are objects of no little importance. The extent of the trade which may be expected to receive benefit, with respect to security and dispatch, from the completion of the Caledonian Canal, (omitting the whole

of the trade between the eastern and western coasts of Scotland,) appears, from several official accounts prepared in conformity to an order of the House of Commons of the 11th of February, 1806, to amount, in value of imports and exports, to about two millions six hundred thousand pounds; of course the tolls to be paid for vessels passing through the canal will be very great.

When this union of the seas is effected, the amelioration of this part of the Highlands, and of a considerable distance round, must be great and rapid. New sources of industry and enterprise will be opened, new settlements will be established, new towns will rise, the fisheries will be increased, and Agriculture will wave, wherever the soil will admit, her golden harvest. The amount of monies already expended upon this stupendous undertaking, up to May, 1807, is 151,711*l.* It is probable that the expense of the whole, by the time it is completed, will exceed half a million. Unless many more hands can be procured, that event cannot be looked forward to for many years to come. With such undertakings as these, and such national advantages, as must in consequence flow from their accomplishments, we may with regret, but not apprehension, contemplate the gigantic progress of French aggrandizement. The resources of our own country are inexhaustible; but many of them, though pointed to by the hand of

Nature, remain unnoticed or unknown. A wise policy will at last teach us to turn our eyes, as it were, inwards; to look at home, where we shall find enough remains to be done; and not to waste our strength and our energies upon distant countries, which court our alliance only in the hour of peril, or which, after having invited our assistance, coldly turn from us, and basely submit to the yoke of the foe by a feeble or faithless co-operation.

Thank Heaven that Britain, though great in commerce, is not solely commercial; and that there are thousands and tens of thousands who have never seen a ship, and who have no adequate conception of its construction or power. Our merchants, glittering as they are with well-acquired gold, are but as fringe upon "the robe of russet brown." Britain can boast of that best strength of all countries, a bold, manly, active, and numerous peasantry, and a spirit of agricultural enterprise, to which Nature yields without reluctance, and the soil unfolds its inmost treasures. That wise policy seems to dawn upon the Highlands of Scotland, and the time may not be far off when the hardy mountaineer, with patriotic attachment, unquenchable as the Grecian light, may find full and ample occupation in the dear and cherished spot of his nativity.

Inverness is celebrated in ancient story on account of its poetical schools (Schoil Bhairdeachd), in which the

Bards were trained, and used to perform certain exercises and examinations, when those who did not acquit themselves to the satisfaction of the proper judges were rejected, a circumstance which sometimes occurred after many years intense application. Unpremeditated subjects were frequently proposed at these examinations, and the Poet who was most successful obtained, as a reward, one cupfull of wine from the King's own hand, and another cupfull of gold: so attentive were the Scots in those early ages to the cultivation of letters.

This Highland capital must also have been long in a state of comparative refinement. The ancient Kings and their courts often visited the Highlands, and Inverness was frequently honoured with being the seat of the royal residence. The Kings of Scotland used to hold the Circuit Court in person, and the last of its Sovereigns who thus presided at this town was the unfortunate Queen Mary: the house in which she lodged on these occasions is still standing, though I saw nothing about it worthy of particular description. The Lords of Justiciary now hold the Circuit Court in the spring and autumn.

It is a matter of curious observation that the river Ness, like the lake from which it issues, never freezes, owing, as it is supposed, to its being strongly impregnated with sulphur; and that in the winter, if horses are led into it, with

icicles hanging round their fetlocks, produced by other waters, they will speedily dissolve. It has also been asserted that iron will not corrode in this river, nor in Loch Ness. The inhabitants along the lake have frequently seen, in severe frosts, a steam hovering over it, which is considered as a sulphureous exhalation; but this is equivocal, for it might as well be an ordinary as a sulphureous vapour, and, if the former, it is rendered visible by the keen purity of the air.

Inverness is also indebted for much of its interesting character to another extraordinary cause, viz. the ruins of a *vitrified fort*, which, as well as others of a similar nature, have hitherto baffled the learning and investigaion of the antiquary. This fort is in the form of a parallelogram, about eighty yards long, and thirty broad. Upon removing the turf and earth with which the ruins are covered, the stones appear to be firmly blended together by vitrified matter, resembling the scoriæ of an iron foundry, or the volcanic substances to be seen near the Giant's Causeway in Ireland: in many parts of the wall the stones are completely fused; in others the fusion has been partial, and they are sunk into the vitrified matter. There are several other vitrified forts in Scotland, generally situated upon the summits of hills. Some philosophers have supposed the

ruins to be the production of volcanos now extinguished, and real lava; but this theory seems to be effectually contravened by the form and regularity of these ruins.

Others maintain that these buildings were originally constructed of stone, and bound together with great beams and posts of timber, as Cæsar describes the ancient Gauls to have erected their fortifications, to resist the battering ram; and that when such fortresses were assailed by fire, the large quantities of timber contained in them produced sufficient heat to effect a partial fusion of the stones, and thus the vitrification was accomplished at the time of their demolition; but this theory is, to my mind, nearly as objectionable as the last, because the vitrification appears to be pretty nearly equal on all sides, and it is scarcely reasonable to suppose that the conflagration was so too, for the action of the wind alone would no doubt make it more intense on one side than on another.

For my own part, and I mention it with becoming diffidence, I am inclined to think the vitrification purely artificial, and coeval with the building. Mr. Williams, who has written upon the subject, conceives that such was the case, and that it was used by the builders, who were unacquainted with cement, to make their forts more impregnable.

He refers to the times of Fingal, and observes that the fort on Knockfarril is called by the common people Knock-farril-na-Fion, or Fingal's Seat, or Resting-Place. The above authority supposes that some great fires, which the ancient inhabitants of those countries have used either in running bog-ore for their iron utensils or in offering burnt sacrifices, would give them the first hint that a strong fire would vitrify stones and unite them together; which hint some genius might improve, and apply to the cementation of forts.

Mr. Williams conceives that two parallel walls or dykes were raised of earth or sods, and a space between equal to the thickness of the intended wall; that these parallel dykes formed the mould or groove into which they were to run their vitrified wall, which groove was supplied with sufficient fuel, on which they laid a proper quantity of the materials to be vitrified; that a hot fire would melt the stones, especially if they were of the breccia or pudding kind, and not large; and that the frame of earth would keep the materials, when in fusion, from running without the breadth of the intended wall: having thus laid the foundation, he supposes they added new fires and more materials, and raised their mould of earth by degrees, until they had formed the whole to the intended height, upon which the

earth was removed from both sides of the vitrified wall. In all the sections of the larger and smaller fragments of the vitrified ruins which he has inspected, he has never seen the appearance of a stone laid in any particular way.

This fusion might also have been effected in another way, by the use of kelp, or common sea-weed, which being intermingled in great abundance, or stratified with the stones of the building, as is done with bricks or lime-stone in a kiln, and large quantities being laid over the walls, the whole was set on fire, and that by this process the stones of the wall were softened, and cemented together by being partially vitrified. In confirmation of this last conjecture it has been remarked, that the kind of stones of which such forts are built is easily melted by the aid of the mineral alkali, which abounds in kelp or sea-weed; and it has also been observed, that all the forts of this description are in the neighbourhood of the sea-side, where kelp could be easily procured.

