

# BALLOCH AND AROUND

by  
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Life in Balloch, the Vale of Leven and Loch Lomondside  
1820-45

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# BALLOCH AND AROUND

RECOLLECTIONS OF PLACE AND PEOPLE SEVENTY YEARS AGO

## PART I

It may be asked, what have I got to say regarding Balloch, farther than can be found in the already published histories? I may say that I intend to encroach very little on what has transpired before my day, but events have occurred since, and I am loath to think of them drifting to the oblivious gulf without any attempt being made to effect at least a temporary rescue. I was born, and lived about a quarter of a century, in the neighbourhood of Balloch, and my memory reaches back to a point some years beyond the allotted three-score-and-ten. The world of those days may be regarded as in some respects centuries behind that known to the present generation. James Watt was then living, consequently that marvellous innovator, the steam engine, was only in its infancy. Henry Bell was still in the vigour of manhood, and steamboats were just beginning to paddle about the shores of the Clyde. Stephenson was not heard of for many years afterwards, and such a thing as a public railway had no existence. The only means by which we could see our way through the winter darkness was by the aid of tallow candles, and oil lamps; gas and electric lights being held in reserve for later generations. Photography being then unknown, the great mass of the people went their way without leaving any other memorial of their personal lineaments than that impressed on the memories of those soon to follow them to the realms of forgetfulness. America was then about two months from our shores, news from India was always at least three months old, and China may be said to have been out of ken altogether.

Recent inventions have, as it were, caused the earth to shrink greatly in size; as formerly to go round it was a rare achievement of two or three years. Now it is a frequent holiday excursion of two or three months. The nations have been, as it were, drawn together, so as to be virtually within earshot of each other. The idea of such a thing as the present newspaper had not then come within the day-dreams of the most sanguine progressionist. The powers that ruled banished poachers, hanged for offences which would now be considered sufficiently punished by a fortnight's imprisonment, and dealt with rebellious Radicals by first hanging them, and then chopping off their heads. To show how narrow our escape had been from barbarism itself, it may be noted that there were then living amongst us some who had not only heard the firing of Prince Charlie's army while on its way to Culloden, but had lived in the days of Rob Roy, and may have seen him in the flesh.

Even in a historical point of view, we inherited a special and most important record, coming down through at least eight centuries. During that time, the titular Earls of Lennox held a first position in the government of the country and gallantly led the "Men of Lennox" to innumerable battlefields, among others to Bannockburn, where their valour extorted admiration from the great King Robert himself.

Balloch was, no doubt, only a portion of the Lennox, but it comprised the residence and headquarters of lords and barons, from whom have descended, not only kings and queens of Scotland, but all the monarchs that have occupied the throne of Britain for the last three hundred years. Another condition which contributed to our importance was that we were next neighbours to, or rather arm in arm with the Queen of Scottish Lakes, and this of itself brought the illustrious to visit us. Above all, there was amongst us a full share of those qualities which have ennobled Scotland, and won for her a prominent position in the march of civilisation. There was, no doubt, the usual blending of the wise and the foolish; there was much to laud, not a little to deprecate, and more than enough to regret. But there is no abiding, and the comparatively insignificant strut and stir of those days have long ago subsided into the silence of the dead ages, quite as much as the tramp and clangour of the mail-clad hosts who occupied the same ground centuries ago.

After<sup>1</sup> shortly referring to the topography of the locality, and changes that might have occurred since, our object will chiefly be to deal with the more prominent features of the humanity that then lived and moved in that portion of the Vale of Leven.

#### OUR CENTRAL POINT

In commencing our narrative we cannot do better than take our stand at the Balloch Hotel, the white walls of which then, as now, partially veiled by the shadows of three large ash trees, give it a very inviting appearance. With some additions it is still the same house, then known as Balloch Inn, which words were conspicuously blazoned on a swinging sign-board at the southern corner. The term “hotel” was not then imported from France, at least had not found its way so far north as Dumbartonshire till a quarter of a century later. The probability is that, judging from its architectural aspect, this house must have been built about the beginning of the present century; but from the fact that a ferry being there from time immemorial, there must also have been a ferry-house, and, as usual, a hostelry.

From this elevated site we have a comprehensive and highly interesting prospect, embracing a portion of the lower end of Lochlomond, with the river Leven “devolving from the parent lake,” where, as the poet characteristically describes it,

“A charming maze its waters make.”

It soon, however, settles into a deep and placid sheet, gliding, majestically on in unruffled, graceful sweep, round the small island, passing the hotel, and at a distance of fully half-a-mile, is lost to view amid an attractive mingling of fields and woods. After this it has a long course of devious windings over its pebbly bed ere it loses itself in the Clyde at Dumbarton Castle.

At the period we refer to there was no bridge over the Leven save at Dumbarton, passage across, both at Bonhill and Balloch, being by boat, and at

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<sup>1</sup> \*The word Balloch (Celtic) meaning “Pass to the field of smooth waters.” The word Leven is a contraction of Lennox, which of itself is a contraction of the word Levanax, meaning “plane tree.” The territory embraced under this name extended from Arrochar on the north to Kilpatrick in the south; and from Cardross on the west, almost to the Forth on the east—Dumbarton being chief town.

the latter only for vehicles and cattle. At Bonhill the current was sufficiently strong, to propel a boat held by, and swinging from, a chain fastened in the middle of the river, some distance further up; which arrangement was not suitable for heavy traffic. At Balloch the comparative stillness of the water admitted of a small rowboat for passengers. Another consisted of a broad flat platform, with high perpendicular sides, in which more than one vehicle could at the same time be accommodated. Its propulsion was effected by means of a heavy chain stretching across, and lying at the bottom of the river, save at the point where it was raised to pass over small iron cylinders at each end of the upper gunwale; motion being given by men walking from end to end, and pulling at this chain. If we can imagine the bridge, together with the railway station, and all other buildings, on the west side (with the exception of one long, low house, called Ferryhill) swept away, we fairly restore the Balloch of seventy or eighty years ago.

South of this, on the west bank of the river, there has been little change, the towing-path and the wood of Tillichewan remaining much as they were. The mansion-house, or castle, so pleasantly situated behind those woods, was there so far back as my memory serves, but some still live who can remember the building of it. In the year 1792, Mr John Stirling, of Cordale, purchased the estate from the Colquhouns of Luss. At a later date the Stirlings proceeded with the erection of the castle, but business misfortunes prevented them from carrying it to completion. The first occupant was an English gentleman named Harrocks, who had no business connections in that part of the country, but he and his family remained in it many years. In 1843, the estate and castle were purchased by Mr William Campbell, father of the present proprietor, one of the most liberal-minded and philanthropic citizens Glasgow ever possessed.

On the east bank the buildings nearest the Inn were the smith and joiner works of Mr Jas. Nairn, father of the present occupant, Mr John Nairn. The neat and substantial villa of Bankhead was not then in existence. Lennoxbank house, which, from its mature and venerable aspect, leads many to regard as a relic of the dead ages, was also a thing of the future; but a short distance south of it stood a small, single-storey cottage, which accommodated two families, each having a "but and a ben." In this house the writer of these lines was born, consequently this forms the pivot on which, for at least the first decade his life, experiences turned.

In those days the road to Balloch-Ferry passed close by this cottage, and onward through the site of the existing mansion, the new or present road being afterwards formed some distance behind, so as to give sufficient space for the proposed erection, and the adjoining planting. After the new road was completed, part of the old one was for some time left open without any barrier raised to prevent travellers or vehicles from being precipitated into the excavations, which were of considerable depth. One dark night we were alarmed by the sound of a passing carriage, which had, by mistake, got upon the old road. There was instantly a rush to the door, and warning given just in time to prevent what would have, in all probability, been a fatal catastrophe, as next morning it was discovered that the ground close to the cuttings was rent by the horses' feet.

The situation of this little house was in every respect well fitted for our juvenile enjoyment. Among other items, it afforded us practical lessons in

natural history, which we could learn at first hand. From our back window we looked down a lengthy slope of garden ground to an extensive bog or bay, which now forms the gardens between Lennoxbank House and the river. This bog was prolific of rushes, reed, and a profusion of aquatic vegetation. It was also an excellent harbor for a certain class of the finny tribes, such as pike, eels, braise, and perch, and beyond all, for frogs in their seasons. Thither sturdy urchins flocked for the purpose and pleasure of throwing stones at the poor creakers; for whose sakes alone, had the bog been in France, it would have been quite a fortune to its proprietor. Thither, also, came amateur physicians, chiefly of the fair sex, to gather bog bean, wallink, and other simples, supposed to possess virtues for the cure of colds and other ailments. The bog was further utilised by James Russell, the father of a large family of sons and daughters. He was of the Methodist persuasion, and did a little in the preaching way, although seldom in the immediate neighbourhood. A story went to the effect that, being at Port-Glasgow, a temporary pulpit was erected for him, and at an impassioned phase of his discourse, the floor gave way, and the preacher found himself up to his middle in a barrel of tar. Whatever may have been his success as a fisher of men we know not, but at all events he, on one occasion, brought home with him a considerable quantity of old fishing-nets, took undisputed permission to set them in the bog, and the result was an important accession to the family larder in the commodity of pike. That this fresh-water shark is valuable as an article of diet may be argued from the fact that most of James' seven or eight sons attained a stature of six feet, and the four daughters to a proportionate height.

In winter, when the lake and river were swollen by rains and the melting of snow on the mountains, the bog was overflowed so as to leave no perceptible distinction between it and the ordinary channel. There was thus a considerable expanse of water, and I can well remember that, in windy, winter weather, the waves rose so high as to swish in white foam along the foot of our garden. During these seasons flocks of wild ducks and other water fowls ventured down from the loch, and there wheeled and dived in pursuit, no doubt, of their own interests; but, at the same time, to our high gratification while watching them. They were, however, shy and jealous, as well they might, for there were firearms about, and men who could use them. The result was that many of these interesting, industrious, and quick-winged creatures never returned to their fishing-grounds among the isles.

Beyond the river, and almost opposite our house, the salmon fishers plied their calling.<sup>2</sup> An elder brother and I were frequently with them, and at an

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<sup>2</sup> "The salmon fisheries of Lochlomond and the Leven are of considerable value. In several parts of the county salmon are cured in a peculiar manner, called kippering; and with many persons throughout Scotland, kippered salmon is a favourite dish. It is practised here in the following manner. All the blood is taken from the fish immediately after it is killed; this is done by cutting the gills: it is then cut up the back of each side the bone or chine, as it is commonly called. The bone is taken out, but the tail, with two or three inches of the bone, is left; the head is cut off; all the entrails are taken out, but the skin of the belly is left uncut; the fish is then laid with the skin undermost on a board, and is well rubbed and covered over with a mixture of equal quantities of common salt and Jamaica pepper. Some of this mixture is carefully spread under the fins to prevent them from corrupting, which they are exceedingly ready to do, especially if the weather is warm. A board with a large stone is sometimes laid upon the fish, with a view to make the salt penetrate into it more effectually. In some places, as Dunbarton, instead of a flat board, a shallow wooden trough is used, by which means the

early age we attained to practical intimacy with boats and nets, and fish of various kinds, from the salmon to the skate, eel, and minnow. At the lower end of the bog opposite the “shot,” as the point was called where the net was drawn ashore, there was a considerable planting of fir trees and a large projecting root of one of them, close by the water, was known to all the neighbourhood as the “Miller’s Seat,” so called from the fact that Mr M’Allister; proprietor of the adjacent mill of Balloch, was lessee of the fishing, and was almost daily to be seen seated on this root viewing the operations going on across the river. He was then, when I knew him, an old man in striped nightcap, ample waistcoat, and knee-breeches, and in cold weather wrapped in a Highland plaid. Him we held in high respect, as he often sent us home rejoicing with a “haughie”—the name given to a small trout that had been caught by the gills while trying to escape through the meshes of the net.

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brine is kept about the fish; sometimes two or three salmon are kippered in the same vessel at the same time, one being laid upon the other. The fish, with the board or trough is set in a cool place for two or three days; it is then removed from the board, and again rubbed with salt and pepper; after which it is hung up by the tail, and exposed to the rays of the sun or the heat of the fire. Care is previously taken to stretch out the fish by means of small sticks or hoops placed across it from side to side. After it has remained in the beat a few days, it is hung up in the kitchen or other dry place till used. Some people, in order to give the kipper a peculiar taste, highly relished by not a few, carefully smoke it with peat reek or the reek of juniper bushes. This is commonly done by hanging it up so near a chimney, in which peats or juniper bushes are burnt, as that it receives the smoke; there it remains two or three weeks, by which time it generally acquires the taste wanted.”—Forsyth, R. O.: *The Beauties of Scotland, Vol III*, Edinburgh, 1805.

## PART II

I may here say that, many years ago, there appeared in the *Scotsman* newspaper, a dissertation on piscatory literature, in which it was asserted that poets and novelists seldom wrote from personal experience, and in order to substantiate this, the "Ode to Leven" was specially instanced. It was there said that Smollett knew little or nothing about the various species of the finny tribe, but had his information from a particular dictionary, the name of which was given. The truth is, if Tobias Smollett required to have recourse to a dictionary to aid him in describing the salmon, the trout, the par, or any other of the fishes referred to in his poem, he must have been the dullest boy that ever roved on Leven's banks, or laved his limbs in the transparent wave. I hesitate to say that there was not another boy of six or seven years of age then, or long after, living on the banks of the Leven who could not have from personal observation, supplied the poet with all the information made use of, and a great deal more than he considered necessary for his purpose. Indeed, this little poem gives evidence in every line that its author knew the river thoroughly in all its characteristics along its entire course, and is as perfect an example of the "realistic" as can be found in native poesy.

No doubt great changes have taken place since his day. There was at least one bleachfield (Dalquhurn) then by the river, but no printfield till some years afterwards.

"The milkmaids chanting o'er the pail,  
And shepherds piping in the dale."

have long been silent and unseen. The river's bed, with white, round polished pebbles spread, is now in great part laid with a carpet of turkey red, and the scaly-brood, which still occasionally attempt to make their way to the lake, are frequently poisoned by the chemical compounds that escape from the factories. Huge brick erections, with their multitudes of tall chimneys, vomiting clouds of smoke and vapor that obscure the skies, are not well calculated to awaken the poetic afflatus. Whatever their effects may be in a social and utilitarian sense, were a comparison to be made between then and now, all we need say is, as was said by the old divine on the character of satan—"much may be said on both sides."

### THE FORD

But to return to our personal experience.<sup>3</sup> When a small boy I had, when the river was low, frequently sat with a detachment of the fishers on a knoll at the

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<sup>3</sup> \*The fishings here in those days were valuable both to proprietor and lessee, as salmon and trout were very plentiful, and of such excellent quality as to bring the highest prices in the Glasgow market. The lessee who succeeded the miller was a near neighbour of our own, living at Knowhead, namely, Robert Ritchie, foreman bleacher at the printworks. The fishing was managed by his sons, especially Alexander, long afterwards known as lessee of Bonhill Bridge. It was a delight for us youngsters to visit the house at Knowhead, where large quantities of the silvery brood were daily to be seen put into boxes, preparatory to being sent to Glasgow; and still further, to see and try our hand at the weaving of nets, in which the industrious daughters were usually engaged in the evenings. In addition to the fishings, they kept a number of cows, so that the processes of making butter and cheese were among the object lessons we were privileged to enjoy.

entrance of what was called the Heather Avenue, nearly opposite Dalvait for the purpose of "watching the ford." From this point of vantage large fish, such as salmon and trout could be distinctly seen while passing up the river. When any did make an appearance, a signal was given to a party farther up, who at once shot out with the net, and almost in every case a capture was effected. This method of watching saved the necessity for keeping the cobble constantly going, and the weary drawing in of empty nets.

It may here be noticed that at this ford, in June 1685, the Earl of Argyle with his small Covenanting army crossed the river, and encamped on the hillside behind the village of Jamestown. How they attempted to march through the moorland to Glasgow, lost their way in the darkness, got into confusion, dispersed, the Earl captured near Inchinnan, and ten days afterwards beheaded at Edinburgh, is well known to all readers of Scottish history.

#### DALVAIT AND LEVENBANK

The Dalvait of my first acquaintance has not so far as the houses are concerned, greatly changed, as several of them are still standing; but it is otherwise with the surroundings. The adjacent Levenbank Printfield then occupied a comparatively limited area. Half-a-dozen houses, of not very imposing dimensions, but substantially built, and well kept, with the addition of a broom drying-shed, comprised the whole. Much of the ground now covered with huge brick erections was then open grassy fields, partly for bleaching purposes, and partly as pasture for cattle. Meantime, however, we shall return to Balloch, and refer more in detail to the surroundings north and east of the Inn.

#### LOOKING NORTH

Taking our stand as before, and looking up the river, we have, as has been already said, a glimpse of the lower portion of the lake, with the mansion-houses of Cameron and Arden in the middle distance, and the opening to Glen Fruin in the not very remote distance. The first mentioned of these is, and has been, the seat of the Smollett family since 1762, and has a special interest attached to it from the fact that Tobias Smollett, poet, novelist, and historian, was one of its members. His birthplace, however, was near the village of Renton, not far from the monument there erected to his memory, but the particular house has long disappeared. Tobias, as may be learned from his celebrated "Humphrey Clinker," visited Cameron House in the year 1766, while on a tour north in search of health. Seven years afterwards Dr Samuel Johnson, and his future biographer, Boswell, on their return from the Highlands, stayed a night, and the surly pedant was pleased to say that "here they had more solid conversation than at any other place where they had been." They had been at Rossdhu some day or days previously, had been provided with a boat, and were much pleased in sailing among the isles. When they reached any green spots, however, Johnson was disgusted to find them rough, when he, no doubt, expected them to be smooth and level as a London park. Sir James Colquhoun had them conveyed in his coach to Cameron, and it is added, "our satisfaction was very great, and we were delighted that we had returned to civilisation." By this time the celebrated novelist had been about two years dead. His cousin, proprietor of Cameron, had just erected to his memory the monument at Renton and had procured an

inscription in English to be put on it. Johnson got angry at the thought of an English inscription. "Surely," he said, "it was not meant for Highland drovers, or other such people as pass and repass that way." He then at once sat down and composed one in Latin, which, with some alterations, was adopted, and may still be seen on the monument.

In my remote recollection, the head of the family was John Rouet Smollett, generally designated Captain Smollett, but at a later date he was promoted to the rank of admiral. A tall, massive personage he was, of martial aspect, and typical of what a commander should be. He had served in the navy during the days of Nelson, but how far he may have shared in, or been associated with, the memorable achievements of that great hero, we never learned. One story then current enough, was to the effect that he served on board the same ship with the Duke of Clarence, afterwards King William IV, that they quarrelled and fought, and that Smollett had the best of it. On the other hand, it has been as confidently asserted that the Duke was victorious. Correctly speaking, the present family name is Telfer, the sister of the poet who fell heiress to the property being married to a gentleman of that name, and in taking possession the present appellation was assumed.

Arden, situated about a mile farther north, was, at the period referred to, nearest neighbour to Cameron. There was indeed, a long, low, picturesque mansion between, but farther back on the hillside, called Belretiro, residence of a Miss Rouat, who was related to the Smolletts, but it was demolished when the present palatial mansion of Auchendennan was erected. Auchenhelish House is of a still more recent date. The proprietor and possessor of Arden was Mr Herbert Buchanan, familiarly designated "Habby," a retired Glasgow merchant. What made his house especially noteworthy was the circumstance of its containing the only authentic portrait of Rob Roy. Historians and other writers, while speaking of "Honest Rab," have seldom failed to mention this as an undoubted fact. As Rob is one of the most popular heroes Scotland ever produced, I, at an early age felt an ardent desire to see that invaluable work of art. Learning from the late Mr George Douglas, watchmaker, then in Bonhill, that he required to go professionally to Arden on a certain day, I was happy to find there was no reason why I should not accompany him. To Arden we went, the occupant then being Mr George Buchanan, son and successor of Herbert. On the picture being mentioned, Mr. Buchanan was pleased not merely to show it, but took it from the wall that we might be better able to make a thorough examination. At the same time he seemed to have no faith in its authenticity as a *bona fide* portrait from the life. He characterised it as "a thing his father had picked up in some Glasgow sale-room," but there was no guarantee that the artist had ever seen the bold outlaw. It was a small picture in water colour representing a kilted Highlander in fighting attitude, with his sword raised, and in the background some cottages in flames. A flat front view, showing "length of arm and strength of limb" enough, and, so far as I was then able to judge, not badly drawn. The idea of it being only a fancy picture was a great disappointment, as I expected to have had undoubted confirmation of what I had often before read, and have since seen frequently repeated in print. Arden is situated almost at the entrance to Glen Fruin, where occurred the dreadful slaughter of Colquhouns by the MacGregors, in the year 1592.

Rossdhu is about two miles further on, but not visible from Balloch.