It is very likely that the vitrified ruins at Inverness are the remains of a fort raised by one of the two methods last mentioned, and that it was a royal residence; as a slight corroboration of this idea I beg to mention, that little more than a year since, as the workmen employed on

the Caledonian Canal were cutting through the side of the hill Torravain, near Inverness, and close to the old road leading to Loch Ness, they discovered a silver chain of double links, having thirty rings; the silver had a small alloy in it of brass or copper: a human skeleton was found near the chain, and a piece of the same metal, resembling bracelets, but too small to have been used as such: a silversmith purchased these antiquities for 10*l*. It is not unlikely, from the rude workmanship of the chain, that the skeleton might have belonged to a Pictish King. Adamnan, in his Life of Saint Columba, mentions that Brudius, King of the Picts, who was converted by the Saint to the Christian faith, had a palace at Inverness. The cutting of the Caledonian Canal may perhaps lead to a considerable illustration of the ancient history of that part of the country through which it passes; and much matter for learned investigation may be afforded to the antiquary as well as the geologist and the lover of mineralogy.

It is a singular circumstance that Dr. Johnson makes no mention of the vitrified forts.

As the Gaelic language is every where much spoken, and almost exclusively so amongst the peasantry in the Highlands, a few remarks upon it, imparted to me by a gentle-

man who is well acquainted with the language, may perhaps be not unpleasing to my readers.

The Gaelic language is as copious as the Greek, and as suitable to poetry as the modern Italian. It is a curious circumstance that it possesses a poetical dialect, as well as one confined to prose. It owes much of its beauty to its immense number of vowels and dipthongs ; it is also barren in names for things of foreign or recent invention, although luxuriant in words to express every object of nature and every instrument of the common and universal arts. It was formerly the general language of Europe. The Welch and the Irish are dialects of the Gaelic. In the common language of Scotland, Irish and Erse are both used to denote the speech of the Highlanders, and are synonymous. John Major, in his Annals of Scotland, published in 1521, when enumerating the talents of King James, says that " he was a skilful musician ; in the management of his voice in singing, inferior to no one ; on the harp, he was another Orpheus ; he excelled the *Irish, or the Highland Scots*, who are esteemed the best performers on that instrument." In Scotland it was long the common language of the country, the court, the bar, and the senate. So recently as in the reign of the illustrious Robert Bruce, the debates in the parliament held at Ardchattan, in Argyleshire, were carried on in this

language. It has a regular and established standard, and is now becoming very fashionable amongst the higher orders of the Scottish people, in many of whose houses I have seen schoolmasters instructing the elder and the younger branches of families in it. To my ear it sounded very soft and harmonious.

It is worthy of remark that this language has experienced such little change, that it would be difficult for the nicest critic to discover the difference in grammar or orthography between the language used by the natives of the remote regions of St. Kilda and that spoken by the best-taught and refined Gaelic scholar.

The following is a specimen of the Gaelic language:—

ORIGINAL.	LITERAL TRANSLATION.
Bu chian ar sgaoileadh o cheile	Far would disperse asunder,
Fea' gach sleibh air barra bhac;	Through the steep banks of each mountain,
Laochrai' chalma, churant Fhinn,	The strong adventurous band of Fingal,
'S am bogha gach tiom nan glaic.	With bows ready in their grasp.
'Nuair a dh'eiradh seilg an fheidh,	When the deer began to start,
Dh' fhuasgladhmaid na ceuda cu;	We let slip the hundreds of hounds;
S'ioma' damh, earb, agus adh	Many a hart, roe, and hind,
A thuiteadh, 'sa bhail gach iul	Fell as far as I could view.
Philleamaid le'r seilg tra-nou	We returned at noon with the spoils of the chase,
Gu Teamhra' cheolmhor nan teud;	To the musical Taura of strings,
Am bu lionmhor cruit is clar	Where numerous were cruits and harps,
'S ioma' Bard a sheinneadh sgeul	And many a Bard to sing a tale.
B'ioma' slige doll mun cuairt	Many a shell went round,
'S dana nua' ga luadh le cheil	And new songs were sung together,
A'caitheamh na feist's ann tur.	Whilst the feast was consuming in the tower.

Great merit is due to Dr. Johnson, to whose literary influence the Highlanders are indebted for a translation of the New Testament into the Erse language. From a want of judgment, some political members of the Society in Scotland for propagating Christian Knowledge opposed this measure, conceiving that the encouragement of the Gaelic language had a tendency to perpetuate national distinctions, a misconception which the masterly pen of Johnson overpowered by force of reasoning. The same short-sighted policy prevented any publication of consequence from appearing in this language; but, by degrees, the Gaelic has provided employment for the press.

Before I quit this subject, I cannot help relating an interesting anecdote of the effect of this language upon a Highlander, in a distant region, communicated to me by the gallant Major Macquarrie, of the 42d. During the time that the navy and army destined against Egypt remained at Marmorice, in Natolia, in Asiatic Turkey, the Chaur Pacha came from Constantinople, as well to pay his respects as to afford every facility and assistance to the Admiral and Commander-in-Chief, in making arrangements necessary for the success of the expedition. When he came on board his Majesty's ship of war the Kent, to visit the Commander-in-Chief, Major Macquarrie was ordered to parade the grenadier company, to receive

and salute him. As this personage with his numerous retinue were entering the cabin of Sir Ralph Abercrombie, one of the attendants appeared studiously to place himself in the rear of the group, as if he wished to speak to the Highlander who stood to the right of the company, and close to the door which they were entering. As this Highlander, and the rest of his comrades, were fixed in observing the novel appearance of the figure, dress, and deportment, of their Asiatic visitors, the Turk I have mentioned touched the former on the shoulder, and addressed him in good Gaelic, to this effect:—"My lad, I am happy to see my countrymen once more, particularly those in the *philibeg*, which I have not seen for many years." If a comet had that moment passed before his eyes, or a thunderbolt had fallen at his feet, the poor fellow could not have been more petrified with astonishment, which had nearly loosened his musket from his hand. When the company came out, the Major endeavoured to prevail upon him to converse again, which he declined, except to assure him that he would return the next day alone, and with pleasure satisfy his curiosity. This gentleman proved to be of a very respectable family in Argyleshire, which he left when a boy, and was then a General Officer in the Turkish army.

The Erse language is so prevalent in the following

districts, that the clergy are required to perform Divine Service in it, viz. the shires of Sutherland, Ross, Cromarty, Inverness, and Argyle, the islands of Bute and Arran, and the parishes of Reay, Thurso, Halkirk, and Latheron, in Caithness, those of Nairn, Ardclach, and Calder, in Nairnshire, that of Duthel, in Elginshire, that of Kirkmichael, in Banffshire, those of Luss and Arrochar, in Dumbartonshire, and those of Balquhidder, Blair, and Strowan, Callendar, Comrie, Dull, Fortingall, Kenmore, Killin, Kirkmichael, Logierait, Mouline, and Weem, in Perthshire. There are also other parishes where the Gaelic language is used, but not by the majority of the inhabitants.