#### BALLOCH CASTLE

On the east side the view of the loch is concealed by the dense wooding, sloping down towards the mouth of the Leven, but beyond these woods, and rising above them, may be seen the summit of Benlomond. About half-a-mile from the Inn, on an elevated site, stands Balloch Castle, a modern creation, and from the view it commands is certainly one of the most delightfully situated mansions to be found in this country. It was built about the beginning of this century by Mr John Buchanan of Ardoch, the title, I understand, being derived from a farm on the estate. This Mr Buchanan was also a Glasgow merchant, a hatter, I have heard it said, but better known as officially connected with the Glasgow Ship Bank, under the well known firm of Carrick & Brown. The former of these is one of the peculiar characters of skin-flint notoriety, without some notice of whom no Glasgow history is considered complete. Mr Buchanan was a very useful member of the company. He it was who put the first signature on the notes, and for him to do so considerable parcels of them were sent down from Glasgow to Balloch Castle by the common carrier, Alexander M'Quattie, and by him were returned to the bank to be completed by the signature of the accountant.<sup>4</sup> Mr Buchanan was member of Parliament for the county of Dumbarton and it was in those days a great matter for a bank to have an M.P. connected with it, as he was privileged to frank, that is, send post free, as many as fourteen letters per day; and Peter Mackenzie, in his "Glasgow Reminiscences", tells us that this privilege saved the Ship Bank hundreds of pounds every year. Mr Buchanan was a Tory, and, very probably was elected at a dinner-party of the constituency, which in those days would not number more than twenty or thirty individuals. He sat for five years. I say sat, for it was said the only speech he ever made had reference to a broken window pane, urging the necessity of having it at once replaced. The House felt the force of his appeal, the more especially as several of the honourable members besides himself had got cold in the head by the draught thereby occasioned. Loquacity in the House of Commons has seldom been chargeable on the Dumbartonshire representatives. At a much later date Mr Buchanan's neighbour across the loch, the late Alexander Smollett, was M.P. for the county. He, too, was a Tory of the most pronounced type. It is on record that he also made a speech and moved a resolution, but with less success. A member following him expressed his inability to understand what the hon. gentleman meant. Mr Disraeli, afterwards Lord Beaconsfield, next rose and said he was not surprised at the remark of the last speaker, as it was evident the hon. member who moved "the resolution did not himself know what he meant." It was surely an act of cold-blooded cruelty on the part of "Dizzy" to treat one of his staunchest supporters so unhandsomely. But that was perhaps a necessary step in his method of

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<sup>4</sup> A Generous Reward.—Some time during the last month a letter, containing money to the extent of some hundred pounds, was dropped by the postman on the Vale of Leven; it was shortly afterwards found by the son of an artisan in the neighbourhood, who shewed it to his father. The father having perused the address, and conceiving its contents to be valuable, notwithstanding desired to take it to the owner, who lived at a distance of some three miles. Having arrived at the princely domain, he was received with much courtesy; the squire giving him in return for the lost treasure and six miles tramp—one sixpence! Caledonian Mercury, February 14, 1842.

educating his party. At all events, he “dished” our respected M.P. from making further efforts in the House.

### PART III

The late Sir James Colquhoun had his turn of the position of Member of Parliament for the county, and sat for a short time; but although he voted Liberal there is no reason to suppose that he ever gave the House an opportunity of judging whether he had a voice at all. What has occurred lately does not materially modify our assertion, but Dumbartonshire may take comfort from the adage that silence is golden.

We must not forget, however, that on one occasion Dumbartonshire had a real orator for its representative, and, at the same time, the most deceptive that ever was entrusted with the honour. That one was a Mr Colquhoun of Killermont. He opposed Sir James Colquhoun of Luss, grandfather of the present baronet, at the election in 1843. Both professed to be Liberals, but Killermont had by far the most fluent tongue. He gave eloquent orations, made great promises, and was carried to the top of the poll amid the hosannahs of the working classes. He was not long in the House till he made the most depreciatory speeches in regard to the working classes having equal right to the franchise with the classes above them. After that the popular detestation was as deep as the former exultation was high. Had he again shown himself in the Vale of Leven he would have been mobbed. But we must return to our first member.

At home, although Mr Buchanan was not considered a paragon representative, he was popular in the neighbourhood. His grounds were virtually open to the people, and great freedom was taken, especially in the woods near the river and the lake. If any decent persons taking a quiet walk, happened to foregather with the laird, he usually entered freely into conversation with them, and made them welcome, not only to outside privilege, but sometimes invited them inside to view the principal apartments of the house. On one occasion, a little lively and ready-tongued woman, wife of a workman at the printfield, named Jamie M'Farlane, but better known by her maiden name of Jenny Lennox, went to the castle to pay her rent, which she always refused to do to any one but the laird himself. The room into which she was shown contained an oil portrait of the laird. After carefully scrutinising it, she gave her opinion "O aye, sir, it's like ye; but do ye no think it's a gude deal to the advantage." Mr Buchanan was himself the reporter of this incident, and it came to be a common expression in the neighbourhood, "As Jenny Lennox said, etc."

The hospitality of the laird was unbounded. Visitors of distinction were many, and among these the world-renowned author of "Waverley," then in the full blaze of his fame. He enjoyed in Mr Buchanan's barge an excursion on the lake, and the oarsmen used afterwards to astonish their friends by saying that Sir Walter knew far more about the loch than they did, although they had been about it all their days. No person acquainted with the biography of Scott can be astonished at this.

#### THE WHITE DYKE

For a considerable time after the castle was built free access by the river side to the lake was not objected to, and it was the custom for parents to take their

children thither, especially when the latter were recovering from whooping cough, the change of air being considered favourable to recovery. This liberty came by and bye to be so greatly abused by mischievous persons injuring the trees and otherwise defacing the grounds, that it was considered necessary to withdraw the privilege. The result was that the high wall, known as the "White Dyke," a short distance north of the Hotel, was erected. By many this was considered an infringement of a public right. No demonstration, however, took place, but one morning it was discovered that a wide gap had been made in the wall, and, the dislodged stones hurled into the water. Who the perpetrators were was never publicly known, but it was supposed to have been the work of the salmon fishers engaged farther down the river. They considered they had, and probably they really had, a legal right to passage by the shore, but the matter never was contested in a law court. At all events, an opening in the dyke was afterwards made, and a gate placed in it, by which access to the grounds was allowed, but this has long been withdrawn.

#### THE OLD CASTLE OF BALLOCH

It must here be mentioned that in the wood, a short distance beyond the wall, stood the old castle of Balloch, for many centuries the residence of the Earls and Dukes of Lennox, who figure so prominently in Scottish history. Indeed, as already said, all the monarchs who have occupied the throne of Britain for the last three hundred years have had Lennox blood in their veins. It was brought about in this wise. A Duke of Lennox, who was Governor of Dumbarton Castle, was detected in a treasonable conspiracy to place Scotland under the sway of the English monarch, Henry VIII, of infamous memory. He took refuge in England, and as a reward for his treacherous efforts was allowed to marry a niece of that monarch. He remained in exile about twenty years. Being recalled by Mary Queen of Scots, he was soon after followed by his son, Lord Darnley, whom Mary subsequently married, and the story of their lives and deaths forms the most thrilling and tragic episode in British history. It will, thus be seen that Lord Darnley was nephew to Henry, Mary was niece to the same monarch, and, therefore in a double sense their son, James VI of Scotland and I of England, had claim to the British throne. Those versed in royal genealogy can have no difficulty in understanding how it is that Queen Victoria has Lennox blood in her veins.

#### THE CAIRN

Balloch Castle was built in the year 1238—that is 654 years ago. The moat or trench which surrounded it was visible within the recollection of people still living, and who used to speak of having seen portions of the walls, but in those days I was not antiquary enough to go in search of them. Near the old site, in the middle of the Leven, there still exists what appears to be a small submerged island, the top of which is visible when the river is low. It is called the "Cairn," and in regard to which a considerable amount of legendary lore was current among the older inhabitants. One version was that eleven ladies connected with, the Lennox family had gone to bathe at this point. One went beyond her depth, another attempted rescue; she in turn was followed by another, and so on until the whole eleven went in, and all were drowned. To commemorate this sad event, the cairn was said to have been raised. It was also said that this circumstance conferred the name Leven upon the river, but, this must be a mistake. Another version was to the effect that the cairn had

some connection with the salmon fishing, a strong post being placed on it to which one end of a net was attached, and from the other end a rope was carried to the castle and connected with a bell, so that when large fish got entangled in the net their struggles rang the bell, and, of course, their own doom. Whether these legends are purely mythic, or have some foundation in fact, it is now impossible to know, but in earlier days they were seriously credited, and had been transmitted from sire to son through many generations.

Another, and apparently a more favoured residence of the Lennox family was in Inchmurrin, from which many of the Lennox charters have been dated. Of this we may have something to say further on.

#### BOTURICH CASTLE

About a mile north of Balloch stands Boturich Castle, originally also a stronghold of the Lennox family. In my early days it was a neglected ruin, roofless and dilapidated, only part of the lower portion being left. The walls were of great thickness, and the stones so strongly bound together that when the building was about to be restored, the use of gunpowder was necessary to separate the parts that required to be reduced. To explore this venerable ruin, I and many of my compeers, turned aside when on stealthy visits to the surrounding woods at nutting season, or when our projected destination was Mount Misery. What afforded us a great amount of pleasure was the ample kitchen, with its arched roof entire, and the huge fire-place, on which our imaginations revelled when conjuring the glorious roasts that must, in the good old times, have crackled there. This castle and grounds at that period formed part of the Balloch estate, but Mr Findlay, grandfather of the present proprietor, married a daughter of Mr Buchanan, and by him the castle was restored and occupied.

#### MOUNT MISERY

How this little hill, rising immediately behind Boturich Castle, has been a puzzle to all the scribes who have had occasion to refer to it.

But whatever the origin of its name, from its summit may be enjoyed one of the most enchanting prospects that can be met with in this kingdom. Indeed, it would appear that nature had placed it there as the grand stand-point from which the lake can be viewed in all its extent and magnificence. As seen from it the lake is of triangular shape, the base extending from Glen Fruin on the west bank, to Balmaha on the east, a distance of seven or eight miles. About mid-way on this line stands Mount Misery, and directly in front of the spectator the water stretches out to the apex, more than twenty miles distant; the two converging sides being formed by ranges of mountains, picturesquely varied in outline, and gradually receding till the farthest appear only a deeper shade of sky. About half-way out to the right, Benlomond, with its towering cone and far, spreading shoulders, figures conspicuously. Within this grand mountain frame are enchantingly grouped no fewer than twenty islands, some of them no more than a mile in length, all varying in size and form; some flat, others hilly, some thickly studded with trees and shrubs, and all delightfully variegated with brown and purple heath, and patches of green sward, with here and there long streaks of shining shore. In autumn especially, there are to be seen the effects of colour which mortal palette never has nor never will approach.

## BALLOCH INN

Balloch Inn had for its host and hostess in those early days the well-known Adam Walker and his better-known wife. She was the ruling spirit, and in many respects well qualified for the position. From the circumstance of Adam being her husband she was usually designated Eve, and had her primogenitor been morally as stern and unyielding, a great catastrophe might have been prevented. She was rather short in stature, but of considerable beam; in facial aspect full, but not rubicund, as those similarly situated are apt to be; of active, bustling gait and manner, and possessed of a temper which made her somewhat more feared than loved. The house was kept in scrupulous order, and as she had in early days been cook in a family of note, was quite capable of providing appropriately the creature comforts for whatever greatness might find its way thither. Adam, who was personally of spare habit and wiry, had the good sense to refrain from interfering in any matters apart from the stables. He had, however, occasional transactions in sheep, regarding which he was considered an authority of the first rank. Like every body else in those days he had no aversion to what is called the “national beverage,” but not to any unusual extent. A rather free indulgence was so common in those days as to prevent any stigma from being publicly attached to an occasional aberration. The bottle was considered an indispensable adjunct in every house, from the highest to the lowest. An idea prevailed to the effect that as a safeguard against fevers, a person should be intoxicated at least twice a year. It was told of a former host of the same Inn that being seized with a severe internal inflammation, a doctor was summoned from Dumbarton, the patient was freely bled, and afterwards doctor and patient drank together till both got oblivious. Adam’s freaks under such circumstances were sometimes amusing enough. On one occasion, while I and others were sauntering in the neighbourhood, our attention was arrested by some peculiar sounds, and on looking towards the Inn there was Adam in shirt sleeves, arms akimbo, stalking hurriedly backwards and forwards, and in his irony Highland accents bewailing his hard fate, of which we were able to judge by his oft-repeated phrase—“Aye, aye! that’s the way my money’s spent.” He evidently felt himself deeply injured, of not an utterly ruined man, and the word *my* was most emphatically pronounced. At the same time his better-half issued from the front door, walked smartly passed him towards a carriage standing at the corner, handed coachee a very thick sandwich, and tendered her instructions. When the vehicle was driven off, she leisurely returned, and while passing her still bewailing husband, she faced towards us and burst into a hearty laugh. We all understood that laugh quite as well as if she had ironically repeated the words “his money.” We knew that whatever pile there might be, to her chiefly the credit was due. It is only justice to both to say that during their long possession the Inn was most respectably and efficiently conducted. They had a family of a son and two daughters. The son died young. The daughters were married, and for aught I know may still be living. Having accumulated a competency and when age was beginning to assert itself in the usual way, the widely respected host and hostess retired to a sheep farm called Glenmolochan, in the Glen of Luss, where, in that quiet and secluded retreat their mortal span was extended to a ripe age.

#### PART IV

A notable feature in connection with the district was the annual fair. As a market for horses, Balloch Fair was almost a national institution, and still retains considerable importance. Horses were brought in from all parts of the country; buyers gravitated from an equally wide area, and, consequently, large sums of money there changed hands.

Locally, the Fair was one of the three permanent annual holidays, the Bonhill Sacramental Fast Day and New Year's Day being the other two. As there were then no railways, the Fair was not altogether an affair of one day. "Gangrel bodies," such as "sweetie wives" and other small dealers, from Glasgow and Paisley, arrived a day or two previously, and contrived to find shelter for the night in houses of the poorer classes of the neighbourhood. But the great heterogeneous mass of stall-keepers, to be in time, required to travel during the night. There was no means of conveyance from Glasgow but by a morning steamer to Dumbarton, and as five miles still required to be compassed on foot a valuable portion of the day was lost before the ground could be reached. The show caravans arrived the previous day, and so numerous were they that, on being ranged and rigged out, they made a display of scenic grandeur which would have done no discredit to Glasgow Fair in its palmy days at the foot of the Saltmarket. In front and around the shows the ground was studded over with tents for the sale of beer and whisky. There was, on that day, no enforced excise prohibition; therefore, a few poles, a plank or two for seats, an old blanket, a jar of whisky and a few glasses, were all one required to become a spirit dealer for the day. Thus it was that on the previous evening the clank of busy hammers, nailing up rafters, could be heard far into the night.

The great day to which we urchins had been for months so anxiously looking forward, and with miserly care hoarding up as much of the small currency as came within our grasp, was now at hand. A pile to the extent of sixpence was considered a fair competency, but when it reached ten or twelve pence the possessor was viewed by his fellows much as people in these days regard a millionaire. That previous night we went to bed early, and with the determination to fall asleep at once as being the best possible way to annihilate, the six or eight hours that still lay between us and the realisation of our hopes.

The first act of this great drama was to witness the coming of the various vendors with their stall furniture on barrows or in carts; candymen and women, lucky poke, rowly-powly, cheap Johns, apple men, and dealers of innumerable grades; especially the horses, which came, not in isolated units or pairs, but in droves. This was a sight in which all grown up people felt, intense interest, and as each and all pretended to great skill in horseflesh, searching, critical comment was kept up all along the line of march for miles away. On that day all the public works in the Vale were closed, and by noon the Fair was in full swing.

Almost all the inhabitants of the Vale were there; lads with their lasses, husbands with their wives and children, old and young, masters and servants, all in Sunday garb, and all prepared to give and receive treat in a spirit of

liberality worthy of the age and of Scotland. Much interest was concentrated on the ferry. Adam Walker had a day of it with his boats which tested all the strength and energy he could enlist in his service. From morning till night they were kept going, the large boat cram full of quadrupeds and bipeds, and under such circumstances the passage was sometimes precarious enough. Indeed, only a year or so previous to my experience, the large boat crowded with passengers was capsized, and several persons drowned. Among these was a highland drover, whose body was not recovered for some days. His dog, which had reached land, for two days afterwards ran along the shore howling piteously, and so deeply impressed the people of the neighbourhood that it continued a current theme within my recollection.<sup>5</sup> Generally, however, the task was accomplished without serious mishap, and a considerable revenue must have accrued to the proprietor. A large business was also done in the Inn itself, as regards both meats and drinks. Besides, in a building opposite the Inn, across the road, called the Kiln, drink was sold in great quantities. Here also, a fiddler was stationed to operate in what was called the penny reels, drinking and dancing being kept up till a late hour; the place being choke full of lads and lasses. Lucky Walker must, from this and her other resources, have had her pockets well lined when the day was over.

Towards the afternoon the proceedings were exceedingly animated. The highway from the ferry upwards was closely lined on both sides with stalls of all kinds, from confectionery to boots and shoes, cutlery, saddlery, and hard and soft goods too numerous to mention. A story was told of two brothers from the Drymen district who had come to the resolution to treat themselves each to a pair of new shoes. The previous evening they measured the length of their feet by means of a pair of tongs laid upon the floor, a wand being cut, to fit into the space that represented the length of the foot. Next day, when

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<sup>5</sup> The capsizing of the Balloch ferryboat in 1811, as reported in a contemporary London newspaper, the *Courier*, and re-reported in the *Lennox Herald* on September 18th 1948.

BALLOCH FAIR 134 YEARS AGO

The following account of an accident to the ferry boat at Balloch—where the old bridge now stands—on the Fair-Day at Moss of Balloch in 1814, appeared in the “*Courier*” (published in London on September 22nd of that year), which came to light in an Alexandria office recently. The “*Courier*,” a very small newspaper was priced 6 1/2d in those far off days:—“On Thursday afternoon, between four and five o’clock, being the great fair-day at the Moss of Balloch, a melancholy accident happened to the ferry-boat at the Balloch, over the river Leven, the full particulars of which are not yet known. We can, however, state on authority that the boat, though every way calculated to give security to the passengers, was, contrary to the advice of the ferry-man, completely overloaded, there being in it nearly 100 persons besides several horses; and it is supposed, some of the horses, owing to the great pressure, having unavoidably been touched by the spurs of the riders, pushed themselves among the people, who flew in a crowd to the one side in order to save themselves from being trampled upon, in consequence of which the boat was upset in about 12 feet of water, where the stream runs with great impetuosity. Every exertion was used by the numerous spectators to save the passengers from their impending fate, and a great number were safely got out. It is impossible to state the number who have lost their lives by this melancholy accident; the bodies however, of Mr. William Graham, flesher of Port Glasgow and of Mr M’Farlane, ferryman at Portincaple, on Loch Long, were found on Friday morning. Soon after the accident it was feared that two persons at least had been drowned, as a horse came on shore and not claimed, which afterwards proved to be Mr M’Farlane’s and a dog known to some persons to belong to Mr Graham, was seen howling repeatedly up and down the whole fair. This faithful animal swam different times across the Leven in search of his master, and, on Thursday night, having gone over the hills, about six miles, he was heard howling at Craighend Ferry, opposite to Port Glasgow, where he had crossed on his way to the fair, and returned on Friday morning to the Balloch Ferry-house, near which place his master was found. It may some days before it be known whether any more persons have been drowned, as the passengers came from all parts of the surrounding country.”

about three or four miles on the way to the Fair they discovered they had forgotten their foot measures, and actually went back for them.

To add to the visual attractions of the Fair, the oratory was overwhelming, each vendor behind his stall, basket, or pack, or from his cart, expatiating at the utmost pitch of his voice on the transcendent merits and cheapness of his wares. The shows, also, in addition to their scenic glories, had their nymph dancers, their stentorian orators of the “walk up! just about to commence” type, with drumming and brass band stormings in ceaseless energy. If effort and earnest endeavour are deserving of success, the claims of these various professionals were very high indeed. The horse-dealing was all done quietly in the field behind the shows, the multitude of recreation and sight seekers taking little interest in the matter.

As the day wore on the treating effects became more and more apparent on a large portion of the male adults. At length the fighting commenced, and was sometimes persisted in with savage determination—fists, sticks, and other weapons were freely resorted to. I cannot recall of any being killed outright, but many received what they never got the better of. There was one case of a powerful quarryman named Currie, whom a Glasgow tailor with his shears stabbed so badly that his bowels protruded, and doctors expected nothing else than a fatal result; but, to their surprise, he recovered, and fought many times afterwards, at the Fair and elsewhere. I can remember an encounter between Glasgow’s great gastronomic champion, Rab Ha’ or Hall, and a tall and formidable blacksmith, regarded as one of the strongest men in the Vale of Leven. Being probably attracted by Rab’s calfskin waistcoat, the smith made some offensive remarks, at which the other at once showed fight, and soon laid his antagonist at his feet. The smith was, however, considerably the worse of liquor, and bystanders interfered to prevent further action. Although not a little fighting was done within my recollection, accounts by people much older represented a still more animated state of matters in their young days. Colquhouns, MacGregors, MacFarlanes, &c., came down from their native mountains, and although not there purposely to quarrel, they often did, and several encounters were sometimes the result. It is possible that Rob Roy may have made his presence seen and felt there, but of that there is no record.