CHAP. XXI.

ROAD TO FORT AUGUSTUS — APPEARANCE OF LOCH NESS DESCRIBED—ENORMOUS STONES—ANECDOTES OF GENERAL WADE —GENERAL'S HUT—FALL OF FYERS—CAVES—FORT AUGUSTUS —MOISTURE OF CLIMATE—DRYING-HOUSES—LETTER FINDLEY —HIGHLAND HUT—THE ROOF-TREE—HIGHLAND PREJUDICE —BEAUTIFUL DUNGHILLS—HIGHLAND LIVING—ANECDOTE— FIR-SLIP CANDLES.

THE road from Inverness to Fort Augustus must be much improved since Dr. Johnson travelled this way, for he observes, "We were now to bid farewell to the luxury of travelling, and to enter a country, upon which perhaps no wheel has ever rolled." It is usual to hire post-chaises all the way to Oban, there being no intermediate stages where they can be engaged. I felt myself fortunate in procuring a good single-horse chaise and an excellent horse, which left me more at liberty to see the country. A recommendation to take a stock of wheat-bread with me gave me but an unfavourable impression of the agriculture of the country through which I was about to pass.

The ride to Dores, the first and a very short stage, is

extremely beautiful; in my way I passed by a Druid's temple, the form of which every one is familiar with. Near this place, upon the top of a hill, the vast watery expanse of Loch Ness, unbroken by islands, twenty-four miles long, and nearly straight from south-west to north-east, opened upon me with all its grandeur. Cultivated fields and a forest of pine formed a corresponding fore-ground; rocks and mountains—some huge, bare, and rugged, and gashed by wintry torrents—others adorned with woods of fir and birch, and all blending with perfect harmony of colouring, in which the heathy purple and a soft yellow seemed to have most diffusion—hung awfully over, or rose with a majestic sweep from the sides of the watery vista, hiding their sublime summits in the clouds. Over many a mile of water the eye beheld its surface; here gently agitated by a partial breeze, there as tranquil as a mirror, reflecting upon its bosom huge fragments of the adjoining crags or mountains; whilst, far in the west, this graceful and sublime scene faded in the sombre mist of distance, and in the darkness of cloud collected from the Atlantic. The prospect led my mind to reflect upon the bright and shaded vicissitudes of life, ending in the gloom of the grave.

From the heights about Inverness, the people, under a benign and unchanging sky, can, for weeks together, see the west involved in clouds, pouring down a deluge upon

the natives within their range below. Nature, as if to exhibit her peculiar fondness for this grand production of hers, has exempted the lake, as I have observed of its river, from one of the great operations of Winter; she has bestowed upon it the privilege of perpetual fluidity, in consequence of which, when other waters are frozen, it is the haunt of all sorts of aquatic birds.

The road winds along the lake, and is lined on each side with thick hazle and birch trees, resembling copses, called *shaws* by the Scottish Bard, and is at short distances channelled by the fury of winter torrents. The drive along the lake was truly delightful; the water rippled at the base of the mountains, on the side of which, with great skill and labour, the road was cut; and a tranquil grandeur pervaded the whole scene. The enormous stones which are raised at various intervals cannot fail to attract the notice of the traveller, and are but in a small degree less surprising in size and elevation than those which constitute the druidical fane. I have no doubt that the Druids, who were a learned body, were acquainted with the astonishing powers of the lever and the screw, and used them to increase the awful impression of supernatural agency upon the vulgar mind. Supernatural indeed must their energies have been, if, without such a mechanical aid, or the mode hereafter mentioned, they could have raised such stupendous masses of

stone as are in many places to be seen to this day. Perhaps the most extraordinary remains of this kind are mentioned to have been seen in Eastern Island, by Captain Cooke, who describes them as gigantic statues, of a grey stone, the same as the vast and ingeniously contrived platforms on which they rest are formed with:—"We could hardly conceive," says he, "how these islanders, wholly unacquainted with any mechanical power, could raise such stupendous figures, and afterwards place the large cylindric stones, before mentioned, upon their heads. The only method I can conceive is by raising the upper end by little and little, supporting it by stones as it is raised, and building about it until they got it erect; thus a sort of mount, or scaffolding, would be made, upon which they might roll the cylinder, and place it upon the head of the statue, and then the stones might be removed from about it. But if the stones are factitious, the statues might have been put together on the place, in their present position, and the cylinder put on by building a mount round them, as above mentioned. But, let them have been made and set up by this or any other method, they must have been a work of immense time, and sufficiently shew the ingenuity and perseverance of the islanders in the age in which they were built."—*Cooke's Voyages*, vol. i. p. 296.

Many of the stones thus perpendicularly elevated on the

road are seven and eight feet high. The moving of these stones astonished the natives at the time, and formed the subject of many little romantic and fabulous stories. This road is one of the several military ones, which have much conduced to the amelioration of Scotland. Before the roads were constructed, the Highlanders seldom held any intercourse with each other beyond the boundaries of their glens; and when General Wade, under whose inspection the military roads in the Highlands were made, first appeared in a carriage drawn by six horses, amongst these Alpine natives, they paid the greatest homage to the postilions and coachman, and wholly disregarded the General and his friends in the coach, whom they considered to be of no consequence, from their being so shut up in the carriage.

These roads have been principally formed in the summer season, by large detachments from Highland regiments lying in barracks, and in other quarters in the Highlands. On the working days each private had six pence extra, a corporal eight pence, and a serjeant one shilling: many other national objects might have been achieved in the same manner with great saving to the state, and an acceptable augmentation to the soldiers' pay, had the same policy been adopted in the other parts of the United Kingdom.

The solemn expanse of the lake, as I advanced towards

Boleskine, was a little relieved by the appearance of a victualling vessel, belonging, as I was informed, to Fort Augustus, from which it was bound to Inverness, for provisions, &c. for the garrison. Enchanted with my drive, I arrived at the inn usually known by the appellation of the General's Hut, so called from General Wade, who, when he commanded in the north, lived in a small temporary building upon the site of, or near to, the present inn. This inn is a solitary house, and stands upon a considerable eminence in one of the finest situations which the imagination can depict. From this spot the remains of the Castle of Urquhart, standing on an opposite point to the eastward, projecting into the lake, are seen. The Scots contemplate this ruin with patriotic devotion, on account of its being the last fortress that held out against the arms of Edward the First. From this spot, too, the lake, and all its majestic associates of rock and mountain, appear to the highest advantage, and strongly reminded me of the scenery in the neighbourhood of Stockholm, which I contemplated from a mountain in the Gulph of Bothnia. Near the inn is an unfinished lodge of the Honourable Archibald Frazer, a son of the celebrated Lord Lovat, known in the annals of 1745.