The perils of the Fair were, it might have been supposed, sufficiently imminent to, in a great measure, neutralise the pleasures. Douce and decent men, with their wives and children, might have been struggling in consternation through the crowd, and making continual efforts to avoid horses and vehicles. “O, there’s a horse!” “Whar’s Maggy?” “Maggy, whar’s Kirsty?” “Kirsty, whar’s Patty?” and such like shoutings by the anxious and excited mothers, as they ran from spot to spot, dragging their candyrock-chewing progeny after them into corners of safety, there to abide till an opportunity offered for renewed attempt at progress. Scenes of this nature were common during the greater part of the day, and even on the highway, after leaving the Fair, such fears haunted them until they found themselves safely at home. How such experiences had not the effect of preventing parents from taking their children thither, is difficult to conceive; but to face difficulties and risk dangers were secondary matters compared with not being at the Fair.

Such, then, was the Balloch Fair, or Moss o' Balloch, as locally termed, of my early remembrance. It is probable that the bridge and the railway may have modified the conditions, but having been a stranger to it these fifty years, I cannot speak from personal observation.

Apart altogether from the sale of horses, there must have been it large amount of money carried away by the showmen and the numerous stall-keepers, who considered it worth their while to come so far for a single day's transactions in a sparsely-peopled country district.

The Fair has been in existence for centuries, as old charters testify. From the most recent newspaper reports it appears to still retain a prestige of first-class, importance as a horse market, buyers and sellers in considerable numbers, from all parts of the country, being present.

#### A COMMON LOUNGE

In ordinary days the ferry shore was a common lounge for work people in the evenings, and for idlers at all hours of the day, as there was always a chance of seeing something out of the usual routine, and abundant opportunities for loitering on the grassy banks; adults to smoke and chat, and juveniles like myself to wade, skip stones, and do any little bit of mischief that might conveniently come in the way. Very little custom was, however, given to Mrs Walker, who did not encourage common tipping, and gained her point by charging a higher price for her liquors than in the ordinary public houses. One feature of special interest to such parties was the starting and returning, morning and evening, of the steamer for Lochlomond.

#### THE FIRST STEAMER

At this period the first, and for eight or ten years the only, steamer on the loch was the Marion. I was her senior by a year or so, but she was on the station as far back as my recollection serves. She was among the first steamers built, and much in accord, with the model of Henry Bell's Comet, which may be seen in the Glasgow Museum in the West-End Park. Broad and flat, with roof of cabin raised considerably higher than the deck, and her squat appearance being considerably increased by a projecting gangway on each side, extending from the paddle-box to the stern, and protected by strong wooden railing outside. The steering was effected by means of a long iron tiller, the wheel now universally in use not being then invented. She had an engine of twenty horse power, with walking beam oscillating from the centre, like the usual land engine. Her original owner was Mr David Napier, but in my remotest remembrance she was owned, or, perhaps only partly owned, by Mr John Stuart, proprietor of Levenbank Print Works. When the sailing season was ended she was moored for the winter months in the lade leading to the works, where most of the crew were during the interval employed.

Balloch was the usual starting place, but in times of drought, when the river fell, it was necessary to keep her constantly in the loch; that portion of the route, fully half a mile, being effected by means of a lighter or scow, propelled by the use of long poles.

Tourists from Glasgow were conveyed by a steamer to Dumbarton, thence by coaches on the west side of the river to Balloch. Fare from this for the day's sailing was 7s 6d, and frequently the Marion was taxed to the full extent of her

carrying capacity. As may well be surmised, the company was for the most part vary select. Speed in those days was not the all-important matter it has now become, nor had it been a special consideration in the steamer's construction. All she could accomplish in one day was from Balloch to Rob Roy's Cave and back, holding her course by the west end of Inchmurrin, and thus avoiding the long detour by Balmaha.

## Part V

With regard to Rob Roy's Cave, I heard an old man who knew the loch long before its waters were disturbed by a paddle-wheel, affirm that Rob had never been in it, and that it was doubtful if he knew even of its existence. The account he gave of it was: when the steamer was about to commence plying, the captain and other interested parties proceeded up the loch in a small boat for the purpose of exploring the shores, in expectation of finding some spot where the vessel could be laid alongside and a landing effected without the aid of ferry boats. Having come accidentally upon the opening, it occurred to them that it might be a good ruse to associate it with the bold outlaw. To give credence to the story, one of them, with an iron nail, scratched the name Rob Roy upon the rock inside. Whether this was the true history of the cave I know not, but, if so, it served the purpose well as an advertising dodge and added a new and not the least attractive feature to the Queen of Scottish Lakes. Historians tell a story about King Robert the Bruce being once under hiding within this cave, which he found tenanted with goats, etc.

The first captain of the Marion was James Glen, son, if I mistake not, of a former lessee of Balloch Inn. William Guthrie was then steward, lived in Jamestown, and every morning passed our door carrying a large basket containing viands for the dinner table of the steamer, cooked at home by his clever wife. He latterly became captain as well, and I being known to him, was occasionally, when meeting him, asked if I was not coming with him to-day. This invitation I was sometimes allowed to take. I can yet remember the ecstatic pleasure I even then felt in looking from the bows of the vessel where there appeared to be "no sea," but a boundless sky, throughout which the old lady was vigorously pursuing her way; the mountains and islands doubled, and, as the Scriptures say of the world, "hanging upon nothing." The whole surroundings seemed unearthly, ethereal, visionary, inspiring thoughts of those celestial regions peopled with angels, and where there is neither sin nor sorrow, pain nor death. I have seen many grand pictures by great masters, but none that awakened emotions so intensely exquisite as those experienced while contemplating this lake under calm and sunshine. Some of our greatest men, such as Tobias Smollett, Sir Walter Scott, Professor Wilson, Dr Thomas Chalmers, and Lord Francis Jeffrey were frequent sojourners on its banks and while writing about it, have carried their admiration to the borders of rhapsody itself. In bleak and stormy weather, however, the effect were far from inspiring celestial ideas.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> \*No doubt, in clear, breezy weather, the ever varying effects of sun and shade upon the hills and islands, which the late Horatio M'Culloch could so well simulate with his brush, afford intense pleasure to all who have any capacity for the enjoyment of the beautiful in nature. But in gloomy and boisterous days, when only great black ridges or mountain shoulders were here and there seen as it forcing their way from the midst of whirling misty billows, the suggestions were of openings from the nether regions, rather than anything of a pleasureable nature. In such cases the strong, white-crested waves on the lake rushed to a considerable height, and made it dangerous to venture, especially with sailing boats, among the islands. Consequently, in my youthful days, sails in pleasure boats were rarely used. On one occasion the prospect was so threatening that the new steamer, Lady of the Lake, would not venture from her moorings. The Marion did, but with difficulty made only as far as Inchmurrin. Jamie M'Alpine was, as usual, at the helm, which, as we have already said, was worked by a

## AN OPPOSITION STEAMER

For a considerable number of years the Marion had it all her own way, and it was supposed she was quite a mine of gold to her owners. This was an exaggeration, as Mr Stuart afterwards stated that fifty pounds was the most he ever gained from her in any one year.

At all events, a number of persons in the neighbourhood, believing otherwise, and probably grieving and envying at the good of their neighbour, resolved to make an attempt to divert the supposed gold flux into their own pockets. A steamer was built at Dumbarton especially with that object in view. She was larger than the Marion, more modern in construction, more powerfully engined, and was felicitously named the Lady of the Lake. When she was got upon the station the next move of the opposing parties was to have touters waiting the arrival of the coaches from Dumbarton to solicit for the respective interests. The cheapening of the fares, which, for a time, were almost nominal, brought crowds of holiday excursionists from Glasgow and Paisley, and for their conveyance the vehicular resources of Dumbarton were frequently found to be inadequate.

Balloch had not for several generations been so attractive and exciting as it became under this steamboat rivalry. Idlers came from afar, and as the sport occurred at the usual breakfast hour, many in the neighbourhood hurried their meals in order to witness the proceedings. There were groups of onlookers on both sides of the river, those from Levenbank Printfield favoured the Marion; those from works farther down the river were mostly for the Lady, as she was the opposition boat, and opposition tends to cheapness in sailing as well as in the more indispensable necessities of life.

The zeal of the contending forces was unbounded, always accompanied by a great deal of clamour, and sometimes running into fistic encounters when tourists were in danger of being rudely handled. Eloquence, however, had its normal effects, and the more telling passages were noted by the non-official spectators, and treasured for the subsequent entertainment of their friends and neighbours. One Highlander gained much notoriety by promising, "if you come with me, I shall show you ta' Duke of Montrose's house, if it was not for ta' trees." A modern advertiser, or canvasser, would have omitted the conscience clause. One of the most effective of those orators was a long, lank, lantern-jawed youth of the name of Russell, son of him of the pike nets, previously alluded to, but better known as "Plunket," who was not officially connected with any of the boats. Though brimful of the spirit of fun and trickery, he could assume, when circumstances warranted, a demeanour of the most saintly gravity, and accompany it with utterances so bland and plausible that very few of those who came within his fascinations failed to follow him to the scow of the Marion. Nor was his service unappreciated, as on the return of the steamer the steward had usually a supply of the debris of the dinner table in reserve for him. And, to do him justice, Plunket was capable of polishing it off in a manner that scarcely admitted of rivalry.

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long iron rod or tiller. Although a strong man he could not keep the vessel steady, and the captain getting alarmed began to storm at him. "Take it yourself, then," said M'Alpine, as he let go his hold. The captain did so, but in a minute he was spinning from side to side of the vessel, as ineffective as an infant; and glad to see M'Alpine at his post again.

As soon as the last passenger was got on board, the lighters were dexterously unmoored, and the grand struggle commenced as to which should be first up to the respective steamers, waiting with steam up and ready to start. Just fancy seven or eight men on each side of both of the scows, every one with a long, heavy, iron shod pole, all running in a row from stem to stern on the flat gunwale, and pushing from the shoulder with might and main. There were Colquhouns, MacGregors, Campbells, Grahams, MacAlpines, and other clansmen, promiscuously banded on both sides, but sure I am that never under their distinctive chieftains did their fore-fathers struggle for victory more earnestly, with claymores and Lochaber axes, than did these men oppose each other with their long poles. If it so happened that the lighters came sufficiently close, fights took place, sometimes, with the fists, sometimes with the poles, and they were known even to fall into the water and there continue the struggle. Of all the regattas I have seen there has been nothing to equal the excitement occasioned by those scow races, and the wonder is that such contests have not got into the programmes of the clubs.

This state of matters continued during the summer months, and although the Lady made once a day the round by Balmaha, and proceeded two or three miles farther up the lake, the Marion still contrived to hold her own. Upon the whole the Lady was an unfortunate boat, accidents to her machinery or hull frequently occurring, and other mishaps that eventuated in loss of life. There was no pier in those days either at Luss or Tarbet, and on one occasion at the latter, the ferry boat from the Lady was capsized and nine or ten passengers drowned.<sup>7</sup> On another occasion the dock hand, while attempting to lower the

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<sup>7</sup> The incident was recorded in a broadside:

A Full and Particular Account of that FATAL ACCIDENT at Tarbet on Loch Lomond, on Friday last, 29th August, 1828, by the upsetting of a Boat, by which Eleven Lives were Lost.

Tarbet is a small hamlet on the western bank of Loch Lomond and the steamers, in making the voyage up and down the lake, usually stop there for a few minutes to land and take on board passengers. Between two and three o'clock on Friday the Lady of the Lake, on her way down the Loch, arrived opposite the place, and a small boat, with twenty-one persons on board, including the two boatmen, instantly put off from the shore. The lake was as smooth as glass, and the steamer only about thirty or forty yards from the beach; but owing to the boat being heavily laden, and her equilibrium exceedingly delicate, the unfortunate individuals on board were naturally apprehensive of some disaster. A person, who was standing on the beach, described the boat as "wabbling" on from one side to the other, till it had nearly reached the steamer, when it made a "creen" so alarming that a number of the passengers started up and clustered to the higher side, when she instantly heeled over, and turned keel uppermost. So suddenly were the whole of the unfortunates engulfed, that only one or two shrieks were heard by the crowd on the deck of the steamer. Notwithstanding the consternation which prevailed on board, a boat was promptly lowered, and, with the assistance of one or two skiffs from the shore, it rescued a number of the drowning people. The first boat which put off from the shore was launched by two women. They had no oars, but one of them used a piece of plank as a substitute, and the other her hands. One or two men rushed chin-deep into the water, in order to tender their aid; but not being swimmers, they nearly perished, without being able to accomplish their humane objects. Nine individuals, some says eleven, out of the twenty, perished. Several of those who escaped reached the shore by swimming. One stout swimmer, at the moment the boat threw out her cargo, found three partners in peril clinging to the skirts of his coat. A seaman belonging to the Leven, who happened to be on board the Lady of the Lake, and who was instrumental in saving four lives, stated that the boat came roughly against the steamer, which occasioned it to dip quite to its gunwale, and thereby induced the incautious movement among the passengers which led to the fatal catastrophe. The lake deepens very abruptly at this part, and is nearly five fathoms

small boat while the steamer was at full, speed, got, thrown into the water and perished. Casualties of this nature made her to be regarded as an unlucky boat. This competition continued for some years, but ultimately the Marion was superseded, and, I believe, ended her career by becoming a wreck somewhere on the shores of Loch Fyne, where she had been stationed as a ferry boat. The Lady continued to sail till 1835, when she was withdrawn and put up on a station on the Clyde, and soon after also came to grief, but I cannot remember how. Instead of a mine of gold she proved a dead loss to two separate companies that in succession owned her. The Marion's successor had been some years running on the Clyde, and in build and power, and, consequently, speed, was superior to the other two. She was classically dubbed Euphrosyne, but locally the final e was ignored, and the word pronounced in three syllables. The after history of the Lochlomond steamers, which, when under a new and unopposed company has been highly prosperous, but I cannot follow from my own observation. There is one comparatively trivial circumstance which I may here notice. One evening, after the return of Marion, I happened to go on board, when my attention was attracted, to one of the crew, a man probably about twenty-five years of age, with trousers turned up to the knees, busily at work with bucket and mop scouring the deck. Occasionally he paused, lifted a book from a form, looked earnestly at it for a minute or so, laid it down, and then resumed his scrubbing. This I saw him repeat several times. Had it occurred in the present era of schools, School Boards, penny "dreadfuls," and overwhelming deluges of printers' ink, it would have passed unnoticed, but those were, in a literary sense, antediluvian days. It was almost as rare a sight as seeing a man with a long beard, or a white crow. I was in no way acquainted with him, but knew his name to be Gardner. For some years after I neither heard nor saw anything of him, and had forgotten the circumstance. One day while walking along one of the streets of Glasgow, I observed coming towards me a tall gentleman in fashionable black suit, and in an instant the bucket and mop flashed upon my mind. It was Gardner, now, as I learned afterwards a full-fledged medical practitioner diligently pursuing his professional duties. The bucket and mop had been the prelude to the pestle and mortar, and, at the same time, no doubt, a means for raising the where-withal for paying college fees. I understand he was highly respected as a citizen and appreciated as a physician, but he had a comparatively short career, having died many years ago.

#### THE GLASGOW EDITORS

The route of the coaches carrying passengers from Dumbarton to Balloch was on the west side of the river, by Renton and Alexandria. A trial was made by the Marion, party to run a coach on the east side, by Bonhill, but owing to the hilly, uneven ground it did not succeed. One day, then, I chanced to be at

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water where the accident took place. It is worthy of remark, that the unlucky boat righted very soon after proving so faithless to her trust. Some of who were picked up by the boats before life was extinct, were with difficulty resuscitated, though every exertion was made that circumstances, and medical aid promptly procured, allowed. The most laudable efforts were also made to recover those in whom the spark of life was for ever extinguished. Their clothes were instantly cut off them, and their bodies were swathed in warm blankets and laid out in the heat of the sun, where they were rubbed with spirits and salt. Some of them were bled, and attempts made to inflate their lungs with bellows. These exertions were continued while the smallest hope of resuscitation remained.

Balloch, and although the coach had arrived with a goodly cargo of passengers, a row-boat for carrying passengers to the steamer still waited. At length the cause of the delay became apparent as three gentlemen hove in sight. They were arm-in-arm, the one between being tall and unusually stout, displaying a capacious white vest, and a profusion of ruffled linen protruding from his breast. The day was very warm, and this, with the exertions to get along, heightened his complexion, and caused such a copious perspiration as to heavily laden his expressive face. This was none other than the notable Samuel Hunter, editor and proprietor of the *Glasgow Herald*, who, at a steep part of the road, required to alight so as to allow the coach to proceed on its journey. Although an unswerving Tory, no Glasgow editor has been so universally respected. He was genial, jolly, generous, and witty, and incapable of being socially influenced by party prejudices. And here I may refer to another Glasgow editor of quite an opposite political stamp, namely, Dr John Taylor, editor of the *Liberator*, an uncompromising chartist organ. One day, during the Chartist agitation, I was standing at the ferry when the large boat with a party of gentlemen on board, was being brought across front the west side. As usual, when nearing the shore, a single plank was laid to allow people to pass to land without risk of getting their feet wet. Dr Taylor was of the group, and on making his way along the undulating plank, he hesitated and swayed as if about to fall. Some one, in order to inspire him with courage, shouted "No fears! no fears!" When the doctor found himself safely on *terra firma*, he turned round and looked thoughtfully at the plank, and I heard him say, in a low voice, "There may be no fears, but, a good, deal of danger for all that." The remark then struck me as showing a proper distinction between the meaning of the two words, which is not usually recognised by Scotsmen. Well, then, this Chartist leader, and editor of a paper politically opposed to the *Herald*, had no better friend than the Tory, Samuel Hunter, who assisted him with money when he was in difficulties, and continued to befriend him when he was in prison, and to the end of his life.

Taylor was an admirable platform speaker, and his style of oratory unique. He had a full, distinct, and resonant voice, stood immovable, without motion of either head or hands, was never vehement or gusty, and from beginning to end of his address every sentence told most effectually upon the audience.

Another day, sometime previous to the incident just related, as I and some other boys were paddling about the water's edge, a carriage came down towards the ferry, and from it two gentlemen alighted for the purpose of allowing the carriage and horses to be go on board. I did not then know who they were, but in the course of the day I learned that one of them was the great Napoleon's favourite general, known as Marshal Macdonald, Duke of Tarentum.<sup>8</sup> He had been on a visit to his relatives, the Macdonalds of Ross Priory, on the east bank of Lochlomond. In crossing the Leven he was on his way to Inverness for the purpose of visiting the field of Culloden, where,

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<sup>8</sup> Marshal Jacques MacDonald visited on July 9-11, 1825. He joined the steamboat at Taret. It was towing the revenue cutter into which he transferred to visit Ross Priory. As it left the steamboat "It fires fifteen shots. The steamboat travellers salute us with hoorays, which we return." He also visited Buchanan and Balloch Castles. The French MacDonald, J.-D. Hache and D. U. Stiùbart (Eds.) *The Islands Book Trust, Isle of Lewis*, 2010.

some of his ancestors fought on the side of Prince Charlie, and after the defeat succeeded in making their way to France.

## PART VI

Just one incident more, and then we shall pass on to quite other matters. While, on the ferry road, near Jamestown, I one day had my attention arrested by two very pretty, fair-haired boys on ponies, riding in the direction of the ferry. They were the two sons of Lord John Campbell of Ardencaple. The elder of the two did not long survive, and the other is now the great MacCallum Mhor, His Grace the Duke of Argyle. I have since seen him as a handsome stripling, gaining platform popularity in Glasgow and elsewhere ; then by report known him as the hope of the Liberals in the House of Lords; as years and bulk increased, to some extent losing his popularity; and now the word notoriety, may appropriately be substituted.