It is a pleasant circumstance for travellers in this solitary region to find a very civil innkeeper, who has one of the

prettiest women I saw in the Highlands for his wife. The house is a poor one, but the possessor of it promised to put it in excellent condition if he could procure a lease of it: he obtained from me a promise to write to his landlord to recommend his wishes, which I have done. If the application succeeds it will be very beneficial to future travellers. In this application I should have been joined by Lord Trafalgar, who was also at this house, and was equally pleased with the attentions of the worthy Highlander, had not a sudden and fatal indisposition deprived his country of a young nobleman who promised well to support, with the dignity of virtue, the well-earned honours of the illustrious Nelson.

It is a matter of considerable consequence to travellers in these parts that there should be a good inn upon this spot, and I hope that the liberty I have taken in recommending the wishes of my honest host will not be unavailing. After an excellent Highland dinner, I proceeded to the Fall of Phoyers, or Fyers, about a mile and a half off, in my way to Fort Augustus. After I had left the General's Hut about a quarter of a mile, the road curved through the mountains towards Strath Errick. This cataract is very lofty and grand, and is considered as the chief of the Caledonian falls. The thunder of its waters, which descend into a gloomy abyss of uncouth and rugged masses

of sable rock and cliffs, wooded with weeping birch, yew, holly, and hazel, is heard from the road; and, contemplated from the various directions in which the beholder is placed by the guide, above, midway, and below, it is truly grand and awful.

From a hillock, rendered for ever verdant by the mists of the cataract, called, I believe, "the Green Bank," the traveller has the finest view of the fall. Here, looking through the splendid prismatic arch of its own iris, the white foam of this Niagara of the north is seen, whilst many a graceful tree and scented herb are moistened by the soft showers of its spray, and the deep ravine below seems filled with steam. This wonderful cataract is formed by the confluence of several great mountain-streams, and the river of a loch in the neighbourhood. Burns has thus celebrated it:—

Among the heathy hills and ragged woods,
The roaring Fyers pours his mossy floods,
Till full he dashes on the rocky mounds,
Where thro' a shapeless breach his stream resounds.
As high in air the bursting torrents flow,
As deep recoiling surges foam below,
Prone down the rock the whitening sheet descends,
And viewless Echo's ear astonish'd rends.
Dim seen thro' rising mists and ceaseless show'rs,
The hoary cavern wide surrounding low'rs;
Still thro' the gap the struggling river toils,
And still below the horrid cauldron boils."

About a hundred yards higher up, there are several large caves, more interesting from their having been the secluded asylums of many of the unfortunate rebels, who found in them a protection from the slaughter which reddened the plains of Culloden with the blood of their countrymen; and adjoining there is a beautiful view from a bridge of one arch, resting upon two opposite rocks, through which the river flows, till it thunders down in the Cataract of Fyers.

Upon quitting this spot, the road turned from the lake through a defile of hills, bordered by trees and bushes, till I at length ascended into a region of mountains, jumbled together as by an earthquake, when all around me became dark, savage, barren, and desolate, and for several miles I neither heard the voice of man, beast, nor bird, nor saw the appearance of them, nor the means by which they could be nourished. It strongly brought to my recollection many parts of the mountainous drive from Killarney to Cork, in Ireland. An occasional view of two small lakes was all that I beheld to mitigate the horrors of this continued scene of desolation. It was evening when I arrived at Fort Augustus, where I found a tolerable inn, and the next morning paid my respects to the Lieutenant-Governor, Colonel Brodie, to whom I had a letter of recommendation, and with whom I breakfasted. This fort, which, seen from the heights

towards Loch Ness, resembles an old decayed palace, stands at the head of the lake on a small plain, and possesses little worthy of observation. Within, it is like the quadrangle of a college. It has four bastions, and twenty pieces of cannon, six-pounders each; and is garrisoned by one company of soldiers. The barracks are able to accommodate four hundred men. As a place of defence it is only necessary to mention that it was easily taken by the raw rebels of 1746, who considering it, as it is fair to suppose, untenable, soon deserted it, after demolishing what they could. In Erse this fort is called Kill Chuimin, or the burial-place of the Cummins. It is little more than a mere *Uncle Toby* fortification. I was more pleased with seeing the mountain-ash which grew about it, and the Governor's little garden, than the whole fortress.

Within a few miles of this fort are the celebrated parallel roads in Glen Roy, which, as the learned in antiquity suppose, were constructed for the accommodation of the ancient Scottish Kings.

There are also in the district of Glenelg, opposite to the Isle of Sky, the ruins of some ancient circular buildings, resembling glass-houses, by some supposed to be Danish forts, but which have long afforded controversial matter for antiquaries.

The view of the lake, from this fort, must be very beautiful on a fine day, with which I was not favoured, and which is somewhat of a rarity in this weeping climate. From a register of the weather at this place, kept for one year, ending May, 1807, it appears that, out of three hundred and sixty-five days, there were only one hundred and five fair. Some wag has said that the climate of the west was composed of nine months of winter, and three of bad weather.

At the Governor's breakfast-table I observed that the wheaten bread was mouldy, owing, as I was informed, to the fort being dependent upon Inverness for its regular supplies of this article, and I found that I had been well advised in laying in a store of it, particularly as the oaten cake disagreed with me. Here it will be necessary for the traveller to lay in provision for Letter Findley. This part of the county of Inverness-shire is so frequently exposed to rain, that the peasants seldom depend upon saving their corn in the open air; *drying-houses* are therefore used by such as can afford them, in which the sheaves are singly hung upon a peg until they are dry enough to make room for others. The people are restricted to the most degenerated species of oats, with the hairy-bearded husk, a light small kind of beer, and potatoes.

From Fort Augustus Dr. Johnson and Mr. Boswell turned

off to Glensheals, in their way to the Island of Sky, which is the nearest route.

Upon quitting it for Fort William I left the river Oich to my right, and, after crossing a bridge, I entered a long and dreary defile of barren mountains, whose sides bore ample testimony to the violence of the winter torrents, and in the road the carriage-wheel was seldom out of water. A few ash and hazle trees occasionally gladdened the eye. About three miles from the Fort, Loch Oich, and its river flowing from it, appeared, with a large range of verdant mountains on either side, occasionally well clothed with mountain-ash, firs, elder, and birch. As I passed along the rocky shores of this lake, I was much pleased with the contrast of the modern house and old castle of Glengarry, and the roads behind, belonging to Macdonnell of Glengarry. They possessed the united attraction of beauty and rarity. In every direction were water-falls, at this time rather slenderly supplied.

As I approached Loch Lochy the rains began to descend, and at the head of the lake my eye could only travel midway up the stupendous mountains between which it is expanded. I passed near Laggan, deserving of notice for its having been the residence, and its surrounding scenery the subject of the pen, of Mrs. Grant, a lady who has

deservedly raised herself to literary eminence by her very interesting "Letters from the Mountains," and several elegant effusions of her Muse.

Letter Findley is a solitary inn, as dirty and miserable as any venta in Spain; and worse, with regard to cleanliness and accommodation, than any other in Scotland that I met with. The children belonging to the house appeared to be, as it is tenderly called, *smitten*, or devoured, with a cutaneous disease, called, from a false impression of its being almost peculiar to Scotland, the Caledonian Cremona, or Scottish Fiddle. This disorder is principally engendered by habits of filth; and, as far as I had opportunities of observing, and of collecting information from medical gentlemen upon the subject, has been very much reduced of late years amongst the lower orders.