### AROUND

In those days the house nearest the Inn, going west, was that which still forms the corner where the road branches off at right angles towards Dalvait. There lived in part of that house an old woman called Granny Nairn, who, alone in a coble, occasionally pulled her way to some of the islands in the loch, bringing home with her cargoes of sticks and ferns, for what purpose the latter I do not remember. There also lived John Lindsay, one of two brothers who built, owned, and navigated the only two gabbarts that traded between the loch and ports on the Clyde, the chief commodity being wood. Continuing our course westward, the two-storey house on the right side of the road was there as far back its I can remember. One of its tenants was Sargeant M'Lean, whose military career I never learned. His stories were, so far as I heard them, always of the ludicrously marvellous, told for the purpose of raising a laugh. He was, however, a quiet and decent man with a wife and family, long well known and respected in the neighbourhood. Jamie M'Alpine, pilot of the Marion, with his family, also lived there, and at the south end there was a small, thatched house, where lived a little woman named Kirsty Salmond, from whom urchins like myself bought parlies and hard biscuits. She was aunt to one long afterwards well known in Glasgow as an architect, but still better known as Bailie Salmond, who died in 1889. Behind these was a group of old, low, thatched houses, named Inverlochy, and it was by looking in at the window of one of these I first saw a loom, and a weaver at work. Inverlochy, its looms, and those who wrought them, have long ago perished from the earth, and almost from remembrance. Nearly opposite this, to the left, was then, as now, the lodge to Balloch Castle, but then it was a much less imposing structure. It was occupied by a family named Currie a member of it we have already alluded to. Another enlisted as a soldier, was sent out with his regiment or battalion to Sierra Leone. Twenty years afterwards he came home, being the only one who did not leave his bones on African soil. He was a very quiet man and for many years after his return might have been seen breaking stones by the roadside. A short distance farther on stood a small, white-washed cottage, named Port Royal; how christened I know not, unless from the fact that one of its occupants was John Kater, an old salt of the Nelson era, and had under that great hero done his duty at the battle of Copenhagen. He was a slater, a little, active man, and retained to the last the peculiar steady gait of the decks. Port Royal with its inmates has also

vanished. A short distance on, to the left, surrounded by high thorn hedges, stood a peculiarly antiquated old thatched house, euphoniously designated Blackhouland, where a family of the name of Bisland resided.<sup>9</sup>

A little further on, to the right, at the top of the brae, was a farm house which had no particular name, but was known as Duncan Lamond's; and some little distance from the road, to the left, was a substantial farmstead, the well-known occupant of which was William Lindsay, but much better known as Mollanbowie, the name of the farm, which still stands. This brings us to Haldane's Mill, usually called Mill o' Hadden, so named from the circumstance that in the year 1460 Haldane of Gleneagles married a daughter of the Duke of Lennox and, got with her a slice of the land of Lennox.

This village, or rather, in those days, hamlet, is situated on the highway between Dumbarton and Stirling, and besides the grain mill and farmstead, then consisted of a "smiddy," a joiner's shop, and a public-house. The joiner was a well-known character named Jamie Cook, his specialty being the making of carts; a subtle neighbour at making a bargain, and of whom many queer stories were afloat. There were also in the hamlet a tailor, a shoemaker, and a mason. The first-mentioned was William, or rather Will Burman, whose besetting fault was an ultra fondness for the native beverage. The other two were Peter M'Nicol and David Cameron, both sober, decent men.

The first occupant of the public-house, so far as I can remember, was George Murdoch; he was succeeded by Hugh Macindoe, both having wives and families, and under both of these the large room was occasionally let as a singing or a dancing school, where the lads and lasses of the district were taught the harmony of roar and the poetry of fling. In the latter accomplishment no one could equal Landlord Macindoe. He was a powerful man, then of middle age. When dancing was going on he sometimes came into the room without his shoes, and in stocking soles gave rare displays of what was called side cutting—that is, springing from side to side, rising towards the horizontal, both feet together, and all the while the limbs quivering convulsively under high muscular tension. In comparison to this, the most animated of modern dancing seems but languid, lacadasical dawdling.

Turning south we descend the long slope called the Shandon Brae, towards Jamestown. Before reaching that village the only dwelling, near the highway was the farmsteading of Milton on the left, then tenanted by a well-to-do

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<sup>9</sup> \*This, I have been told, was the parish school till about the end of last century. Its last incumbent was a Highlander, named Macfarlane who had previous to that been teaching in Port-Glasgow. He was from Balloch promoted to the parish school of Kilmarnock, where he lived to a great age. I can remember him, acting as precentor in that parish church when he was too infirm to stand upright, then apparently the wreck of a large and powerful man; and the strong, yet wheezing, trembling, guttering voice, as it issued from his thin, wire-woven lips, still lingers in my ears. Strange to say, my father, when a boy, had been a pupil of his in Port-Glasgow; many years after my mother was a pupil of his in Kilmarnock, and both had much to tell us of the peculiarities of this uncouth pedagogue. Navigation had been one of his acquirements in the former place, and while in the latter his boast was that he "could launch a boat in Shon Bisland's loch, and sail her to the coast of Africa." In his old age he was assisted in the school by his son, Peter Macfarlane, who afterwards was appointed governor of Dumbarton Prison, and in that capacity was much respected. He died about ten years ago.

farmer named Walter Scott, but, as he himself use to say, “not the great Sir Walter.” A short distance behind, on the “braeface,” was another group of the old world, peat reeked, thatched houses of the Inverlochy type, called Birniehill; and still farther back, and a little more to the south, was another batch of the same character, called Ruchet Moss. In the former, one of the tenants was a reputed witch, which was certified by the fact that on dark nights lighted lanterns, without any visible attendants, had been seen moving along the road and entering Meg’s house by the chimney. Ruchet, however, ought to be worthily remembered from the fact that there Mark Scott, brother of Walter just referred to, kept a school which, from its isolated position, had a very limited attendance. But Mark showed much ability as a gravestone letter carver, many of the most tastefully cut inscriptions in Bonhill Churchyard being from his chisel. Birnie and Ruchet, with many generations that had found shelter under their blackened roofs, have long since and for ever passed away. The same must be said of a rather long range of grimy houses of the same character which stood at the south-west end of Jamestown Bridge, appropriately enough named, Blackstick, where at least three families lived. The father of one of these families was named William Harrison, engaged in the salmon fishing but known to fame, in the neighbourhood, as a poet.<sup>10</sup> His effusions, more grave than gay or humorous, were printed, and bought and admired by not a few. Another of the residents was Charles, or rather, Charlie Glen, then the Bonhill carrier, going twice a week with his caravan to Glasgow.

#### JAMESTOWN

Jamestown, at this period, consisted, of only one row of houses on the east side of the highway, most of them two stories in height, several of which still exist. This name arose from the circumstance of the various proprietors of these houses having the Christian name of James. But in those days the village was usually denominated Damhead, the dam supplying the mill of Balloch being close by. It had then no public-house. There were, however, two shops, one kept by old Mrs Buchanan, but the stock consisted of a few sweets, several penny picture books, and some oranges and toys at the New Year. The other was the only grocery in the district, its owner being Robert Fenton. He was then mason at the adjoining printfield, and his wife during his absence kept the shop. During this period he superintended the building of Lennoxbank House, and it was said he and the proprietor, Mr Stuart, were the only architects engaged in making out the plans. Some years afterwards Fenton built the first house that was erected on the west side of the road, and in addition to groceries, procured a license for selling spirits. His wife having died he attended to it himself, did a large business for many years, accumulated a considerable amount of money, which did no one any good, as his family of three sons and one daughter all fell victims, only one surviving him.

One of the notables of Jamestown in those days was Nanny Miller, a spare, hard-featured, ready-tongued widow, who was post runner—Post Nanny—to and from Dumbarton three times a week. She had two sons then about middle age. The older, Alexander, always spoken of its Sawney Miller, was rather

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<sup>10</sup> William Harriston.

notorious for his uncouth personal appearance and erratic behaviour, although his irregularities occasioned more merriment than denunciation. He was a block printer, but enlisted in the army, was present at the battle of Barossa, and when he returned made that fight the theme of a poem which he published, along with others, chiefly lampoons on people to whom he had a dislike. Stone breaking and going about selling his poems were his vocations in the latter portion of his life. Being in Helensburgh he, for some very trifling offence, was harshly arrested and put in a cell, and two hours afterwards was found on his knees dead, having strangled himself with his braces. His brother Andrew, also a block printer, was in all respects a different man; steady, upright, and careful of his money, and in this last respect was an exception to the great majority of his fellow workers. When the evil day came which closed the works, Andrew was one of the few who did not require to go away in search of work. He invested in property which made such returns as enabled him to be comparatively at ease for the remainder of his days. He was in politics one of the few Tories then to be found among the workmen in the district. He had great respect for dignities, was a man of taste, paid court to the learned, was much in favour, with the teacher and the minister, and his prudent and most exemplary life was extended till he was upwards of four-score years.

## Part VII

Adjacent to the village, at the dam head, was, and is, the Bonhill Parish School, although distant more than a mile from the village and church of Bonhill. The mill of Balloch, a short distance west of the dam, is very pleasantly situated among fields and foliage. A substantial two-storey house was attached, and here, in preference to the manse at the village of Bonhill, the minister, the well-known Rev. William Gregor, set up his abode. In this quiet retreat the reverend gentleman passed, in single blessedness, his ministerial career, which comprised a space of about forty years. We had thus in our corner of the parish the parson and the schoolmaster, and as they were both men of mark we must devote a little space to each of them.

Before doing so, and in order to complete our round of the district, we must refer to the only two dwelling-houses which then intervened between the schoolhouse and the village of Bonhill. The first; of these was the one of two-storeys, called Arthurstown, which still exists, close by the railway station. It was occupied by people engaged at the printfield, the two I best remember being Duncan Stewart and Duncan MacGregor, both Highlanders—very. The former seriously declared that he had been drunk at least a hundred New Year Days, and it was difficult to make him comprehend that if so he must have been more than a hundred years old. MacGregor was a short, sturdy, rough Highland filly of a man, of whose sayings and doings many funny stories are afloat. For instance: one winter morning, when his wife was ailing, he got up early for the purpose of lighting the fire. Meaning to avail himself of the bellows, he commenced to blow with the valve side uppermost, but, in his own phrase, “Tevil a bit would she plow at all, at all.” To remedy this defect, he went down to the works with the maligned wind-blowers for the purpose of having “ta hole” closed up. On another occasion, when he was himself unwell, he, on a Saturday afternoon, proceeded to Dumbarton to seek medical advice. The prescription he got in a small phial, with instructions to take so many drops twice it day. After leaving the town on his way home, he thought of having a taste, and felt the better of it. A little farther on he again took to tasting. Finding further improvement he thought, as there was now only a “mouthful altogether,” he had better take it all. He did so, and next morning was found lying sound asleep at the roadside. He came home completely cured.

I should say that, attached to this house, was another small house with roof of single slabs, in which old Mrs Brodie lived. Its peculiarity was that from the middle of the outer wall rose a brick chimney, perhaps ten or twelve feet high, and scarcely more than the same number of inches square. So much was it off the perpendicular that the wonder to many was how it kept its feet at all, even in calm weather. Winter after winter came, hurricane after hurricane, which uprooted large trees, swept houses of their slates and chimneys-pots and devastated the neighbourhood, yet this apparently tottering fabric, lean and leaning, grinned a contemptuous defiance to all. Whether, like the leaning tower of Pisa, it had been purposely built with the hang, is uncertain, but whoever was the builder his name ought to have been placed on the list of great men. Thomas Carlyle immortalises his father for his substantial building

of a bridge at Eeeflefechan, but I do not think he ever achieved anything to match Brodie's lum.

The other house one of the most enviable and attractive in the district, was situated almost opposite, on the west side of the public road. It was the residence of a Mr Arthur, who had once been partner in the adjoining printfield, but in my recollection he owned another printfield at Bonhill close by the church, chiefly known as Arthur's or the Weefield. In it he was succeeded by Mr Gilbert Lang, whose manager for some time was Mr, now Sir John Pender, of Manchester. This printfield has long since, disappeared, its site and that of the old manse being partly absorbed by the churchyard.

Levenbank House was of two storeys, its shining white walls being relieved and enlivened by peacocks, usually seen, with feathers in full fan, sitting on the railing opposite the windows. A smooth, green field separated it from the public road, and behind and on both sides were masses of foliage, in which forest trees, fruit trees, ornamental shrubbery, and flowers were pleasingly combined. After the owner's death the house lay tenantless for some considerable time. One morning, it was discovered to be on fire, and notwithstanding every effort by the people of the neighbourhood nothing was left but portions of the outer walls. In this condition it remained for years, when it was purchased by a farmer named Ritchie, who had it cobbled into a hive of cells or dens, which he let as dwelling-houses. Poor people or people who could find a house no where else, flocked thither, and in a short time it was swarming with human life—young and old. The natural consequence was that it soon became a hot bed for fevers and other diseases; a moral and physical nuisance to the surrounding community—as much an eye-sore and repellant to the beholder as it had previously been attractive and inviting. If I rightly recollect this plague spot was got rid of only when it and the grounds came into possession of Mr Ewing, now Sir Archibald, whose manager's house now occupies the site, and to some extent restores the lost prestige.

Of the early history of the Mill of Balloch, where the minister was so much at home during his forty years of pastoral life, I know nothing for certain; but being in the olden times called Napierston Mill, it has, in all probability, been in existence since a John Napier of the Kilmahew family married a daughter of the Earl of Lennox, about the year 1460. With this lady he received, as Haldane had done, a portion of the Lennox lands. It does not appear, however, that the mill came into his possession, as he had the privilege of having his grain ground free, as an equivalent for allowing the salmon fishers to spread their nets and keep their boats on ground belonging to him at Dalvait—a Gaelic word meaning "Field of the boats." The old miller M'Allister (already alluded to), was himself proprietor of the mill and adjacent grounds, and on his death they came into possession of his nephew, Peter M'Allister, long and well-liked by every person in the neighbour for his kindly, genial, and happy disposition. When the neighbouring print works extended so much as to hem him in on all sides, he sold the whole of his estate to the proprietor of these works, and emigrated with his family to New Zealand. Here he was near neighbour to the warlike Maories, with whom he lived for many years before his death on the most friendly terms. Several members of his family are still there.

OUR MINISTER AND TEACHER

In person the minister was fully the ordinary stature, of spare habit, in walking had a slight stoop, and very quietly trotted about without assuming any airs of superior sanctity or professional dignity. The teacher, Mr Patrick M'Neil, parochial schoolmaster and session clerk, as he chose to designate himself, in many respects the opposite of the parson, was scarcely the ordinary stature, of full bodily habit, walked erect with slow and measured step, and assumed such an air of dignity as to beget for himself the soubriquet of "Princey." When obeisance was duly paid him by raising the bonnet or hat, the response, by the stately yielding of the body, and graceful motion of the hand and arm as he pronounced the words "fine day," would have done credit to that master of politeness, George IV of not very blessed memory. This peculiarity was duly noted by the minister, who was not averse to make it the occasion of a little fun when he was in the humour. On one occasion, when two or three of us boys were in the way, the minister came forwards and, in accordance with home instructions we took off our bonnets, but the minister's remark was—"Oh, never mind me; yonder is Mr M'Neil, run and do it to him?" all the while this good man, in gleeful mood, stealthily turning round to see and enjoy the denouement.

Patrick's intellectual endowments were very meagre. Besides a limited, and by no means accurate, knowledge of English, he knew some Gaelic, of which he was in the habit of saying—"The Gaelic is the most expressive language with which I am acquainted."

Compared with the satchel of the present urchin, which, contains an epitome of the national library, ours was a very portable affair. The wee spell, the big spell, the New Testament, the Bible, and the Collection, in rotation, comprised the whole literary equipment; while Gray's Arithmetic and a copy book were all the additional requirements for completing the curriculum. Grammar was a thing almost unknown. Scanty as this course of instruction was, the majority required to put up with it, and it was astonishing how some made it serve their purpose in making their way in the world. They were thus put into possession of the key to knowledge, and by its aid, and the will to use it, could wriggle their way to considerable attainment in any department of literature or science.

The dominie could, however, write a fine hand, clean and pleasing to the eye as copper-plate. Of this half the Bibles in the district could testify, by the name of the owner being, by special request, written by him on the blank leaf. His position of session clerk added somewhat to his income which, after all, was a very insignificant pittance compared with what is now common in Board schools. At bookings, or putting in the cries, as the initiatory step to publishing the banns was called, his habit was to say, after stating the statutory sum, "any more's your pleasure." Besides, he had a fair musical voice, and led the psalmody in the church, but what money allowance was made for that I do not know.

On Sunday mornings, immediately before the Minister entered, Patrick from his desk under the pulpit made the proclamations, with such a full intonation and grandeur of effect that those who heard him could never forget. All the church-going ladies, with exception of the *gentry*, came early, so that, on no account to miss the well-known "There is a purpose of marriage," etc., which

had a more earnest and devout attention than any other part of the day's proceedings.

## PART VIII

There was, indeed, one more perquisite constituting an item in his record of yearly drawings, which must not be forgotten. That was the Candlemas offerings. Every scholar brought some silver money, ranging from sixpence, but rarely exceeding a half crown, the boy or girl giving most being proclaimed king or queen, and presented with two oranges, all others getting only one. Patrick was regarded as keen in the matter of getting and keeping money, and on such occasions was jealous of any keeping back of the sum with which anyone had been entrusted. I well remember on one occasion when a boy named Walker, nephew of, and residing with, the lessee of Balloch Inn, had been displaying among his companions two half-crown pieces. Before the money was taken Walker had slipped out of the school, and, the dominie missing him, enquired where he had gone. Some one said he had gone out to change one of his half crowns. At this the dominie became furious, and was about to send a boy in search of him, when the door opened and Walker made his appearance. At once, without making any enquiry, Patrick rushed at him, and while belabouring him with his hands, exclaimed—“How dare you, sir, go to change any of the money your aunt gave you for your offering?” Till then the poor fellow was perfectly ignorant of the cause for his flogging, and at once denied that he had done so, proof of which he gave by pulling from his pocket the two shiners intact. The effect was miraculous. In a twinkling vengeance gave way to loving kindness and mercy. The most mollifying terms in the pedagogue’s vocabulary were used, and evidence the most convincing given that repentance was genuine. That day Walker was declared king.

It was, if I mistake not, on this occasion that Patrick, the day being cold, put a glass or two of whisky in a quart bottle, filled up with water, and all were treated to a taste. Had this been done in these days, we all know how the vials of teetotal wrath would have been poured out on the dominie’s silver lock, but then it was otherwise. When we got home, no doubt rejoicing under the baleful effects, and told what we had been getting, there were only smiles, and the act regarded as very considerate in “the maister,” seeing the day was so cold.

Children in those days were not allowed to remain long at school, as, before they had reached the age now fixed by statute, viz., thirteen, many of them had been four or five years in the printshops, working in a highly-heated, and chemical effluvia-pervaded atmosphere from six in the morning till six in the evening, the remuneration being two shillings or half-a-crown per week.

With regard to the minister, he, as we have said, by no means magnified his office by affectations of any kind, unless it was in his scholastic punctilios. He had in early life been a teacher, and his acquirements in the classical languages were acknowledged by his co-presbyters to exceed what was usual amongst them. His examination was an ordeal to which many aspirants for the ministry trembled to submit. At that time the whole of the parish duly lay upon his shoulders, marriages, baptisms, and burials for the most part demanding his services, which were usually willingly given. Every person knew the minister, the minister knew every person, and although there were

numerous dissenters in the parish, he and they jogged along in a spirit of cordiality not always to be found under similar circumstances.

He belonged to what was called the Moderate party in the Church, and was not considered a strict disciplinarian in dealing with his flock. Many of them were seldom seen in church except at Communion services. A remark of his was that "the church was all good enough, but there was no need to be always riding on the rigging of it." I do not think we require to expend any tears of pious regret over these irregular attenders, as many of them were good, simple and God-fearing men and women. They did not require preaching to remove doubts, because they had none, which would scarcely have been the case had they lived down into the distracting theological vortex which is now foaming and churning around us on all sides.

#### HOLY FAIRS

On fast days (the Thursdays previous to the Communion Sabbath) by far the majority of the parishoners embraced the opportunity for visiting friends at a distance, or for crossing the hill to Cardross, to wade, bathe or gather shellfish. On Sunday, besides the services in the church, there was the tent preaching in the churchyard, continued for the greater part of the day by relays of clergymen; the assemblage, usually very numerous, being seated on the tombstones under the far-spreading boughs of an immense ash tree, which had been planted there centuries before. An old residenter told me he was present on an occasion when the eccentric and quaint old Mr Oliphant, of Dumbarton, was holding forth in the tent. A number of boys had got upon the branches of the tree, and having become somewhat noisy, the minister paused in his discourse, and shouted at the highest pitch of his voice—"Take these boys down, and bury them twenty feet below ground." Oliphant was dead before my church-going days. Jeffrey was the minister of Dumbarton I first knew. He was a most energetic preacher, a wonderful favourite of the older people of Bonhill, some of whom were pretty rough Christians. Their expressions of admiration of him were reported freely enough, but in terms which would not commend themselves to all ears.

The same round of clergymen reappeared year after year. Among these was Rev. Dr Napier, of Glasgow, who was a special favourite of Gregor. Said the latter on one occasion, "Now you have heard a sermon to-day which you will not hear equalled until Dr Napier comes back again."