I had before seen specimens of Highland hamlets, and in my way to this place I passed by another of them. At a distance they resemble a number of piles of turf. In general they are built in glens and straths, or upon the side of a lake, or near a river or stream, adjoining to which there is a little arable land. This near Letter Findley is close to the shores of the lake, all the huts of which appear to be constructed after the same style of rude architecture. The walls

are built of turf or stones, according to the nature of the adjoining soil, and raised about six feet high, on the top of which a roof of branches of trees is constructed; this is covered with squares of turf, of about six inches thick, closely pressed together, and put on fresh from its parent moor, with the grass or heath upon it, which afterwards continues to grow; and renders it difficult for a traveller, unless he be very sharp-sighted, to distinguish at a little distance the hut from the moor. I have seen many of these buildings in high vegetation, and in that respect they reminded me of the same description of buildings in Sweden.

I was obliged to stoop on entering the door of these sylvan abodes, and within saw a cabin which brought to my recollection that of Robinson Crusoe: upon the ground, about the centre, was the fire, the smoke of which escaped through a hole in the top of the roof, but not without having first blackened every part of it within, till the rafters looked like charcoal; and, unless the covering should be weather-proof, the rain must fall within as black as ink-drops. In others there was a little fire-place of iron bars, with a hob on either side, and above a crank, for holding the meikle pot. The only furniture I saw were some boxes, stools, pails, an iron pot, some bowls and spoons of wood, and also a cupboard, or shelves, for holding provisions.

A tolerable hut is divided into three parts: a butt, which is the kitchen; a benn, an inner room; and a byar, where the cattle are housed. Frequently the partition of the chambers is effected by an old blanket, or a piece of sail-cloth. In the kitchen, and frequently in the inner room, there are cupboard-beds for the family; or, what is more frequent, when the fire on the ground is extinguished, they put their bed of heath and blankets upon the spot where it has burned, on account of the ground being dry. A true farmer loves to sleep near the byar, that he may hear his cattle eat. These patriarchal dwellings frequently tremble, and sometimes fall, before the fury of the tempest. I was told that very far north, when a Highland peasant entertains his friends with a cheerful glass of whisky, it is usual, as a compliment to the host, to drink to his *roof-tree*, alluding to the principal beam, which by its weight enables the roof to resist the pressure of a mountain squall, and which forms the great protection of the family within from its fury.

A house with an upper story is called, by way of pre-eminence, a *lofted hut*. I was informed by some gentlemen, who had long resided in the Highlands, that in some of these miserable habitations, upon their return from grouse-shooting, they have been frequently offered a glass of excellent white or red wine, as well as whisky. Another

Highland gentleman informed me that these mountaineers are so attached to their peat or mud hovels, that, although he had erected for some of his tenants neat stone cottages, they continued to prefer their former dwellings, the workmanship of their own hands.

The Highland peasants, like the Irish, are very much attached to their dunghills, which are constructed close to their doors. To such a pitch of fondness is this carried, that upon an order being issued that no one should raise their dunghill in the streets of Callendar, one old lady is said to have expressed her joy that she was not deprived of hers by this clean and cruel decrée, for she had made it in a back room.

The peat-stack is generally the near neighbour of the dunghill: by this arrangement the most disgusting objects are strangely kept in full view. Here, as in Ireland, the dog forms a part of the family. The children romp with him; and, in general, he is a great favourite.

The mode of living amongst the Highland peasantry corresponds with the simplicity of their abodes. Their principal food is oaten or barley cakes. Oatmeal is used in various shapes, under the names of brochan, stirabout, sowins, &c. Sometimes the oaten cake is made of grannaded

meal, that is, of meal separated from the husks, and roasted by the fire, instead of being threshed and kiln-dried.

Milk also yields a principal source of subsistence. They milk not only cows, but goats and ewes. It has been said, but I doubt the fact, that oatmeal is sometimes supped *dry*, undressed, or baked, by putting a handful in the mouth, and washing it down with water. I was told that the very poor Highlanders boil the blood of their cattle, when killed, with a quantity of salt, and that, when it becomes cold and solid, they cut it in pieces, and use it for food. At Inverness I saw some poor people in the act of carrying blood in bowls, and, upon my asking what they intended to do with it, they said, "To make puddings with it." The Highlanders have had wisdom sufficient to see and feel the value of cultivating the potatoe, a vegetable which Nature seems to offer as the bread-fruit of every country. The memory of Sir Walter Raleigh deserves more from his country by having brought the potatoe from America than if he had conquered Guiana. I saw few Highland huts which had not an adjoining little potatoe-plot, and I think the Highland potatoe little inferior to the Irish. A very favourite Highland dish, of the higher class, is composed of sour cream, sugar, whisky, curds, fresh milk, and flummery, a paste produced from a pre-

paration of oats steeped in water. The affections of the peasant are easily engaged by humouring his prejudices and conforming to his habits. It is recorded, in the romantic accounts of the escapes of Prince Charles Edward, that when he effected his retreat to the Hebridean Island of Rasay, in consequence of almost all the houses having been burnt by the soldiers under the command of the Duke of Cumberland, he was obliged to repair to a little hut, recently built by some shepherds, where a fire was kindled, and a bed of heath prepared. When the provisions which had been brought with him from Kingsburgh were opened, he was presented with wheat-bread and brandy, which he declined, declaring that he would not taste them whilst *oat-bread* and *whisky* lasted, " for these," said he, " are my own country's bread and drink."—These expressions greatly increased the affection of the Highlanders for him.

Although society is so widely scattered in the Highlands that the natives have not frequent opportunities of assembling on convivial occasions, yet with social improvement the use of whisky has increased amazingly, although the duty upon it has increased too. It appears that the duty on spirits distilled in Scotland, exclusive of the duty on malt and malt liquor, imported spirits and wine, did not produce in the year 1777 the sum of 8,000*l.*, whereas in 1806 it produced 250,000*l.*

In some of the remote parts of the Highlands, a candle would produce as much sensation as a Chinese lantern. On account of the difficulty and expense of procuring tallow, they substitute dried slips of the birch and fir-tree, the stumps of which they find in the peat-bogs when they cut for fuel. The care of attending to these rude tapers, which burn quickly and brightly, is confided to those of a family who are too aged or too young to perform any very serviceable labour. This substitute was not unknown to me. In the course of my rambles in other countries I have met with the *fir-slip candle*. It is frequently used in mountainous regions. On the borders of Wetteravia, a country not far from Franckfort on the Maine, rises a chain of mountains called Der Vogelsberg, the produce of which is chiefly potatoes. On the summit of this mountain the snow defies the summer sun. In this elevated region also the lower class of peasantry, in their long winter evenings, use, instead of candle, slips of fir, a tree which, as well as the oak, flourishes there in great abundance. These slips are put in the middle of the room, round which the girls of the family assemble to spin, whilst their lovers stand behind, to claim the privilege of a kiss, if their mistresses make an error in slipping the knot.

CHAP. XXII.

EXTENT OF HIGHLANDS — FARMING IMPROVEMENTS — RURAL ARRANGEMENTS — RUDE GEAR — FORT WILLIAM — A HIGHLAND SHOWER, WHAT — FINE WEATHER UNWHOLESOME — BEN NEVIS — CATTLE FAIRS — A CHURCH-INN — THE CONA OF OSSIAN — HORRIBLE MASSACRE — MACDONALD OF GLENCOE — APPIN-HOUSE — OBAN.

IN my progress thus far amongst the Western Highlands, I had sufficient opportunity of observing their eminent pretensions to be ranked amongst the sublime and beautiful of nature. The Highlands may be said to commence from Dumbarton, near the mouth of the Clyde, and comprise the mountainous parts of Scotland from thence to the north and north-west, including the Hebrides. Their length is about two hundred miles, and their breadth varies from fifty to one hundred, yet they have no ascertained boundary coinciding with the limits of any civil jurisdiction. It is worthy of observation that the ridges of the mountains which characterize this part of the country run nearly west and east, and that they exhibit evidences highly corroborative of the deluge, which, it is fair to suppose, poured in from the south-west to the north-east, and produced those

vast and astonishing inequalities which are visible in this direction upon the summits of these and of every other known mountain of the earth. The shepherds in the Highlands constantly observe, that, whilst the south-west side of the hill is sterile, the north-east side is rich in soil and pasture, and exhibits traces of alluvial earth.

The summits of the mountains have seldom any other covering than moss, upon a bed of stones and gravel; and where these have been washed away by storms, the bare rock appears. The sides of these mountains, which are generally clad with heath, and other hardy northern plants, can never become arable land: it is only in vales and sheltered situations that tillage can be tried with success; in these spots barley, oats, potatoes, flax, pease, rye, turnips, and some foreign grasses, are cultivated, but not in a sufficient degree to render the importation of grain and meal unnecessary.

The butter in the Highlands is much improved: it used to be full of hairs, and it was a common saying, that, if the butter had no hairs in it, the cow that gave the milk would not thrive. The butter of Scotland is in general, I think, inferior to that of England, and perhaps a consciousness of this circumstance led to the introduction of honey, marmalades, and preserves, upon the Scottish

breakfast-tables. The Highland honey is in high estimation, and is indebted for its peculiarly delicious flavour to the bloom of the heath. The Lowlanders call themselves the Land of Cakes, whilst the Highlanders proudly boast of inhabiting a land of milk and honey.

The domestic distribution of labour in the little Highland farms is singularly interesting. The lesser boys take charge of the weaned lambs; the stronger attend the goats to the rocks and perilous precipices, upon which they love to browse: the young girls are employed at the distaff; the young men attend the cattle upon the mountains, whilst their father cultivates his little patch of ground, repairs his hut, of which he is the designer and builder, and upon which occasion the knife, the axe, and the augur, are his simple materials; in this respect, however, he is better provided than the Russian boor, who works with more skill, neatness, and ingenuity, with only his axe. At evening fall the children return home, the bearers of fish which they have caught in some neighbouring stream, and of alder-bark, and buds of heath and moss, with which their mother may stain her home-spun plaid. Amongst the Highlanders, both young and old, the season of "*summer flitting*," when they remove for the summer to the mountains with their flocks, is always hailed with a rapturous welcome. At this time they live in the mountains in shealings, or little huts constructed

for the purpose, and sleep upon beds of heath, leading a life perfectly pastoral until the autumn is advanced, when they return to their glens.

The materials which they adapt to useful purposes are frequently very simple. In different parts of the Highlands, as in the south-west parts of Ireland, straw is found a convenient substitute for ropes. The horse-collar and crupper are frequently made of straw. Sticks of birch twisted together are also frequently used for halters and harness, and are called woodies.

The dimensions of Lochs Oich and Lochy I have before given. Upon bidding adieu to Letter Findley, which I should have done with great pleasure had not the magnificent grandeur of the prodigious mountains opposite afforded an uncommonly rich banquet to the eye, the road lay through a long chain of craggy mountains, affording little more variety than what was furnished by a miserable straggling hut or two, until my eye caught with pleasure a lofty bridge built over the river Spean, under the direction of General Wade, to whom the traveller in the Highlands finds himself continually under obligation, and to whose memory he would gladly contribute his mite to raise a monument. Through the arches of this bridge the Spean rushes with great rapidity to the head of Loch Lochy. In the winter

season, this river, in consequence of its being supplied by so many mountain torrents, exhibits, as I was informed, a tremendous descent of waters. As I approached Fort William, I passed on my left near the base of Ben Nevis, whose stupendous summits I had long contemplated, soaring above his associate mountains with an elevation and aspect truly sublime; and on my right the ruins of the ancient Castle of Inverlochy, which possess nothing about them worthy of particular notice. The entrance to the town of Maryborough, adjoining to the fort, has little to gratify the eye; and Loch Eil, and the surrounding mountain scenery, is more grand than beautiful

Fort William is situate on Lochaber, bordering on the Western Ocean, yet within the shire of Inverness. It was built in the reign of King William and Queen Mary, being called after the name of the King, and was originally designed as a check upon the chief of the Camerons, a clan addicted to plunder and rebellion. The town was erected into a borough in honour of Queen Mary: it is a long street of indifferent houses, stuccoed white, and is chiefly inhabited by fishermen, who carry on a considerable fishery in the lake. The inn is rather destitute of accommodation. Nothing can be shabbier, as a fortification, than Fort William; it has neither strength, space, nor neatness. It could scarcely stand a siege of two days

against a company of raw, but resolute, volunteers: the barracks are composed of wood, and, having already suffered by time, promise at no distant day to be blown away as touch-wood. It is garrisoned by a serjeant's guard. The Government-house is very small and incommodious, but rendered comfortable by its neatness, and delightful by the reception which I experienced from the officer residing in it, and his lady. The principal reason, I was informed, for continuing this military station, (if it may be dignified with that appellation,) is to preserve a check upon the smugglers in this part of the country. If it be worth the expense of preserving, Government would do right to deal out repair with a prompt and lavish hand, otherwise they will soon have to regret its fall: but within, hospitality found room to spread a plentiful table, and elegance to display the most agreeable manners. The farce of shutting the gate at the hour usual in fortified towns is still preserved in this travesty of a fortification.

The shattered remains of the flag-staff, which, when erected, was a very thick mast, bore ample testimony to the terrible storms of wind which visit this place, particularly near the autumnal equinox, when they prevail with such fury, that vessels are frequently blown from their moorings, between Loch Lochy and the sea, a little way from Fort William. The Caledonian Canal commences in this direction, and is

carried over aqueducts, which are necessary to give a free passage to the waters of this mountainous country. The persons concerned in this noble undertaking have found that, in stormy seasons, the occasional torrents that fall loaded with stones are so formidable, that they have been obliged to enlarge the span of the arches, by which means sufficient passages are opened for carts and cattle under the canal, and the necessity, which before existed, of building bridges for that purpose, will be prevented.