The other ministers were Dr Graham, of Killearn; Messrs Lochore, of Drymen; Carr, of Luss; White, of Kilmarnock; Proudfoot, of Arrochar; and Jeffrey, of Dumbarton. There was also Wilson, of Cardross, but he had lost his sight and had, in my time, ceased from coming to Bonhill. White had also become blind, but continued to attend meetings of presbytery at Dumbarton, but at the dinner he usually gave signs that he had not lost his appetite. Oliphant in his latter days was also blind, and when asked what he would have to eat his reply was "What's Andrew White eatin'."

#### A BIG DINNER

For a considerable time the "big dinner" on the Monday after the sacrament, took place at the Mill of Balloch, but subsequently at Balloch Inn, where Mrs Walker could supply the good things of this life as unctuously as these holy

men could supply nutriment for the life to come. They considered it, however, a duty to make the best of both worlds; and everybody knew they were not altogether “moderates” in carnals. On one occasion, when the company were taking their seats at the dinner table, sounds of instrumental music were heard, and it was discovered that the Bonhill band were in a boat returning from an excursion on the lake. What could have been more fortunate? They were hailed, came ashore, and were delighted to give their services to add additional relish to the creature comforts of which the fathers and brethren were about to partake. Seats were provided for them in front of the Inn, and having had their inner man refreshed, they discoursed in a manner which gave the big dinner an *eclat* that it never had before. Although the good men would in all likelihood find this very soul-cheering after the dry and exhausting services of the preceding days, it was considered by not a few simple-minded folks in the neighbourhood as unbecoming, and not at all in keeping with the solemnity which should characterise the proceedings at such a season.

A rather good anecdote was told of the minister and one of the heritors, the well-known Mr Alston of Westerton, grandfather of the present possessors. At a meeting of the heritors for the purpose of considering the propriety of rebuilding the church, Westerton made some remark which displeased Gregor, and called from him the rejoinder, “But we all know, Mr Alston, you do not care much for the church at any time.” The reply was, “No, Mr Gregor, and if you paid as much for it as I do you would care just as little.” I have no doubt they both spoke the truth.

Mr Alston was a well-known personage in the neighbourhood. He was tall, thin and of gentlemanly appearance. He had a tenant in one of his farms named Willie Peters, and the two spent a good deal of time in the house of another tenant known as Jenny Cook, who sold whisky. Peters used to say that the only difference “between ‘e laird and ‘e tenant was that ‘e tenant had aye the maist siller amang his hauns.” It was further said that when rent-day came round there was always a balance in favour of Jenny. Many sad and deplorable scenes of dissipation occurred in that out-of-the-way houff at Ballagan.

Although there were indubitable traces of the Holy Fair in these Bonhill sacramental occasions, they were not nearly so marked and notorious as in some of the neighbouring parishes. For instance, at Cardross, drinking booths and salmon dinners induced many to flock there from Dumbarton and the Vale of Leven. One who went over the hill told me that, when near the church, his attention was attracted to people running from the tent service in the churchyard, and entering a field close by, in which a fight was going on. A steamer used to sail from Dumbarton to Arrochar on the Communion Sabbath of that parish, and always had as many passengers as she could carry. This occurred in the good old days when Scotland was supposed to be more religious than now, but it would be an unwarrantable stretch of charity to believe that sermons were the chief attraction. Under the guise of carrying people to a sacrament the steamboat company escaped the charge of Sabbath-breaking, although their sole aim was the increased dividend thereby accruing. On the other hand, the passengers had no better object in view than a day’s

recreation, with full scope for “refreshments”—a cheat-the-devil policy on both sides.

It is but fair to say, however, that this Holy Fair business was not confined to the Established Churches, but, from the fact of their State connection, they were more conspicuous than those of the dissenting bodies. Those who had experience of what took place at the sacrament of the Relief Church of Kilmarnock may remember the running to and fro during the services from the church to the public-houses, at least two of which were conveniently near. Quite enough there was to justify the picture Burns has given of what occurred in his day.

In my youthful days I had considerable experience of this church, but, although there had been tent preaching, it was discontinued before my time. It was brought to an end in this wise. The tent had been erected on Saturday as usual, but on Sunday morning, to the surprise of many and the dismay of some, the sacred rostrum was found lying, with head down and heels up, at the back of a dyke near which it had been placed. Nobody blamed the good minister, Mr Murdoch, for giving any authority for this, but it was shrewdly and truly guessed that none other than the minister’s wife, with the aid of a man servant, had been the irreverent perpetrators. However, the tent was disjointed, taken inside the church, and placed against the wall near the pulpit, from which it never was removed so long as I was in the habit of visiting that church.

## PART IX

During the fierce controversy on the voluntary question which prevailed previous to the disruption of 1843, Gregor, although not taking an active part on platforms, was none the less keenly and even bitterly interested. At a meeting of the friends of the Church, held at Dumbarton, he was a speaker, and took occasion to stigmatise their opponents as embracing the rag-tag and bob-tail in the community. The phrase being new to the Vale people, occasioned a considerable amount of merriment, and perhaps, to some extent a spirit of retaliation among a certain class. I was, one day soon after, standing on the Balloch Road in conversation with a young man who was a zealous dis-establisher, when we observed the minister coming at his usual slightly-stooping, half-trot pace. While he was passing my neighbour suddenly turned towards him, exclaiming—"Well, old rag-tag, how are you?" The parson raised his head and gave him a sharp glance, said nothing but immediately changed his pace to full trot, and was soon out of sight. This may be thought impertinent, as no doubt it was, but the zeal of the house on both sides had eaten up to some extent the neighbourly courtesies and amenities that ought to exist in civilised communities.

The only other clergyman then in the Vale of Leven was the Rev. John M'Kinlay, of the Old Burgher denomination, Renton, and for a considerable time it was not known to which party he adhered. Being, however, invited to an Established Church meeting at Dumbarton, he went, and there was no longer any doubt as to his leanings. He settled the matter by stating in his address that the gates of hell would not prevail against the Established Church of Scotland.

The part taken by Gregor in what was called the Row Heresy, gave him a not very enviable notoriety far beyond his own parish, and all this from a hasty expression made by him at the trial, before the presbytery, of Mr M'Leod Campbell, to this effect—"We have nothing to do with the Bible," meaning, of course, that it was the doctrinal summary of the Bible given in the Confession of Faith to which they had all to subscribe, and against which the man of Row had sinned. This remark of Gregor's was, however, by many considered monstrous, coming from a minister of the Gospel, but in reality it was nothing of the sort. Their standard was the Confession of Faith.

### KIBBLE AND THE ROW HERETIC

At this period Dalmonach was by far the most important printwork in the Vale of Leven, if not in Scotland. The proprietor was Mr James Kibble, who engaged as his manager a Mr Bush, an Englishman, whose salary was said to be £1000 per annum, considered in those days most extravagant. This man was regarded as a mechanical genius. Old hand processes were to be superseded by mechanism, and no expense was spared in getting it of the most approved quality. From Manchester he brought with him pattern designers, engravers, chemists, and mechanics. Excellent work was produced, and for a time the factory was regarded as a perfect mine of gold. Kibble's proclivities were of a religious nature, and latterly took the form of a craze. He ran about the workshop with Bible in hand, collected the workers about him, and read

portions to them. He seemed to have had a sympathetic regard for the Row heretic, for after the deposition of the latter by the presbytery, Kibble invited him to preach at Bonhill. To think of getting the use of the church was entirely out of the question, so a temporary pulpit was erected in a field near to where the U.P. Church now stands, and there, on a Sunday afternoon, Mr Campbell held forth to a large congregation. Like every person else able to move about, I was there, and thought it a “preach” just like other preaching, and neither I nor anybody else heard anything to find fault with. Our churches now seem to have made the discovery that Campbell was the only sound theologian in the presbytery that deposed him. All I need further say about Kibble is that his works were conducted on such an expensive scale that they did not pay, and he soon came to grief. The works were shut, and, I suppose, little short of a thousand persons deprived of their usual means of support. There was migration to many places, chiefly to Campsie, where the works of Messrs Dalglish were rising in importance. How many of them felt under the exile from the homes of their fathers and their youth, may be gathered from the following stanzas, written by one of them to whom the muses had been bountiful—

“By Glazert stream we sat and wept,  
When Leven we thought on,  
In midst thereof we dashed our heads  
The great whinstones upon.”

Kibble retired to the neighbourhood of Paisley, and became a member of the poor law board, or some other board there. At one of the meetings he came to loggerheads with the noted Rev. Patrick Brewster, and struck the rev. gentleman a severe blow on the head with an umbrella. For this rude and un-Christian conduct he was universally stigmatised, alike by the public and the press. After this Kibble vanished from public observation, but whether there be even a stone about Paisley to perpetuate his memory I know not.

#### GREGOR IN A FUNK

Although I knew Mr Gregor from my earliest days, and saw him almost daily walking about, and frequently heard him preach on Sunday, I came to have special opportunities for seeing and knowing him at closer quarters.

At Levenbank Printfield I was apprenticed to pattern drawing, and was placed under Mr James Harper, who had long been at the works in that capacity. We had an apartment to ourselves, and as James was ingenious and tasteful in all handicraft matters, he was called on to do many little jobs apart from his usual vocation. Amongst others the minister, who occasionally gave us a call, to get his hair cropped, his razors sharpened, etc., was very communicative and jocular, and entered freely enough on the discussion of current topics. He was, of course, a Tory, James an advanced Radical, which I thought the minister knew, as politics seemed the only subject on which he appeared to avoid discussion.

One day they fell upon the subject of infant baptism, which had a personal bearing on James’s position. The discussion went on calmly for a short time, but in his rejoinders James always commenced by saying, “Granting that, but — —.” These words were so often repeated that the parson broke out— “Granting that, granting that! Why, you grant everything, but will yield

nothing.” With this he dashed on his hat, rushed out at the door, banging it after him, and hurried downstairs. From the window we saw him pushing along at double quick, his hat elevated behind so as to expose very prominently the combative bumps. This, thought I, is the finale to the minister’s visits; but not so. Not more than two weeks passed till the minister again made his appearance. He was as affable and jocular as ever, and at length took from his pocket a case containing two razors which, he said, had been presented to him by a friend. The blades were said to be of silver steel, and were elaborately and tastefully ornamented by floral tracery. “They are nice to look at,” said he, “but they have one fault—they won’t shave; at least, I cannot make them do so.” He wished James to put them to the test on himself, and if they would not do he might make of them what he pleased. He then entered upon other topics. A day or two previously five pounds had been sent him by a rich Glasgow merchant who had recently come to reside in the parish. This money was given for the benefit of the poor, but on the condition that it be made public through the newspapers; but he refused to take it on any such conditions. “Why,” said he, “I have several times got like sum from Mr Stott, of Balloch Castle (Mr Buchanan’s successor), but the conditions were that no public notice should be given of it.” He also had something to say about one of his elders, Walter Bain, lessee of the ferry at Bonhill. What it was I do not remember, but his remark was, “being as you know an old sailor, he is a little rough in his speech, but as good an elder as I have for all that.” Walter’s besetting fault was a rather free indulgence in the use of strong language, sometimes mixed up with pious expressions, which made his utterances a ludicrous mixture of the sacred and the profane.

The razors were tried, found wanting, and James resolved to make an attempt to harden their temper. The blade of one was taken out, made red-hot, and plunged into cold water. The result was extraordinary. It bent back somewhat in horseshoe fashion, and split into filaments from the back towards the edge, resembling a fine-toothed comb, or the section of a hedgehog. The effect was so peculiar as to excite a hearty laugh, and the curiosity was laid aside to wait the coming of the parson. The minister continued these visits long after I left the works.

#### A MECHANICAL GENIUS

James Harper was himself, in many respects, a curiosity. He was not a Lennoxman by birth, but had come when young from the upper ward of Lanarkshire, and had a thousand stories to tell of Thankerton, Carnwath, Symington, Tinto, and his father’s smithy. These wards became so familiar to me that in going to visit the places long afterwards I felt somewhat as a Mohomedan pilgrim may be supposed to do in going to Mecca, or a Jew to Jerusalem.

No doubt his boyish experience in his father’s smithy was the reason why he was afterwards so expert at the anvil. In smith work of the nicer kinds he was more than the equal of an average professional. He could hammer out a rugged piece of iron or steel into a thin bar, as square and equal as though it had been drawn through a gauge. In wood work he was equally dexterous, making planes, saws, gunstocks, fishing-rods, and could plane heavy blocks of wood so smooth and level that when laid on each other they adhered like a bit of steel to a magnet. In a corner of our room he had a tall, wooden press, the

lower portion of which contained an agglomeration of old nick-nacks which might have gladdened the heart of Grose himself; kept, not for their own sakes, but for the purpose of being transformed into something useful as circumstances might require. "Keep a thing seven years and you will find a use for it," was a maxim he frequently repeated when about to proceed upstairs to the "cutting shop," where there was an anvil, and when some antique piece of iron was about to assume under his hammer quite a new shape and character. He was also an amateur physician and surgeon to the works.

When any accident occurred, from the machinery or otherwise, James was at once in requisition till legitimate professional skill, if found necessary, was procured. I have seen him engaged in cases, such as crushed fingers, which severely tested one's nerves even to look at, and he used to say that if he had not required to act he could not have stood to be only a looker-on. Tooth-drawing, mixtures for cough and sore throat, etc., were frequently called for, and when the cases were simple, his prescriptions usually sufficed.

James's own head was as great a receptacle of curiosities as his mysterious press. It was full of plans for everything. Passing a joiner or a mason at work, he was always prone to criticise proceedings, and if not to his liking his remark would be, "Now my plan would have been," so and so.

## PART X

But the grand object James had in view, and at which he laboured during all available hours, in his own house, was to discover perpetual motion. It has long been a settled matter in the scientific world that such a thing is impossible, but it was not so considered then, as Government had offered a premium of £30,000 to the person who should make the discovery. With this object in view he had various plans, some of them being tested by models, and as one proved fallacious, another was resorted to. The oftener the failure, the more certain did he become that it could be done, and that he would do it. One day he told me that his chief difficulty now was not how to make it go, but how to stop it. Months and years he had laboured with hammers and files, and gone with some of the heavier portions to a smithy in the neighbourhood, but still the triumph lingered.

On one occasion, while going from Kirkintilloch to Glasgow, in a canal boat, his feelings were so touched by the cruelty exercised towards the tow-horses, that his perpetual motion labours were suspended for a time, till he should mature and work out a plan for propelling a boat without the aid of either horses, oars, sails, or paddles. It would sail with the wind, against the wind, and when there was no wind. Not only that, but he had expectation of being able to construct it so as to run ashore and along an ordinary road quite as well as it moved on the water.

The boat scheme, however, did occasion me some inward misgivings, even although in relating it to me his face assumed an aspect of solemnity worth of an old Hebrew prophet scanning the future.

For months he wrought away in woods and iron in order to practically realise his ideas, and when his apparatus was completed he procured an old coble and had it carefully fitted up. Early on a fine summer morning he, accompanied by his son, a boy of about twelve years of age, rowed the coble up the loch so as to have full scope for a fair trial. All this was unknown to me till some days afterwards, and how far his invention proved successful I never really knew, as the subject was not again referred to by him.

### SCREW PROPELLER

About this period it was publicly made known that the propelling of a vessel could be effected by a screw as well as by paddles. I saw this announced in a newspaper, and on turning James's attention to it, he at once said "that is just my plan." He then went over to his press and fished out a large sheet of paper, and there indeed were sketches of propelling screws which he had made years before. So far as I recollect there were more blades or flanges in his plans than there are in those screws now in use, but the principle was the same. Just to think of the absurdity of screwing a vessel through the water, thought I then; but a short time showed that this notion of his was well grounded. James had known, and used to speak of, "my friend, Mr Bell;" and this leads me to refer to a visit to Helensburgh shortly after Henry Bell's death. But, first of all, we shall notice some changes that at this time took place in the educational opportunities of the district.

Mr M'Neil, as a teacher, was not keeping pace with the growth of public opinion on the nature and importance of a sound education in early life. An idea got abroad that an attempt should be made to persuade him either to resign or procure an efficient assistant. A deputation, first of all, went to the minister, who heartily approved, and as a first step advised them to go to the schoolhouse and speak the matter over with the dominie. They did so, and returned to report their want of success. Mr M'Neil, they stated, says he can teach as well as ever he could. "True enough," was the minister's reply, "but, the fact is, he never could teach."

As Patrick still refused to yield, a new school was resolved on. Money was raised by subscription, a disused byre and stable at Knowhead were at once granted by the proprietor, Mr Stuart, and were speedily converted into a comparatively large and comfortable schoolroom. A teacher being advertised for, a young man named Gibson, who had been educated at Dollar Academy, was appointed. The school was conducted successfully for some time under Gibson and one or two successors, but the one with whom we have now to do was called Campbell, a man of middle age, with a wife and family. He had possibly been educated with a view to the ministry, but had not succeeded in getting a charge. He was a rare specimen of the old class of dominies; rather under the average stature, thin and somewhat sallow, long neck, narrow shoulders, and the nose sweeping out a long way in the Brougham style. His habiliments—week day at least—may have been once black, but had been greatly toned down, and from their "cut" appeared to date from an earlier era. His scholastic claims were, however, superior to those of his predecessors, and upon the whole he was a worthy man. It was a treat to see him at mid-day interval lock the school door, poked the key, then shoulder a potato grate as a soldier does his musket, take up with the other hand a large wand basket, then march off to the potato field with slow and measured solemnity of step, as if to the music of the Dead March in Saul. Having reached his destination, he thrust at the tubers in a style that would have made an agrarian expert conclude that he was still in the awkward squad. His dwelling-house being on a floor above the school, he was next neighbour to James Harper, and the proximity naturally led to an acquaintanceship, which soon ripened into warm cordiality. I once heard the dominie say to James that he had always been select in the choosing of his associates. He declined ordinary workmen, but had no objections to a pattern drawer. James looked thankful, but at the same time by a wink gave me to understand that we must consider ourselves highly honoured. But what we have now to deal with was ours.

#### JOURNEY TO HELENSBURGH

We three were upon the road early on as fine a summer morning as ever shone. Those who know the road from Balloch by the loch shore do not require to be told of the variety and beauty of the scenes that come within the range of the eye as they move along, and the peculiar charm which they receive from a morning such as that. The woods were in full luxuriance of leaf and flower, the sunbeams amongst them throwing a fine checkering of shadow from stem and branch, and the only sounds that broke the stillness were the songs of birds and hum of bees. "The stillness of death" is a usual expression, but I have often experienced, as on this morning, the stillness of life, when everything in external nature indicates the very intensity of vitality,

and yet not a sound heard nor a movement apparent. The same may be seen in the sleep of a healthy child, when not a movement of limb or feature can be perceived, nor even any indication of breathing, and yet you feel assured that the functions of life are in full operation and with perfect harmony.

The least interesting part of the road is that immediately behind Cameron House. Originally it was lower down, near the loch, but had been shifted back to make room for the house and policies. This has entailed rather stiff up-hill work on pedestrians, but particularly upon many a poor horse which has to strain every muscle in dragging up heavy-laden vehicles. In a sanitary point of view the theory now-a-days is that the road should still have been down and the house up, as, indeed, was suggested by Tobias when he made his visit in the year 1773. As it stands all view is shut out till we get round to the low level close by the shore, when a most expansive prospect of loch, island, and mountain opens up. We are all familiar with the terms "Landmarks of history," and as this part of the original Luss Road is not without its marks, we may pause for a minute or so while we refer to some of them. If we, in imagination, seat ourselves by the side of the lake, and, without much regard for dates, allow our minds to skim the past, we may conjure a series of apparently concurrent incidents which hold prominent places on the historic page.

For instance, we may first of all picture a numerous contingent of horse and foot soldiers from Dumbarton and neighbourhood passing gaily along to assist the Colquhouns in their anticipated conflict with the MacGregors, and a day or two after only a remnant of them returning in full flight along the road, leaving their comrades lying gashed and dead in the neighbouring glen. Next, we see, passing south, an army of Covenanters marching to their doom a day or two afterwards in the moors behind Jamestown, their great leader, the marquis of Argyle, taken, and a few days after carried away to have his head struck off at Edinburgh. Next we see another army of 500 strong from Dumbarton, accompanied by a fleet of boats on the lake, on their way to chastise the still turbulent and lawless MacGregors. At Luss they were reinforced by a considerable contingent of Colquhouns, and continued their course till they were opposite Inversnaid. Here the fleet fired "its great guns" at an old house on the hillside, but seeing only an old woman or two coming out those in the boats gallantly leapt ashore, furiously beat their drums, and called on the MacGregors to come on. Rob and his men had that day gone to Stirling to witness the battle of Sheriffmuir, and consequently did not hear the defiant notes. The official report says, "having thus cowed the MacGregors," this courageous armament returned safely, "without the loss of a man." Again, we see a single carriage coming along this road, and who of all men in the world should be in it at this lonely place so far from London, but the great, gruff, and growling English pedant, Dr Samuel Johnson, and his biographer, "Bozzy," on their return from the ever memorable Highland tour, the doctor chuckling over the thought that they had now reached civilisation and a coach. Again, we see on this road the peasant poet, Robert Burns, on horseback, at full gallop, racing with a breechless Highlandman, also on a horse, but without leather saddle or bridle, when the horses come in contact, and they and riders are all brought to the ground together. Happily, none were seriously hurt. No doubt long intervals occurred between these events, but

history has no perspective, and what took place five hundred years ago comes as vividly before our minds as events only one hundred years old.