I was now in the *region of rain*, which descended with little intermission, during my stay at Maryborough, with a copiousness which I have not often beheld. Rain, which continues in this neighbourhood for nine or ten weeks together, is called by the natives by the gentle name of *a shower*. Such almost eternal moisture, no doubt, preserves the verdure of the pasture, which otherwise, so thinly scattered as it is on a face of rock, would be soon burnt up by the sun. A Highland gentleman, who went over to Paris during the late momentary peace, met a friend of his there, who the year before had been upon a visit to him at his Highland chateau near Fort William: after the first usual interchange had passed, the Highlander was asked by his friend whether the shower which was falling when he left him was yet over; so accustomed are the natives of these parts of the Western Highlands, and the Hebrideans, to be under a

weeping climate, that in all human probability a long series of fair weather would produce sickness and despondency.

Having no hopes, by a protracted stay, of being able to see the magnificent view which in a clear day must lie before the beholder upon the top of Ben Nevis, I contented myself with walking some way up its sides. This mightiest of the mountains in Great Britain is four thousand three hundred and seventy feet above the level of the sea. From the top, I am informed, in favourable weather, the eye can travel from the German to the Atlantic Ocean, can command many a Hebridean Isle, and extend almost to the coast of Ireland. When I first saw it, the atmosphere was tolerably clear, and it then appeared to be as ugly in shape as it is huge in size. In some of its chasms in its northern side, the whiteness of eternal snows singularly contrasted with its vast masses of black and grey rocks.

Ben Nevis exhibits a very visible and extraordinary appearance of the triumphs of time over the most stupendous objects. It is now evidently part only of a much greater mountain, that seems to have included the present one, and two adjoining ones of lesser height, presenting now between them too immense gullies, from whence it is conjectured that the alluvial deposition has probably formed

most of the flat land about Fort William: this perhaps may account for its uncouth appearance. A great part of this vast mountain is fine porphyry, in which the tint of the rose is blended with yellow and white: in some parts it is green, with a tinge of red and brown.

Cattle fairs, or rather meetings, are held at Maryborough twice a year: these meetings, inspired by Highland integrity, are conducted with great liberality, and confidence in the honour of the contracting parties: nearly all the great Highland farmers are gentlemen of good education and polished manners. They sell their cattle to English buyers, who purchase without seeing the beasts, from a knowledge they have of the stock bred upon the farm of the owner: they are sold upon the honour of the Scottish proprietor at so much a head, and the purchaser sends for them. The cattle are purchased lean, on account of the length of the winters and the shortness of the summers. Many parts of the Highland pasture-land will keep thousands of sheep, though incapable of fattening any. I was informed also that the Highland farmers never part with their lambs, and never kill them but for their own tables. On the shores of Loch Ness the ancient Highland breed of sheep are frequently found without any mixture. This breed is of a race very different from that of the southern provinces: their frame is small, and apparently delicate;

their tails are short and tapering, and thinly covered with strong silvery hairs; their eyes are prominent. Sheep and goats are generally reared together; the latter follow the former, and eat up thyme, pennyroyal, and other aromatic herbs, which the former will not touch.

I was not sorry to leave Maryborough, the neighbourhood of which Mrs. Grant, in her Letters from the Mountains, has very justly described:—"It is a sea-port without being animated; it is a village without the air of peace and simplicity; it is military without being either gay or bold-looking; it is country without being rural; it is Highland without being picturesque or romantic; it has plains without verdure, hills without woods, mountains without majesty, and a sky without a Sun—at least his beams appear so seldom, that I wonder the Lochabrians are not dazzled into idolatry when he walks in his brightness."

The road from Fort William for a long distance towards Appin is very good, and the country very picturesque. I passed by several huts, more miserable I think than any I had yet seen, which, from the smoke issuing through the roof, and their squalid appearance, resembled so many reeking dunghills. As I was waiting for the ferry-boat of Balahulis, on the opposite shore of Loch Leven, a large group of Highland peasants was assembled at the ferry-

house, in waiting for their pastor, it being Sunday; so that the house united two rather opposite characters, that of inn and chapel: this is by no means an uncommon case in the Highlands, where the population of a parish is so widely scattered: in fine weather, under these circumstances, Divine Worship is performed in the open air. Sometimes those ardent devotees are seen crossing shallow rivers upon stilts, bearing their parents on their backs to the church on the opposite side.

The lake is about a quarter of a mile across, and a more grand and beautiful assemblage of objects than those which are presented to the eye in all directions, in crossing this ferry, I never beheld. A verbal description, however vivid, would not fail to be a very imperfect picture. Soon after I arrived at Balahulis, the rains, which had ceased for a short time, just to unveil to me this romantic and enchanting scenery, descended with redoubled copiousness before I could secure my retreat from a ramble along the shores of the Leven, amongst some of the beautiful glens, which here every where invite the notice of the traveller. After waiting with Job-like patience to ascertain if the weather would permit me to visit a place in this neighbourhood, much celebrated for its awful gloom and horror, called Glencoe, I relinquished the design, and proceeded to Appin-house. I was much vexed at the disappointment, for the

glen was the birth-place of Ossian. The river Coe, at its mouth, is the *Cona* of Ossian :—

"Their sound was like a thousand streams that meet in Cona's Vale, when, after a stormy night, they turn their dark eddies between the pale light of the morning."—FINGAL.

Cona is also frequently celebrated in other parts of his poems. This frightful glen was the theatre of a massacre not often paralleled, and the recital of which cannot fail to make the mind shudder with horror. It appears that many of the sturdy and high-spirited chieftains, from an attachment to the fallen fortunes of the Stuarts, submitted to the Act of Settlement in favour of King William with reluctance. The Earl of Broadalbane undertook to reconcile the malcontents to this great political change; but, meeting with difficulties in his way, he resolved to be revenged upon those who embarrassed his mission, and particularly selected Macdonald of Glencoe, against whom he had a private pique, as an object devoted to destruction. Accordingly he represented him at court as an incorrigible rebel. He told the King that Macdonald had got his Majesty's proclamation, which offered an indemnity to all who had been in arms against him, upon submission, and taking the oaths of allegiance, before the expiration of a year, but threatened with military execution those who should hold out after the first of December. Macdonald refused to take

the oaths, alleging that the Government had nothing to apprehend from his doing so, as he always intended to keep his opinions to himself. At last, however, overpowered by the persuasion of his family and friends, on the last day of the month he repaired to Fort William, and requested of Colonel Hill, the then Governor, to tender the oath to him, which the Governor declined, on account of his not being a magistrate; upon which Macdonald set off for Inverary. He travelled with such swiftness, although the snow lay deep upon the ground, that he arrived there within one day after the period of indemnity had expired. Sir John Campbell, sheriff of the county, in consideration of his disappointment at Fort William, administered the oaths to him and his adherents, and they returned to Glencoe, full of confidence in the protection of Government. In consequence of Breadalbane's representations, the King, with the most unfeeling composure, signed an order for putting about two hundred persons out of the protection of the proclamation; and a warrant to this effect was issued to the Master of Stair, Secretary of State for Scotland, who sent orders to Livingstone, the Commander-in-Chief, to put the unhappy inhabitants of Glencoe to the sword, that the rest of the refractory clans might be impressed with terror by the example.