#### GLEN FRUIN

But to resume our journey. I had been previously well acquainted with the road as far as the Red House, so called from its tiled roof; but there we turned at right angles into Glen Fruin, and from that onward all was new to me. The massacre of three hundred years ago awakened in me thoughts and feelings more easy to conceive than describe. The natural character of the glen itself was enough to keep the eye and mind in a state of active enjoyment; but in addition, I was endeavouring to realise what might have taken place at this or that point on the fatal day. James knew all turnings and windings of the Fruin, having previously fished it along most of its course to the lake. He also pointed out some spots where relics, such as swords and helmets, had been found, and had many anecdotes to relate of the present and recent inhabitants. At Dumfin the scenery is very interesting, but the conversation fell on the subject of ornamental wood turning, which was at that time a favourite pastime among the upper classes. The proprietor of the mill, or rather, liquor works, here, whose name I do not recollect, was an expert in the art, and, according to James, he, Lord John Campbell, of Ardencaple, and Mr Graham, of Gartmore were the three best in Scotland.

## PART XI

An interesting object on the hillside was the old castle of Bannachra, which also figures in history as well as in the poetry of Scott, and the novel of "The Spaewife," by Galt. But what was of more immediate importance was the fact that we were approaching the Cross Keys, a licensed house where, our guide informed us, a drop of the purest sma' still whisky could always be had; and in those days conscientious scruples had no reference to the propriety of not going in. The landlady, a tidy, smart, good-looking dame about middle age, at once recognised James, and on his "signifying" to her that we should like a drop of the true, she laughingly replied that we should have it "stark naked"—meaning pure from the still. I was no judge, but if tasting it, wriggling the lips, and nodding to each other with a kind of ecstatic quiver before the effort of a final capsise meant anything, it indicated that the quality was "all that could be desired."

Thus refreshed we took the road with largely increased buoyancy, my companions with hats more erect, step lengthened and evidently minds enlarged, as their speech was more emphatic, and altogether pitched in a higher key than formerly. At a point of the road some distance farther on James had an anecdote to relate, to the effect that an extensive sheep farmer in the neighbourhood had been to the south for the purpose of selling his flocks, and on returning at night on horseback, a man, at this spot, rushed from the roadside and attempted to seize the reins. The farmer, however, who had been prepared for emergencies, pulled out a pistol and fired, and pushed on at a gallop without waiting to learn the result. Next morning a dead body was found near the spot, and it was discovered to be that of a son of the very lady from whom we had just parted. The report was circulated that he had died suddenly, and in those days, especially in Dumbartonshire, the authorities did not trouble themselves much about matters of that kind.

In course of progress we came to the top of the hill where the Firth of Clyde is seen stretching out on all sides, and as this was my first view of it from this point, I was greatly impressed with its varied outlines and grand general effect. What is called the new road was probably not then made. At all events we came down a road which terminated nearly opposite the Bath Hotel, specially noticeable then, as now, by its battlemented walls. It had been built by Henry Bell, here he lately died, and the house was now managed by his widow. On entering we found her to be a quiet, unpretending, little woman, modestly attired in black. She recognised James at once, and the cordiality of the greeting was to me sufficient proof that he and her husband had really been intimate friends. Before we left she showed us models of different kinds which he had made from time to time, and the saddened expression of her face when referring to him proved that the bereavement had been deeply felt.

### HELENSBURGH

Having had something substantial for the inner man, we make our way along the town, which, in size and importance, was insignificant as compared with what it is now. There was only one row of houses fronting the water, with one or two rudimentary off-shoots behind. A rickle of stepping stones was designated the quay, at which ferryboats from Greenock, and other small craft,

were only what was usually seen there. Henry Bell had indeed attempted to erect an iron wharf, but it was swept away by the first high tide, and the wretched old dyke was destined to do duty many years afterwards. Even when steamers came to be numerous, the efforts to get on board, or get ashore, were attended with danger to the most robust, and were a terror to the weak and timid.

We had a very pleasant walk towards Row, the scenery being new to me, and, consequently, full of freshness.

There was nothing for us afterwards but to turn our faces homeward at an easy pace, and thus, for me at least, to carry with me the recollection of one of the most pleasing pedestrian excursions I have ever enjoyed, and which, in its main features, is still fresh in my mind.

There is one other little outing to which I may here refer before I part with these two notables. James had been on Luss Road soon after the elegant new lodge was erected by Sir James Colquhoun at the entrance to the grounds and mansion of Rosssdhu. He had been delighted with it, and proposed that we should take the first opportunity to go thither and make a drawing of it, to which I gladly agreed. The dominie was consulted, warmly supported the proposal, a day was fixed, and due preparations made. Having secured the use of a boat we, on a calm summer day, set out, the teacher carrying a parcel, of the contents of which I was ignorant. He being fully as awkward with an oar as with a potato grate, and not more competent at the helm, James and I managed to do the rowing and steering without much difficulty, and after an easy pull of about an hour and a half, we arrived in Auchentully Bay. Not having seen the lodge before that time, I was quite delighted with its elegant and spacious aspect. As pedestrians from the Vale well known, it consists of a central gateway, having a lofty round arch, with massive entablature and cornice. At some considerable distance on each side a plain, square lodge is connected with the central archway by a low wall, surmounted by tall, iron rails. James took up a position almost below the arch, and commenced by sketching or attempting to sketch, the Colquhoun arms sculptured above the arch. Having wrought earnestly for some time, he began to feel the midges annoying him, and asked me to take a spell at it. This I did, he falling behind. While intent at my task, he touched me, and, stifling a laugh, pointed to the dominie, who had unfolded his bundle, and with ludicrous solemnity was parcelling into three heaps, on the low wall, its contents of pease scones and a corresponding modicum of cheese all the while being entirely ignorant of the fact that a passing party of ladies and gentlemen had halted and were looking on, making themselves merry at his expense. To all this the dominie was as oblivious as ever Dominie Sampson was to anything but the contents of the volume in which his thought was submerged. He never knew while he lived that he had given enjoyment apart from the banquet, which, thanks to his thrifty wife, he had so kindly procured for us. On the other hand, James had taken care that there should be something else than solids for our delectation. At length our business was ended, and a rather remarkable performance we brought away with us. The day was delightful, the scones, etc., excellent, everything around us savouring of beauty. We got home safely and this was another of those days destined to remain permanently on the memory as among the things that go to make life worth living.

The pencil sketch was afterwards, at spare hours, enlarged, carefully made out by ruler and compasses, and the natural colours applied—so far as our joint capacity admitted—and the result was astounding. It was greatly admired, but I do not think it was by accredited critics, especially those skilled in perspective, which is usually the weak point of amateur sketches. To what portion of the universe that picture passed I know not, but if it be still in existence it may with all safety be regarded as an old master.

I notice these little excursions because there is nothing in my early experience clings more tenaciously to the memory than such outings among the hills, and glens, and isles, of which the neighbourhood afforded almost unrivalled opportunities, and of which I and many others took every advantage. They become a permanent heritage, and can be enjoyed over and over again to the full in after life among those whose experiences have been, like ours, in the same localities.

#### A DISSENTING CHURCH

About the year 1830 the Rev. William Gregor had for twenty years been sole minister of and in the parish of Bonhill, and had attained to about sixty years of age. He had ceased almost entirely from preaching, which was now and for the twenty following years of his life done by assistants. The time had arrived when the Established Church should no longer be the only place of worship or be the only spiritual guide and guardian in the parish of Bonhill. Among the population there were many dissenters. Some, for convenience, went to the Parish Church, not a few to the Relief Church of Kilmarnock, about four miles north of Balloch; about as many went to the Relief Church at bridgend, Dumbarton, about the same distance south; not a few going to the Old Light Burgher Church at Renton. It may be considered that these were long distances to travel, and with great inconvenience, but of persons in ordinary health it was not then so considered. They took to the road with less compunction than many people in town do to go round to the next street. Besides these there was one family of Cameronians, the M'Allisters of Mid-Auchencarroch Farm, representatives of a covenanting ancestry, who went every Sabbath to Kilmalcolm, in Renfrewshire, where they found a church of their own persuasion. Just let the reader think of a Sabbath day's journey of six or seven miles to Dumbarton Castle, then ferry across the Clyde and make their way over the hill, which was three miles more—in all nearly ten miles, and retracing their steps in the afternoon. There were three or four young ladies of the family who regularly accomplished this distance. It was not solely the length of the way, but also the penance of the Clyde ferry, which often at low tide entailed the necessity of wading perhaps half-a-mile through mud and water to reach the ferryboat. One of these ladies became the wife of Mr James Nairn, of Bankhead, and mother of the present representative of the family.

Physically, this could not be said to be making the Sabbath a day of rest, but, no doubt, it gave rest to their souls and conscience. This strict adherence to their own sect was a conscientious compliance with what they considered to be duty, as was certified by a corresponding Christian practice. This may now be considered by some as carrying their convictions to the extreme of sectarian narrowness; yet I never heard anything like a sneer in allusion to it, as would certainly have been the case had there been any incongruity between

profession and practice. In those days the M'Allisters retained traditions of a martyred friend named Robert Nairn, who lived at Napierston, a mile or so to the south. He was a shoemaker, and must have been a man of taste, as his Bible, now in possession of Mr Nairn, besides the ordinary binding, has a cover of leather ornamentally cut with great taste and elaboration, while the blank leaves are all beautifully written over with choice passages of Scripture. That the M'Allisters had befriended him and concealed him in the days of his trial is substantiated by the circumstance that, about the beginning of this century, in pulling down an old barn they discovered a double gable-wall leaving sufficient space between for such a man to pursue his calling; and to further prove the fact, his lapstone was there found, just where he had left it more than a hundred years before. It is, I understand, still in possession of a family in Dumbarton. He died from the effects of exposure in a cold night, while concealed on a tree when the minions of the law were in pursuit of him. The curate of Bonhill refused him burial in the churchyard, but a few determined young men forced open the gates, and the interment was effected in spite of him. An interesting account of this martyr is given by Wodrow. The grave has ever since been carefully tended and covered by a massive stone, and besides the name there is appropriately inscribed on it Cowper's well-known passage:—

“Patriots have toiled, and in their country's cause  
Bled nobly; and their deeds, as they deserve,  
Receive proud recompense  
But martyrs struggle for a brighter prize,” etc.

The majority of the dissenters being of the Relief persuasion, they opened subscription papers, a sufficient sum was soon raised, and in a few months a substantial church erected, which still exists as the U.P. Church of Bonhill. It was opened in the year 1830 by the venerable Rev. Archibald Murdoch, of Kilmarnock, who, although it deprived him of a portion of his congregation, encouraged it both by voice and money. I cannot remember how Gregor felt in relation to the erection of such a church, but some years afterwards, when one was proposed in connection with the establishment at Alexandria, his remark was that it was no more needed than a cart was in need of a third wheel. He had not long to wait until these dissenters supplied a sample of the virtues of voluntaryism, which, if it did not give, might have given sufficient scope for the exercise of his sarcastic talent, which was considerable.

## PART XII

The new church being duly opened, the next step was to find a suitable minister. The synodical rule was that all probationers in connection with the body should in rotation conduct the services for a day; then, from these a short leet be chosen, who, being again heard, an election should follow. The list of probationers was very long, but in the course of time it was got through, and no fewer than four nominated as the short leet. A day was fixed for the election, and the Rev. John Edwards, of Bridgeton, Glasgow appointed to preside.

The first voting resulted in favour of a Mr Tudhope and a Mr M'Coll, the former having well on to the half of the whole membership in his favour. These two were now set up, and the vote being taken, the clerks found for M'Coll by one or two of a majority. There was some little discrepancy between the figures of the two clerks, besides some mistake by the moderator in refusing to take the vote of a person, on the grounds that he had come in after the meeting had been constituted by prayer, which the Presbytery afterwards admitted to be wrong. The Tudhopites held that the majority was theirs; the M'Collites as determinedly maintained opposite, and the result was the church split into hostile sections, exasperated in the highest degree.

The official report to the Presbytery was, of course, in favour of M'Coll, and the call laid on the table. The Tudhopites protested, and although every effort was made to soothe and bring them to conform to the finding of the moderator, and advice and admonition of the fathers, all was in vain. They returned home, held meetings, and came up to the charge at the next meeting of Presbytery, declaring that if the call was sustained, then their resolution was to leave the church, and set up for themselves elsewhere. The usual clerical "soft sawder" was applied—of living in unity, cultivating the things that work for peace, etc.—but all to no purpose. A day was fixed for a deputation of the Presbytery to go to Bonhill brimful of recipes for healing the wounds of Zion; but, unhappily, all clerical practitioners are not skilful in such cases, and some of them gave expression to the very sentiments which were calculated to aggravate the evil. They even threatened presbyterial pains and penalties should the protesters persist in their rebellious courses. Continue they did, and these fathers and brethren retired to their respective places of abode, after having succeeded in making matters worse. The protesters were now in a frame of mind for defying the Presbytery at the next meeting.

Prior to that, meetings were held by both parties, and in the interval the entire population of the parish was kept in a state of ferment. Although fists were not actually resorted to, very little would have sufficed to make old friends set at each other as some of their fathers did in the days of old, with dirk and claymore. It was said that on a Sunday, when the church was being dismissed, one of them was seen to spit on the new coat of an opponent who was in the passage walking before him. On the night before the day on which the Presbytery was to meet, the 'Collites held a meeting, at which it was resolved that, should the other party still persist in their determination to leave the church, the proper course for them would be to yield, but until they were assured of this they should continue to maintain their old attitude.

The greater number of the Tudhopites were in the Balloch district, and although Dominie Campbell was not a dissenter, nor connected with this church, he had at some former period been engaged in presbyterial conflicts, and was fully conversant with the tactics that ought to be pursued. He had a shrewd old neighbour Robert—commonly Robin—Ritchie, already alluded to, who took an active interest in the conflict on behalf of Tudhope, and who, by consulting the dominie, received much information which was useful in the circumstances. As Robin was appointed one of the deputation to the Presbytery, he prevailed on his counsellor to accompany him and advise, which he did; and while on the way to Glasgow they learned of the resolution secretly arrived at on the preceding evening by their opponents.

At the opening of the case the 'Collites, as instructed proceeded with their prayer for sustaining the call. Dominie Campbell at once got up and objected, putting the question if it was not the case that the 'Collites, at last night's meeting, had resolved to conditionally yield. The moderator enquired if it were really so. It could not be denied, and the matter was virtually at an end. Mr M'Coll was persuaded to relinquish the call, which, to his credit he did. I need not say on which side was the jubilation.

Thus ended officially the first act in the drama of dissent and popular election in the parish of Bonhill, but it was long ere the rancorous effects died out. Each party presented their hero with a gold watch as a solatium to blighted hopes.

#### RECONCILIATION

The parties now coalesced, and proceeded again to the hearing of a score or so of probationers, numbers of whom had been long upon the road. At the close two only were selected, and by a large majority the lot, or rather, vote, fell upon the Rev. John R. Swan. He was soon ordained, was considered a good preacher, had great gift of speech, and could make himself very acceptable in private as well as in the pulpit. Some thought that he and the parish minister would not get on very harmoniously, but they were mistaken. The first time they met Gregor took him by both hands, and shook them heartily, saying at the same time, "You may give me a pull for the people, but I think I will be able to give you a pull for the stipend."

About this time Mr Candlish, afterwards the famed Rev. Dr. Candlish of the Free Church, was Gregor's assistant, and I well remember him, on a Sabbath evening, coming into the Relief Church for the purpose of hearing Swan, who was to preach on that occasion. I heard afterwards that he spoke very favourably of what he heard, although inclined somewhat to differ on some points. Swan in early life, like Gregor, had been a schoolmaster, was an acknowledged scholar, and the two went frequently together to examine schools and candidates for schools, apparently on the most friendly terms.

The new minister was a Liberal in politics, made no objection to secular meetings in the church, which he regarded as only stone and lime, and not more sacred than any other house. The pews were fully let, most of the hearers being in comfortable circumstances were by no means unwilling to give freely, and for some years the church was very prosperous.

By and bye, however, the Chartist agitation set in. Mr Swan being from home, the use of the church was requested for a meeting at which the redoubtable Fergus O'Connor was to speak.<sup>11</sup> The deacons, remembering the minister's stone and lime dictum, had no hesitation in complying. When the minister got notice of this he was indignant, and on the following Sunday referred to "hot-headed young men who had completed the degradation of the church." He even alluded to one personally, whom he said he saw smiling, by saying "he was welcome to the remarks if they fitted him." Here again was the demon of discord let loose in the congregation.

Thus matters went on, always growing more and more unsatisfactory between a considerable portion of the people and the pastor, until the disaffected portion left and built a small church on the Alexandria side of the water. As the Presbytery refused to grant a supply of preachers, one connected with the United Secession Church, Mr Broom, then out of employment, was procured, and for a few years this church got along with comparative success.

The Disruption occurring about this time, the new minister supposed there was an opportunity for getting into the establishment, and thought proper to make application. He was disappointed, and wished to resume his duties in the little church, but the congregation refused to accede, and he left the locality. application for service was now made to the United Secession Presbytery. The moderator had received a letter setting forth the ill-usage Mr Swan had received from this party, and he (the moderator) made a speech in opposition to the request of the applicants. Mr Somerville, of Dumbarton, afterwards the well-known Rev. Dr Somerville of the U.P. Home and Foreign Mission, was there. He knew perfectly the causes that led this party to leave the Bonhill Church, and from his representations the Presbytery no longer hesitated to grant supply. The first minister was Rev. Alexander Wallace, now Rev. Dr Wallace, of East Campbell Street, Glasgow. Under him the congregation increased so much that a new church soon required to be erected. After he left for a charge in England, he was succeeded by Rev. Mr Sprott, afterwards of Queen's Park U.P. Church, Glasgow, who so sadly lost his life in a railway accident in England. The church under these ministers was highly prosperous, and under their successors it continued to be so. Thus it was that churches began to multiply in the Vale, and instead of one or two there are now upwards of a dozen, and all, I am told, in a flourishing condition.

#### ASSISTANTS AND SUCCESSORS

The Rev. William Gregor died in 1848, aged 79 years, he and the parish teacher, Mr M'Neil, having been contemporary all along their professional career, about the same age, but the teacher outlived the former nine or ten years. The minister's later assistants were the Rev. Robert Smith Candlish, from 1831 to 1833, when he was appointed to St George's church, Edinburgh. He was succeeded as assistant at Bonhill by Rev. James M'Gowan, afterwards of Laurencekirk. Then came Rev. William Shaw, who ultimately was successor to Gregor as incumbent, but was afterwards translated, first to Ayr and subsequently to Alloa. He was succeeded in Bonhill by the Rev. F. L.

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<sup>11</sup> Fergus O'Connor visited the area at the beginning of September, 1841.

Robertson, afterwards Rev. Dr F. L. Robertson, of Glasgow, whose death has recently been recorded.

The Rev. John R. Swan, of the U.P. Church, having fallen into bad health, was compelled to retire some years before his death, having as assistant and successor the Rev. William Smith, who still occupies the pulpit.

#### FIRST TEMPERANCE SOCIETY

I had made some progress in my teens before anything in the way of temperance and teetotalism was heard of in the district. Before any society was formed a tract on the evils of intemperance, a rare thing then, had found its way into our house. It was carefully read, the handed to neighbours, and thus the subject took serious hold on the minds of a few of the more thoughtful in the neighbourhood. They resolved to form themselves into a society; a twopenny pass-book was got, the names appended, and the work was done. There were no formal rules; everyone knew that he was bound to abstain both from taking and giving spirituous liquors, and that was enough. Some of these were men who had been in the habit of taking spirits, sometimes more than in moderation; yet, not one of them seemed to think there was any sacrifice needed in order to give up the habit, and kept true to their principles to the end of their lives. The first public advocates of the cause that appeared in the parish were Dr Kirk, a medical gentleman from Greenock, and Mr James M'Nair, from Glasgow. One of the first converts who signed was Mr John Robertson, who never deviated, but was zealous in the cause till his death at an advanced age a few months ago.