In consequence of an order from Major Duncannon,

Captain Campbell, of Glenlyon, marched at the head of his company into the valley of Glencoe, early in the month of February, 1691, on pretence of levying the arrears of the land-tax and hearth-money. Macdonald demanded of the officer the object of such a visit, who answered, upon his honour, that he meant no injury either to him or to his people. In consequence of this declaration, Campbell and his soldiers were kindly received, and treated in the most hospitable manner for fifteen days. At length the horrible hour of unsuspected slaughter approached. The Lord and Lady of Glencoe, and Campbell and some of his officers, spent the day, in the evening playing at cards together, and parted early, with mutual expressions of esteem. In the course of the evening young Macdonald observed that the guards were doubled; and, from other appearances amongst the soldiers, suspected treachery, and communicated his suspicions to his father, whose confidence in the honour of Campbell made him revolt at the idea. The young man continued firm in his opinion, and at nightfall went, accompanied by his brother, amongst the soldiers, to make further observations: upon approaching a guard, they overheard a sentinel express his dislike to the meditated business of blood to his comrade, observing, that he should have no objection to fight the Macdonalds in the field fairly, but that his soul revolted at butchering them in cold blood. "However," added he, "our officers are answerable for the treachery." Upon hearing this the young men hastened

back with the intelligence to their father; but the massacre had commenced. Before they reached their house, the vollies of death, and the shrieks of despair, rang through the glen, and, being unarmed, they preserved their lives by flight. The ferocious soldiery entered Macdonald's chamber, and, upon his starting up, they shot him through the head, and he fell dead in the arms of his astonished wife, who died distracted with horror the ensuing day. The huts of the tenants and dependants were surrounded, and every one within was put to death. Thirty-eight persons were butchered in their beds. The design was to murder all under seventy years of age, amounting to about two hundred persons; but some detachments, happily for the survivors, did not arrive in time to secure the passes, and, in consequence, one hundred and sixty escaped.

When these savage assassins had completed the massacre, they set fire to the houses, seized all the property they could find, and drove the cattle away. The night was one of the bitterest of the winter; and, when the day broke upon this horrible scene, women, who, with their infants, had fled naked from the murderers, were found frozen to death with their children, under rocks and hedges, at some distance from the glen.

Upon a representation of this barbarous outrage to the King, he endeavoured to throw the responsibility from his

own head upon those who induced him to sign the sanguinary order; but, as he never punished the perpetrators of the massacre with becoming vigour, it remains an indelible blot upon his character.

In this valley, I am told, there is a very extraordinary appearance, produced by the superinduced stratum of rock on the south side, which has not yet been elucidated. There is also a fine blue slate quarry, along the banks of Loch Leven, in the road to Glencoe. Under a sky of tears, I reached the hospitable roof of Appin-house, a seat belonging to the Marquis of Thomond, and occupied by Colonel Robertson Macdonald, and his amiable lady and family, who had recently returned from Ceylon. The situation of the house is elevated, and commands a charming view of that great arm of the sea called Loch Linnhe, the ruins of a castle, which nearly cover the island upon which they stand, the verdant island of Lismore, and the opposite and celebrated mountains of Merven. The plantations upon this estate are very extensive: upon the shores of the lake, a little way from the house, are some vast globular rocks, well worthy of notice. Appin is a miserable-looking place, but the country, as I proceeded to Shean Ferry, is well wooded, and very beautiful. At this ferry I crossed Loch Creran; and, about four miles afterwards, Loch Etive, at Connell Ferry, which, on account

of some opposing currents, is attended with some difficulty, and occasional danger. Near the road to Connell Ferry is the site of the celebrated city of Beregonium, once the capital of Scotland, and built by King Fergus II. It is supposed that this city perished in a volcanic eruption, great quantities of scoriæ of different kinds being found in and adjoining to the spot.

From the ferry to Oban, about four miles, the country, which is rocky, is marked by volcanic appearances, which constantly attracted my notice until I reached the flourishing and beautiful little town of Oban. This town, which is concealed from the Western Ocean by the island of Kerrara, is finely situated for trade and commerce. It has a bay, which is of a semicircular form, from twelve to twenty fathoms deep, is capacious enough to hold five hundred sail of merchantmen, and has two entries, one from the south, and the other from the north; it is well protected against the westerly winds, and the fury of the Atlantic, by Mull, and other islands before it. Only a few years since, this town presented nothing but two or three houses, amongst which was a store-room built by a trading company of Renfrew. The local advantages soon afterwards became so obvious, that the Duke of Argyle, and other persons interested, exerted themselves to promote its prosperity; but a respectable and enterprising indi-

vidual, of the name of Stevenson, and his sons, to one of whom I had a letter of introduction, and who settled here in 1778, have most contributed, by their spirited undertakings in various branches of traffic, to raise it to its present consequence. They principally supply the Hebrides in their vicinity with merchandise; they carry on a large coasting trade; deal in meal, kelp, cattle, hides, &c.; and carry on the business of ship-building. There is no place upon the coast of Scotland better adapted, on account of its excellent harbour and road, than Oban, for a great seaport and fishing station.

In times like the present, when we are contending with a most subtle and formidable enemy, this place is peculiarly worthy of the notice of Government, as affording an admirable situation for a royal dock and arsenal. There is a ready communication open with Glasgow, by the Clyde, for the conveyance of stores; Loch Linnhe is navigable to Fort William, which has an easy access with Fort Augustus and Fort George, where a considerable body of troops might be lodged, or barracks might be erected in the neighbourhood of Oban. Ships of war and transports might sail for the West Indies or America, from the west coast of Scotland, with any wind, at all times of the year; and, if the constitution and the garrulous curiosity of the country would admit of it, this coast would

be well suited for fitting out expeditions which should be really secret.

Oban was much enlivened by the expectation of the Duke of Argyle, who, I found on my arrival, was with a party of friends visiting some of the Hebrides. In the neighbourhood of Oban there are some beautiful walks, particularly one to Dunolly-castle, along the bay of Oban. This castle was once the residence of the ancient Scottish Sovereigns; and an aquatic excursion to the Castle of Dunstaffanage, near Connell Ferry, will amply remunerate the trouble of reaching it. The remains of this castle stand on a bold rocky promontory, jutting into Loch Etive. This castle was founded by Ewin, a Pictish Monarch, contemporary with Julius Cæsar. It is said that, when visitors unexpectedly arrive at this castle, and there are not sufficient provisions within for their entertainment, an hospitable telegraph, namely, a *table-cloth*, is hoisted upon a pole on the battlements, which is a signal for certain tenants of the proprietor to bring supplies of fresh salmon, or any other fish which may be in season.

At Oban I engaged a vessel to carry me over to Mull.