This movement was, I believe, the beginning of a new era in the Vale, of rational sociality, of useful reading and lecturing. A soiree was then a great novelty. Among the first was one held in the schoolroom at Knowhead. It caused quite a hitherto unknown sensation. Great preparations were made, the walls whitewashed, the floors scrubbed, interested matrons produced their best delf and china, evergreens and flowers procured from the best gardens in the neighbourhood, and the highest available taste enlisted to make the most effective arrangements. Ministers and public speakers were invited from afar. There were the Rev. Mr Bruce, who then had a private academy at Cardross; Rev. Mr Blair, from Drymen; Rev. Mr. Somerville, Dumbarton; James Stirling, the well-known teetotal cobbler, from New Kilpatrick, and contingents from Killearn, Kilmarnock, and many other places. Mr. Stuart, of Levenbank, and his two daughters also gave their countenance, and what with tea, and speech, and song, the success even exceeded the anticipation. I doubt much if the soirees now-a-days create such a *furor*.

### PART XIII

I have alluded to the Chartist movement, but we may go a little further back, to the time when those of the middle and working classes who were not Tories were in full harmony in their efforts for reform. James Harper had been a Radical of the old school. His political apostle was William Cobbett,<sup>12</sup> whose writings he always bought and carefully studied. When that really able writer and politician came to Glasgow, James went thither, saw, heard, and returned delighted. Next day he was in a worshipful frame of mind, and the venerable and noble appearance of the sage, his easy attitude, with one hand in his vest pocket, and the homely conversational style of his oratory, were all described to me by dramatic personation, and with an air of awe-stricken admiration which was absolutely contagious.

Speaking generally, we were all politicians, and with few exceptions felt that so long as we had no voice in the law-making and government of the country we were slaves, no matter who said or sung to the contrary. It may here be said that the term, "Working-man Conservative," was not then invented. But the fight for freedom was going on, and after a long and bitter struggle the Reform Bill of 1832 was passed by both Houses of Parliament, and we, the men—and boys—of Lennox, in common with the whole of the middle and working-classes, were in ecstasies. There was the great Dumbarton and Vale of Leven procession, in which, among others, the banners and the tramp of the Lennoxmen of the Balloch division were seen and heard.

That crisis passed, but it was soon discovered that the only portion of the community that had been emancipated was the middle classes, lairds, and big farmers. Matters had been so arranged that the working-classes were still out in the cold. They had so far as in them lay assisted those immediately above them to secure the franchise, and naturally expected that the middle classes would now assist them to a like privilege, but in this they were disappointed. Many of those new voters, having gained their object, said no. The franchise is now low enough, and further reduction would admit only the riff-raff. Even Lord John Russell, father of the late Bill, spoke of it as final, and for this he was dubbed "Finality John," which epithet stuck to him long, and for a time his popularity waned. This was the true origin of the Chartist movement, of which many in the present day entertain very erroneous notions. To mention the name Chartist is to conjure up visions of rapine, spoliation, rebellion, and moral and social chaos. the Chartist creed consisted of six points, all of them loyal and reasonable, most of them having since been virtually realised, and the others in a fair way of being so.

In all popular movements there are over-sanguine and impulsive spirits, who are apt to drive on recklessly without regard to possibilities and rational methods, and this was the class which wrecked the Chartist organisation. What was chiefly wanted was the lowering of the franchise, and although the demand was for universal suffrage, a household suffrage, such as we now have, would have averted all the commotion and rancour of those fulminating days. In order to concuss the Government, some very whimsical and

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<sup>12</sup> William Cobbett(1763-1835), English radical whose Rural Rides highlighted much of the social injustice in the countryside of his time.

ludicrous proposals were made. It was proposed to starve it out by abstaining from all exciseable articles, such as spirits and tobacco, but a very short trial sufficed to show that the sacrifice was too great even for the sake of securing political emancipation. Again, as most of the clergy of the Established Church and some dissenters were opposed to the movement, it was proposed to abstain from attending such churches on Sunday, but at the same time to meet and find laymen among themselves to expound and conduct the devotions. In the carrying out of this scheme, a considerable number of self-ordained parsons came upon the field, and notwithstanding the want of credentials from universities and divinity halls it was wonderful how well the legitimate article was sometimes simulated. In this new scheme prophets soon failed and tongues ceased. There was still another move which, if it should do little for the main object, would in all probability annoy the enemy. That scheme was to attend in large numbers meetings got up for other purposes, and by moving counter resolutions turn these meetings in favour of the Charter. Not a little annoyance was effected in this way, but after the overthrow of the National Convention the movement fell into the old rut of hustings and petitions. Chartism proper still survives in the present Liberal programme. We had in our district a sprinkling of the various grades of Chartists—physical-force men, who actually went the length of purchasing muskets; moral suasionists and preachers not a few, some of whom in after years occasionally indulged in a good laugh over the recollection of their canonical days.

#### OLD SOLDIERS AND SAILORS

In the Balloch district there then lived not a few who had served their country in foreign battlefields. We have already referred to old Kater of Copenhagen, Currie of Africa, and M'Lean, whose history, as well as that of a Sergeant M'Kay, who also lived at Balloch, I do not know. None of these were connected with the printfield. There was however, Billy M'Culloch, the calendar man, a big, rollicking Irishman, who had been a sailor in Lord Duncan's fleet, took part in the mutiny at the Nore, and after that in the battle of Camperdown, where the Dutch got such a drubbing. It was not easy to get much of a reliable nature from him, and he was always prone to yarn, and for the fun of the thing tell quite impossible stories when he thought he had a sufficiently credulous auditory. There was also one Jamie Gray, whom I don't remember very distinctly but heard much of him, a singularly quiet man when sober, but brimming over with fun and humor when he got a dram. He had been in the Peninsular campaign, and at Waterloo, spoke modestly of what he had seen, and was perfectly reliable. Being questioned as to the effect of a bayonet charge, he spoke of one in which the orders were that every man was to engage the man directly opposite him. As they approached each other, Jamie saw that his opponent was a big, stout Frenchman, against whom he could have no chance. He, however, had a charge in his gun, "so I just gave him it." Here he ceased his narration till asked about the effect. The reply was, "oh, ye ken, he sat doon," a very softened way of saying he fell dead. About the same time here was at the works a blockcutter named James M'Auslane, who had been in the navy, and lost a leg in one of the Nelson fights. It was said that despite the defect of the wooden leg, he would walk with unwavering steadiness round the gunwale of a small boat. He married a Dalvait widow who had two grown-up daughters, whom he usually designated

“one line-of-battle ship and the two frigates.” He was fond of his grog, and one day being at church interrupted the minister by shouting, at intervals, “That’s from Baxter,” “That’s from Boston,” “That’s from Hervey,” etc. The minister paused and told the beadle to go and put that man out. “Ay,” shouted the interrupter, “that’s your own.” I was surprised to learn, a few years ago, that one of the “frigates” was still living in Glasgow.

At a somewhat later date there was another blockcutter in the works named John Forrest, who had been in a cavalry regiment, the Lancers, and had served in India eighteen years. He was a middle-aged man, and to the last retained all the bearing and smartness of the thorough trained soldier. From him we heard much about India and the fighting in which he had been engaged, but never in the spirit of boast. He had a pension, and one circumstance I remember went to the confirmation of the truth of what he said. Previous to an engagement in the Deccan he and a comrade made their wills in each other’s favor. It so happened that the other man was killed, and he himself severely wounded, being shot in the arm. Afterwards a shot killed his horse, which fell, and he under it, in such a way that he could not relieve himself. In that condition he lay all night, and in the morning, when found, was taken to the hospital, when it was discovered that his breast bone had been severely injured. The course of the ball we could trace distinctly in his arm, while from the other injury he continued at times to spit blood. It must have been eighteen or twenty years after his discharge that we observed in the newspapers a notice of the Deccan prize-money being about to be distributed. Forrest asked me if I would write in his name to the War Office, mentioning the circumstance of the wills, and stating where they had been lodged. I did so, and it was the opinion of most of us that nothing more would be heard of it. But to our surprise, in a week or two an order came for both sums, which were duly received by him. One day he and some others had been about Balloch Inn, when the host, Adam Walker, who was a member of the local Yeomanry, made it a boast that the latter were as well trained and disciplined as any of the regular cavalry. Forrest doubted that, and at the instigation of someone, the two consented to try a pass or so with fencing sticks. The sticks were soon found, the two got into position, and soon, to the extreme merriment of the onlookers, Adam’s weapon was seen flying out of his hand and over his head. The affair came off in quite good humour, and no doubt friendship was cemented in the usual way. Forrest was a handy, good-natured man, but at pension times spent much of the money in treating one and all who came in his way. One night, being, it was supposed, under the influence of liquor, he had seated himself on the parapet of Jamestown Bridge, and had fallen asleep, for next morning his body was found on the almost dry bed of the stream below.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> *Distressing Event.*—Another instance of the fatal effects of indulging in intoxicating liquors took place on Sabbath evening, the 19th instant, at Jamestown in the vale of Leven. A printcutter, who, during the day, had been indulging rather freely in spirit drinking at a public-house in a neighbouring hamlet, left it about seven o’clock in the evening, very much the worse of liquor. It appears that on his way home he had either stumbled over the parapet of the bridge, or, sitting upon it, had fallen backwards, a height of from 15 to 20 feet, by which his skull was dreadfully fractured, in which state he was found dead on Monday morning, among the dry stones that form the channel of the rivulet. The report of his fate created considerable sensation in the neighbourhood, where he was much respected for his obliging

Besides these old soldiers there were many rather notable characters about the neighbourhood, some of whom are not undeserving of notice.

#### OLD THOMAS NAIRN.

The oldest man in the district—the life that was stretched furthest back into the dead ages—was Thomas Nairn, uncle of Mr James Nairn to whom we have previously alluded. Thomas was the original owner of the smith and joiner works at Bankhead. When I was a small boy I remember seeing old Thomas frequently sitting, in night cap and sleeved waistcoat, at the head of the lane which branches from the Balloch Road to the workshops. My father in those days had, once or twice a week, a reading of a newspaper, and as Thomas, old as he was, retained an anxious desire to know what was taking place in the world, he frequently made his way down in the evenings to our house. When about sixteen or seventeen, while employed in herding cattle somewhere about or beyond Kippen or Fintry, he heard the firing of the Highland army of Prince Charlie, on their return from England, and on their way to the fatal field of Culloden. If it was the fact, as Sir Walter Scott states, that Rob Roy lived till 1740, Thomas would then be at least ten years of age, and may have seen him. The only other circumstance I can remember of this venerable sage was told me by another old man, who strenuously maintained that the stones called the “old kirk,” seen in the loch opposite Auchenheglish, really and truly were those of a kirk or house. His main reason for believing this was that Thomas Nairn had taken wrought wood off the roof. I know not what modern archaeology may have to say to this.

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disposition. He has left behind him a wife and two young children. *Glasgow Herald*, March 1837.

#### PART XIV

In those days there was no hearse in the Vale of Leven. The coffin, covered with a wide sheet of black velvet, called the mortcloth, was carried on handspokes, locally named "spakes." Two of these were necessary, and the carrying usually effected by one, sometimes two, men at each end, having relays as they moved along. The spakes and the mortcloth were kept at the church under care of the sexton, and the use of them could be had for a few shillings. When there were long distances to travel a cart was usually employed. This state of matters continued till, I suppose, about the year 1826 or '28, when Mr James Nairn supplied a hearse, since which the spakes have become all but obsolete. Shortly after the introduction of this sable conveyance, it was one day seen to stop by the way near Knowhead; the door was opened, and, to the surprise of bystanders, who should creep out but our old friend, James Russell. By that time he was far gone in consumption, but still engaged in going about selling tea or books. The hearse had been returning from a funeral, and James, feeling very much exhausted, asked the driver to take him on. The seat was not sufficient for two, so James begged to be allowed to go inside, which was granted. Not long after this old James had his drive in the usual way.

#### BEARDS

In the course of the preceding narrative I have made reference to the beardless condition of the community in the Vale of Leven; and, indeed, everywhere else in Scotland. For many years in my early days nothing longer than a week's growth was known. Every male from sixteen onwards had something in shape of a razor with which he scraped his phiz., not later than every Saturday night or Sunday morning. Somewhere in the thirties, I should think 1832 or '33, a converted Jew came to preach in the U.P. Church of Bonhill. All the parish ran thither, not to hear the Gospel but to see the beard. After all, it would now-a-days have been considered a very insignificant affair, but then many thought that the Christianity of one wearing such an appendage to his face was very doubtful. A sample of what is now to be met with in all places every day would then have frightened, not only children, but their mothers, and caused doors to be barred.

#### CIVILIANS

In those days there were many who had never donned the regimentals or blue jackets, but still of peculiarly marked character, a few of whom may be referred to. One of these was John Dykes, usually called, when I first knew him, "Auld Dykes," and lived in Bonhill. He was also a block-cutter, and physically and mentally a human curiosity—fully six feet in height, almost fleshless, but had a powerful frame-work, which could, and had, borne a great amount of tear and wear. John was not what was called a dissipated man, but he could, especially in his younger days, take his glass with much freedom when occasion offered. At the same time he was of a religious turn of mind, was a regular attender of the Established Church, and the remarks at the close of the services which passed between him and some others of like nature, especially on sermons they approved of, were unusually much more

expressive than accords with chastened saintly reverence. Mr Jaffrey, of Dumbarton, was their beau ideal of a preacher, as he was of many more who brought higher culture to bear upon the forming of their opinion. I have heard a story regarding Dykes, which I believe to be well founded. An old woman who lived in Jamestown, whom he had formerly known, was reported to be seriously ill. He went to visit her. "O John, I'm awful fear't tae dee," said she to which he replied—"An' well ye may; ye have been a clashing' jade a' the days, o' ye, an' God Almichty 'ill judge ye, an' that sherply." Having thus unburdened his mind he withdrew. Whether this be true in every particular I cannot say, but at all events it was highly characteristic of the man.

When upwards of seventy years of age he, his wife, and daughter, thought proper to leave this country to join some relatives in America. It did not appear that they had given due notice of their coming out, as after arriving at their destination they had the mortification to learn that their friends had left for some other locality at a great distance, if I recollect rightly, somewhere about two hundred miles. Being without means, nothing remained for them but to travel that distance on foot. This they resolved to do, and after suffering great hardships, weary and worn, reached the abode of their friends. So unwonted had their journey been that an American newspaper made it the subject of a long article describing their perils and privations with considerable minuteness.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> The story is to be found in Albany Daily Advertiser, March 27, 1829.

Two brothers, whose wives also were sisters, resided near Glasgow, in Scotland, and on the fruits of their industry in their lucrative and respectable occupation (they were Calico printers) supported their families in comfort and ease, and were enabled to give their eight children all the advantages of mental and religious instruction, for which the better class of tradesmen particularly are so distinguished in that country. The distress, however, which for years has pervaded the manufacturing districts of Great Britain extended at last to them, and continued its visitations until their prospects were destroyed, and their perseverance exhausted. Denied all hopes of better times, they resolved in despair to abandon an occupation which no longer repaid their toil, and in June last they embarked with their families for Canada, with the purpose of purchasing and cultivating land.

They settled in the town of Ramsey, 200 miles above Montreal, and there soon found, in the task of building their log hut, and clearing their heavily timbered new land, that they were entirely unfitted for, and unequal to, the duties and labours of their new vocation. Provisions were dear and scarce, the climate was severe, and their fund of money was almost exhausted: a hard winter was before them, and—looking on their wives and children, who had thus far endured their privations patiently, if not cheerfully—they resolved with the advice of their few neighbours, to cross into "the States," and seek their employment in some of the new manufactories. They started on the 15th November, expecting to send in a short time for their families which they were leaving but slenderly provided. It was not, however, until the 10th of February that a letter reached its anxious expectants, stating that they had at length found employment at Fall River in Massachusetts, and would send for their families so soon as they had earned the means.

But for this their families could not wait—they were sinking under the pressure of evils among which the "hope delayed" counted but as trifling. The sum of money which the husbands had been able to leave them was but small, and the scarcity of provisions prevailing in the incipient settlement was shared by them even to extremity; to absolute hunger—the crevices and seams of their log hut were but partially closed, and admitted the snow at every blast of the wind. Amid hunger and cold and the cries of their children, their thoughts often turned to their own pleasant home by the Water of Leven. The few and distant neighbors gave them no assistance, for they did not know their wants—"we had not any means o' repaying oblegations," said one of them to me, "and sae did we nae like to ask them!"—and these two women, who in their own country had perhaps never seen an axe, were obliged, standing to

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the knees in snow, to cut down with their own hands the trees from which they obtained fuel for the fire around which their children shivered.

This could not endure longer, and in good time had the letter arrived. They knew then where their husbands were, and resolved to go to them. A sleigh was engaged, and their little preparations soon made. But the snow threatening to break up, the man dared not venture upon the long journey and refused to go! This was a cruel stroke; the cup of their affliction had long been full, and this last drop might well have caused its waters of bitterness to overflow—for no pangs cut so sorely as those of disappointed hope. They had now no choice but to endure as they had endured, or to attempt the journey on foot. The first seemed impossible; and besides these children and their mothers loved the fathers and husbands from whom they were separated. The prospect for the latter also might well appal the stoutest heart—the distance was nearly 500 miles—winter was at its depth—of money they had but four dollars, and there in the woods their clothing would sell for nothing, (their furniture had been chiefly left at Montreal,) and to crown the whole they had eight children of whom the eldest had not reached her 10th year.

In despite however of these fearful difficulties, these two heroic females bent up their hearts to the undertaking, and on the 18th day of February commenced on foot their toilsome journey. Each carried an infant at the breast with a bundle of clothing—the eldest girl, Sarah, carried on her shoulders her sister of 18 months, and the other three girls and two boys, aged from 3 to 8 years, trudged along as well as their little feet could carry them. From the 18th of Feb. until the 12th of March, when they arrived in this place, the weather had been peculiarly inclement—many days were severely cold, there were two deep falls of snow, and constant high winds, and for the two last days they had come under a cold rain. Their course had been entirely on retired roads, which being little travelled were but imperfectly beaten. Their slender stock of money had been long since expended, and they were forced to rely upon such scanty charity as their appearance elicited (for they never asked any) and their number made even that less efficient. But mid snow and storm, in hunger and cold, they still pressed on.—There was no day in which they did not make some progress—they slept where they could, and fed when it was offered, and the protection of that Providence which tempers the wind to the shorn lamb, and their own strong hearts has brought them thus far. Little Sarah, who carried her sister, suffered much with the soreness from that cause of her shoulders, and two others had their faces frost-bitten; but although worn and wearied with the toils of their journey, were well in health; and their spirits were high in the increasing hope of soon meeting the husbands and fathers whom they sought. They had several times been carried forward a few miles by humane persons, and thus got over perhaps 35 of 240 miles which they had passed. Strange as it may seem, and dark, as it the fact, for the many towns through which they passed, this was the first place where any efficient assistance was afforded to them. During the few days of their stay here, they were comfortably housed and fed. Their deficiencies of clothing were supplied, a stock of wholesome provisions was prepared, a sleigh was sent with them to Albany, where they were sure, if from the letters alone which they carried, of further assistance, and a sum of money was given them besides, which would bear them on their way. The simple gratitude and honest pride of their “kindly” Scotch hearts were equally apparent:—“Thank you, thank you—may Heaven itself bless you!” would they say, “but don’t if you please—we would rather not take more than just for the expenses, leave it for the poor creatures who need it more!”—It was a pleasant sight when, with their thankful hearts beaming in their happy faces, they set off over the icy road in a sleigh with the children comfortably wrapped up, to join soon the fathers of their love. I believe that I have omitted to tell you the name of the subject of my story—it is Dykes.

I am, sir, respectfully, yours, &c. Johnstown, March 16, 1829.

On the arrival of this interesting family in our city, the letters furnished them in Johnstown were delivered; a special meeting of the St. Andrew’s Society called, and although numerous applications, throughout this long and severe winter, had nearly exhausted the treasury, a sum as large as prudence would permit was immediately appropriated to their use; this, however, fell far short of the amount necessary to forward them in comfort to their ultimate destination, a subscription was therefore set on foot, and among the members present a sum was collected, which, with the contributions of a few charitable individuals, unconnected with the society, was found equal to the object. A vehicle was hired, comfortable provisions for a six day’s journey were purchased, and under the care of a steady and attentive driver, these heroic women, with their interesting families, started for their home on the morning of the 18th inst. On the evening of the same day, the elder of the brothers arrived here for the purpose of

After remaining in America some years they returned to Scotland and Bonhill, the old man again finding employment at Levenbank. Some months after his resumption of work, at a dry and sunny season of the year, Dykes made his appearance in the morning in a pair of boots thickly clogged with mud. One of his shopmates said—"John, John, where have you been to get your boots puddled in that way?" His reply was—"That's no' your mud; it's American Clay." The Bluchers had never known brush nor blackening since they trod the slimy tracks of the New World. This incident enabled us afterwards to boast of not being strangers to American soil. Besides an iron frame, Dykes possessed considerable force of intellect, and could, in his peculiar, slow, hissing way, give graphic descriptions of what he had seen and done on the other side of the Atlantic. I can well remember his account of his experience in coming down the rapids of an American river; how the boat had a very large helm, four or five men at the tiller, and their anxiety and alertness while guiding the boat as she swept at almost lightning speed round rocks and bluffs. The captain told the passengers that should anything go wrong they should each take hold of one of the flour barrels, and it would enable them to reach the bank. "My auld wife was lying below ill, so, says I, if that be the way o't I'll hae naethin' tae dae wi' your flour barrels. I'll awa' doon beside her, and we'll gan aff thegither. They, however passed in safety.

Some years after his return John's wife died, and when nearly eighty years of age he again took it into his head to go back to America. To enable him to do this money must have been sent him. He had heard some person remark on the folly of an old man such as he going away so far, to which his indignant reply was, "An auld man gaun tae America! Man, ye don't go; Ye sit in ship and she goes." Go he did and his daughter with him. Nobody supposed that Scotland would ever again see that shrivelled-up rickle of humanity. A year or so afterwards, one windy day, what appeared to be the ghost of auld Dykes, with his apron tightly wrapped round his body, was seen stalking by the river-side at Bonhill. It turned out to be Dykes himself still in the—the bones. On being spoken to, and referring to his apron, he said as it was very windy he

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conducting the families home. It would appear that when they had accomplished the first fifty miles of their toilsome journey, they halted at a tavern, from whence they wrote their husbands, stating the circumstances which had induced them to leave their comfortless residence, and their hopelessness of being able to accomplish the task they had undertaken, and the slender prospect they entertained of procuring any mode of conveyance. On the receipt of this letter he instantly started, in his anxiety to proceed on his journey, he passed through Albany without any inquiry, and in like manner through Johnstown; fortunately in arriving in the next town, he found he had missed the stage, and although he knew it was adding nothing to his progress, as he must be overtaken by the next stage, he determined to continue his journey on foot; such was the restless anxiety of his mind to press forward to the relief of those so deservedly dear to him. We say fortunately, for here he overtook a fellow traveller, who, in the course of conversation enquired the state of the roads to the Eastward, expressing anxiety on account of two women and eight children, who were journeying in that direction. We need not add that he instantly retracted his steps. At Johnstown he heard with a full heart and overflowing eyes, of all that these families had suffered, and of their present comforts. On Friday last he again arrived in Albany; he sought the managers of St. Andrew's Society, and it is with pride in the honest and honourable feeling of our countryman, that we state he instantly insisted on refunding from his slender means, the sum advanced from the treasury of that association: this amount they accepted.—He was equally solicitous in desiring to repay all the private contributions, but who would willingly be deprived of the heartfelt satisfaction of contributing to the comforts of persons so deserving? This restitution was therefore declined.

had tied it round him, "just to keep his bones frae rattlin'." He had come back just to lay them beside his auld mate. And that was done for him not long after.

#### A HARSH LAW

A man engaged at the works, whose name I cannot remember as the incident occurred when I was very young, had saved a little money, and an opportunity occurring he took a lease of Haldane's Mill. Finding the walls and machinery defective, he employed tradesmen to make the necessary renovation. I cannot say whether or not the mill had done any work after the repairs had been made, but, at all events, when rent became due, all his capital had been exhausted. When the proprietor found that nothing could be got from him, the harsh laws of that period were acted upon, and he was marched off to the debtor's cell in Dumbarton Jail. How long he remained there I cannot say, but it must have been a considerable time, for he was allowed to continue his work there, blocks and patterns being regularly sent him from the printfield, more than four miles away. I am also ignorant of how his release was effected, but he had no longer anything to do with the mill.

#### SMUGGLERS AND DROVERS.

There were at the works many who had known pretty rough paths in earlier days, such as old smugglers, drovers and fishermen. One there was named Smith who had had considerable experience of the houff and whisky making. It was the custom at the New Year for parties of the workers to club together and buy a whole cask of whisky, have it taken to the works and there divided, to be carried home in bottles or cans. On one occasion the said Smith offered to make and supply whisky at a cheap rate, and the offer was accepted. The houff was situated somewhere about Balloch Burn, and on the last day of the year the cask was duly delivered at the works. When opened it was found that its contents resembled milk rather than whisky. On being questioned as to this Smith said that the whiteness was caused by some new London barm that had been used, but the whisky was good enough. As it was found to have bite in it, if I mistake not, it was retained. But a song was made on the occurrence, and that ditty was a favourite in the locality for many a day, and "London Barm" was the nickname that stuck to Smith ever after. At these whisky divides considerable quantities were carried home in the stomach. On one occasion Watty Glen, the millwright, had his share in two cans, but the evening after the divide he and the cans were found in a ditch at the roadside. Either he or the ditch had got the whisky, as the cans were empty. These were grand old times.

With regard to drovers, there were at least two at the works, who had in their early days gone from the Highlands to England with droves. One of these was Neil M'Innes, a Mull man, and although the greater portion of his life had been passed in the Lowlands he could never manage to express himself in Scotch or English in a way that failed to cause merriment among his neighbours. He was, however, a sober and most industrious man; had at an early age been at the cobbling business, and now his meal hours and all available moments were devoted to the mending of shoes. And, besides, he watched the churchyard three or four nights a week, for which he was paid eighteenpence a night by those for whom he acted as a substitute. All males

in the parish beyond a certain age required, in those days, to take their turns in pairs, to watch against resurrectionists, who never neglected an opportunity for carrying out their revolting avocation. Neil's great ambition, it was said, was to make a hundred pounds for his only daughter, but, poor man, evil times fell on him before he died.

Another of those old drovers was Alexander M'Pherson, a joiner, a most respectable man in every way. Among his experiences was that of seeing, in lonely places by the wayside in England, the bodies of men who had been executed for highway robbery dangling from poles, and the dismal creaking of the chains in windy days was described as the most eerie sounds he had ever heard. One can scarcely realise the fact that such barbarous customs came so near our own times. Sandy or Sanners, as he was often called was an excellent example of the saying that speed or efficiency is not indicated by fuss or bustle. A casual observer might have concluded that he was a slow worker, and that he did not stress himself much. He never seemed to be in a hurry, and yet he executed his task at more than average speed, and with the highest degree of efficiency. He never seemed to be at a loss to know what should be done and everything he did was done with ease, and was always a finished performance. A most amiable good man, without any show or pretence, and no man held him in higher esteem for his work's sake as well as for his exemplary life than the master whom he faithfully served.

There were many of whose peculiarities much might be said, but only to one more will I allude, merely for the sake of recording his mode of settling in an amicable manner any dispute that might arise about wages. His name was Jamie Cuthill, a mechanic. Jamie was a rather uncouth specimen of the race, and gruff in speech. In a former situation there was a dispute between him and his master about overtime which Jamie held to be due him. In order to have it finally settled he determined to appeal to the master's conscience, and addressed him thus—"Weel Master Mitchell, are ye gaun tae pays, or are ye gaun tae cheat's o'er it." He did not get the money but he got the sack.

## PART XV

Travelling, in my earlier days, among the ordinary population at least, got little assistance from mechanical contrivances. The big man had his carriage and horses, the farmer had his cart and horse, but all the rest of the community required to make the best they could of the locomotive apparatus with which nature had supplied them. It is really marvellous to think of what has been accomplished by that means alone. From the beginning of mankind, passage by water has been effected by floats of some kind in the shape of boats, but dry land, from east to west, and from north to south, has disclosed itself to the pedestrian alone. Scottish feet have been among the foremost in the grand march of discovery and civilisation, and of making a knowledge of the world common property. In support of this we might quote the names of a dozen world-renowned travellers, but we need not go back from our own times for an example, when we mention Dr Livingstone. In comparison with their achievements those of our immediate ancestors are small affairs, but still, what the present generation would not like to be under the necessity of submitting to. It is in the memory of some still living when the inhabitants of the Vale of Leven had no means of visiting Glasgow or Paisley than by walking. Few could accomplish the distance under five hours, and fewer still the going and coming in the same day. I can well remember my own grandmother, when she must have been over sixty years of age, setting out one morning from Balloch to visit a relative in Kilmarnock, and reaching home on the afternoon of the next day—thinking it no feat at all. Her remark was, the day was warm, and the perspiration caused by walking “kept me fine and soople.”

However, so far as I remember, there was a steamer every morning from Dumbarton, but the hour for starting was in great measure contingent on the state of the tide, and this frequently detained her an hour or two after the stated time. The chief difficulty was the bar at the castle, but having once got over it there was still a long sandy shallow running slant out to a perch which required to be reached and rounded before the steamer got into the channel of the Clyde. In the passage out, in order to prevent grounding, the passengers were kept running from side to side so that she might rock and wriggle her way through the sand. I many times had experience of that; and, besides paying, we had thus to sometimes work our passage. This necessity was after a while obviated by a box, filled with heavy chains being pushed to one side so as to give her a permanent heel when necessary. In returning we often stuck at the bar, and were put ashore in a plank when near, or a small boat when too far out.

The first captain I knew was a middle-aged man named M'Kinlay, who had previously been carrier on the road from Dumbarton to Glasgow. He retained his old habit of using “hip” and “whoa” to the engineer, just as he had formerly done to his horse.

Strange as it may appear, one could get from Dumbarton to Glasgow cheaper by the steamer than he now can by the railway—time not taken into account.

BONHILL AND BALLOCH BRIDGES

There was no bridge across the Leven till about the middle of last century, when that at Dumbarton was erected. As we have already said, passage at Bonhill and Balloch was effected by boats; that at Bonhill, where the current is strong, being on the swing principle, which was quite unsuitable for cattle or vehicle traffic. When the river was swollen it was also very dangerous, a very sad case in point having occurred at Levenfield, about half a mile farther up the river, which some old people may remember. The manager was an Englishman named Berry, living at the works. On a Sabbath morning he went out to ferry a friend, taking with him into the boat his two young sons. He effected his purpose in putting his friend ashore, but on returning the heavy pressure of the water overturned the boat, and all were thrown into the river. Mr Berry, being a good swimmer, took hold of the boys, one under each arm, and so far succeeded as to get near enough to be within reach of a bush that grew on the bank. Endeavouring to lay hold of the bush, he lost his hold of one of the boys, and in making an effort to regain it they were all swept along and drowned. The incident caused a great sensation at the time, and was long remembered.

As public works and people increased, the want of a bridge to connect the two villages was sorely felt. In the year 1807 the Road Trustees were empowered by Act of Parliament to build bridges, but no advantage was taken before the term of the Act expired. In 1828 the Act was renewed, but still the Trustees, for want of funds, lingered till 1834, when an Act was procured which allowed the Trustees to arrange with the proprietors of the ferries, Admiral Smollett at Bonhill, and Sir James Colquhoun at Balloch, to build bridges, and to reimburse themselves, along with compensation for the loss of their ferries, by the levying of pontages. Bonhill Bridge was therefore erected in 1837, and Balloch Bridge in 1842.

The public were all the while under the impression that so soon as the bridge paid for itself, and a specified sum for the loss of the ferry, the bridge would become public property. At Bonhill the amount annually collected was large, and in 1848 the Trustees were requested to state how matters stood between the proprietor and the public. The Trustees replied that the public had no right to interfere as the bridge was private property. When the inhabitants thus discovered that they were at the mercy of the proprietor for all time coming, they considered themselves grossly deceived and illegally dealt with. Money was then raised by subscription, and after long litigation the Court of Session decided the case in favour of Mr Smollett, the form in which the case was raised giving him an advantage. The public were powerless. They were prohibited from the use of the neighbouring ford, and the right was denied them to build another bridge within half a mile on each side of the Smollett erection. Among those who assisted the people, none was more forward and zealous than Mr William Campbell, of Tullichewan.

#### BOATING ON THE LOCH

On paying a visit to Balloch lately, I was pleased to see a large fleet of handsome pleasure boats moored in the Leven, both below and above the bridge. These, for the most part, belong to private parties, mostly tradesmen at the public works down the river. In my early days there was no pleasure boat belonging to any individual or party of the working classes. One or two were kept for hire at the Inn. Mr Nairn had one, less for pleasure than for

business, and one belonged to Mr Paterson, then a partner in the firm owning Levenbank Printworks. Latterly, when Mr. Stuart and family came to occupy Lennoxbank House, they kept two—a small one and a larger. The small one was almost daily in use by the two youngest of the family, viz., Miss Jessie and her brother David. This young lady was an admirable oarswoman, and no doubt the bracing exercise tended to fortify a constitution which has enabled her to long withstand the inroads of time, as she still survives—the widow of Mr Joseph Turnbull, of Bonhill Place. David also survives, and with several of his family has for some years been settled in the beautiful island of Tahiti, of which we often read, and find characterized as the “Gem of the Pacific.”

The first boat in connection with the working classes in the district belonged to a portion of block printers at Levenbank. The custom then was that any one, before being allowed to become an apprentice, should pay to the men the sum of seven guineas as entry money, and, as aspirants were numerous, considerable sums were occasionally on hand, which were usually spent on balls, suppers, and other convenient entertainments. On one occasion a proposal was made that part of the money should be devoted to the purchase of a pleasure boat. Accordingly, a certain number was commissioned to proceed to Greenock, and endeavour to find one that would accommodate a tolerably numerous party. The result was that a ship’s jolly-boat was procured, towed by a steamer to Dumbarton, thence up the river by the owners themselves. She was carvel built, strong and roomy, and, at the same time, very easy to pull. The “Isabella” was the name given her, out of compliment to an amiable young lady, a daughter of Mr Stuart, proprietor of the works. This lady became the wife of the Rev. James M’Gown, who succeeded Mr Candlish as assistant to Mr Gregor, and he was afterwards for many years Established minister of Lawrencekirk. This lady still survives.

The “Isabella” came to be a well-known cruiser on the loch. The central point of attraction was Inchmurrin, for two sufficient reasons—first, it was the island nearest to Balloch; second, the keeper, Duncan Graham, sold whisky. But the island in itself had attractions in its history and natural peculiarities sufficient to draw towards it visitors of all classes, from historian to the artist. The Duke of Montrose, about two hundred years ago, purchased portions of the Lennox lands from the descendants of the original family, and Inchmurrin became the duke’s deer park, which it still continues to be.

#### INCHMURRIN

This island, as we have already said, was for centuries a favourite residence of the Dukes of Lennox, in which insular spot, it may be supposed, they felt more secure from attack than in their other house at Balloch. On a high rocky knoll at the extreme west end are still to be seen the remains of the ancient castle, reduced to time-worn fragments of walls, and Mother Nature has hopped up under her grassy coverlet much more than she has left above ground. Charters, still extant, are dated from this house as far back as 1333. History records a painful incident which occurred not long after this date. Duncan, then Earl of Lennox, was a powerful and influential personage in the government of Scotland. James the First, who had been long a prisoner in England, had been released, returned to Scotland, and being enraged at the Scottish nobles for not having made more effective efforts to bring about his release, determined to make examples of some of them. The first of his

victims was this Earl Duncan, then about eighty years of age, who, along with his son-in-law, Duke of Albany, and grandson, were arrested, carried to Stirling and all beheaded, in May 1425. Historians regard this as a cruel and barbarous act for which there was no justification, as Duncan was both loyal and a good man. His widowed daughter, the Duchess of Albany, was driven from the estate and doomed to a long banishment. Being subsequently released she was allowed to return to Inchmurrin, and to exercise her legal authority over the Lennox for the long period of thirty-five years. She died in 1460.

At the foot of the knoll on which the ruin stands there was, and no doubt, still is, a neat, modern villa of octagonal form, originally erected by the duke for the accommodation of the family when they chose to visit the island; but it remained unfurnished during the time I had been in the habit of going thither.

## PART XVI

Duncan Graham's House was still situated a little beyond, and farther from the beach. A long thatched, single-storey house, comprising, besides the dwelling house, a byre and a stable, and in front there was a goodly space of green sward, on which many a dance took place by lads and lasses from the Leven and elsewhere. Duncan was tall and broad shouldered, and in his earlier days must have been physically powerful. When I came to know him he was fully over middle age, and inclined to take life easily. The peculiarity of his head was a low and narrow brow, and a heavy, precipitous chin, which projected considerably, leaving a short thin upper lip in the shadow of a rather prominent nondescript nose. He was proud of his light soft, yellow hair, which was always smoothly drawn down almost to his eyebrows. The dwelling house consisted of a room and a kitchen, and in the former the visitors were served. Duncan, who had no license, always presided, and never failed to have a full share of what was going. He had only two whisky measures, black bottles of different sizes, the smaller being designated the young doctor and the larger the old doctor, in compliment to the two Doctors Leckie then in Bonhill, who were known as the old and the young doctor. His favourite topics were about the old times and the gallant Grahams, often repeating the lines—

The Grahams they made their heads to dance,  
Upon the Haughs of Cromdale.

Besides, his lisping, nasal, and hurried enunciation gave his utterances a peculiarity which cannot easily be described, but was frequently enough successfully imitated by mimics of the Vale of Leven. He was exceedingly touchy and passionate, and required to be always addressed "Mister." The word Duncan, uttered by a visitor, would have been instantly resented. I only once heard the mistake made, and the reply immediately was, "I won't deny my name. No! I won't deny my name!" and some little effort was required to appease him.

His wife, Mallie, as he called her, had also her peculiarities, but she was clever and tidy, made excellent cakes, and curds and cream and whey were usually to be had in abundance.

The Isabella came to be a frequent and welcome visitant, and Mr Graham had confidence in her that she was not a pirate. This term he applied to all boats of which he was suspicious of stealthily landing in some out-of-the-way part of the island for the purpose of molesting and killing the deer, considerable numbers of which might often be seen quietly grazing close by the dwelling house. Duncan's confidence in the Isabella may, for aught I know, have been well founded so far as the island was concerned, but there were temptations on the shores of the loch, such as game and fruit, to which she was sometimes clandestinely guided, and made not unfruitful calls.

That Duncan had good cause for suspicions there could be no doubt, as was shown in one case which not a few may yet remember. One evening at dusk a boat was seen at a distance making for the farther end of the island. He had at

that time assistant watchers, who kept their eyes upon this boat, and saw it come to the shore. By the time they reached it, the occupants had landed and gone after their game into the bush. The boat was secured, and brought round to the bay at the keepers's house. The night was cold, and at a late hour one of the supposed pirates came down and gave himself up. The other remained out all night, but being in a starving and benumbed condition, he also came and was secured. They were taken to Stirling, put upon their trial, and sentenced to a term of imprisonment of considerable length. In jail they remained for some time, but it came to be discovered that Inchmurrin was not in Stirlingshire but in Dumbartonshire., where they ought to have been imprisoned. In virtue of this technical error they were released, and returned to Bonhill. The exposure that night on the island had, however, fatally injured their constitutions, and they both succumbed not long afterwards.

In conversation with Duncan, it was absolutely necessary to guard against saying anything in the least uncomplimentary about the Duke of Montrose. A single word that could bear such a construction would in a moment set Duncan on fire, and woe to the offender. He might consider himself fortunate if he could leave the island without having a gun levelled at him.

On one occasion I went to the island with our old friends, James Harper and Dominie Campbell. We were comfortably situated at the table, with Duncan as usual filling out the liquor and handling round the glass. Something was said about the battle of Culloden, when the dominie referred in highly laudatory terms to Hogg's song of "Cumberland's awa' to h- - -." He began to recite parts of it, and when he repeated the line, "gathering sticks to roast the Duke," Duncan in a moment sprung to his feet, and, after a preface of malediction, demanded to know what Duke? James, who knew his man thoroughly, at once interposed by telling him that the Duke of Cumerland was referred to, and not the Duke of Montrose. This mollified him, and his reply was, "O, then, say awa'." Many instances might be given of a similar nature in regard to this half-tamed sample of humanity, but the preceding may suffice. Mallie died when she was somewhat beyond middle age, and was buried in the neighbouring island of Inchcalliach. There was a great gathering of boats from all parts of the loch and the Leven, and the rounds of whisky were so many, and the quantity consumed so great, as to be regarded as a wonder even in these notable liquefying latitudes. Duncan himself died some years afterwards. His remains were conveyed by the steamer to the same place of burial, and Duncan and his Mallie lie side by side, in the company of many generation of Grahams, Buchanans, and M'Gregors, who had long ceased from troubling. The orgies on this more than equalled those of the former occasions.

#### A THREE-MASTED VESSEL.

Some time ago I saw what purported to be an engraved view of Lochlomond, on which was introduced a full-sized three-masted ship. People who knew the locality were having a hearty laugh at this absurdity, as they justly regarded it; and yet, the most beautiful three-masted vessel I have ever seen was upon Lochlomond. She was known as the King's Cutter, and was stationed there for the purpose of putting down illicit distillation, which was then carried on in the islands, and along the shores and in glens, to a vast extent. She was an open boat, not much larger than a good-sized pleasure boat, very neatly

rigged, had sails above each other like a full-rigged ship, and the slightest breath of wind made her speed along in grand style. I have seen her, with her white sails set, come sweeping round Balloch Isle and make for the landing place with ease and gracefulness of a gigantic swan. What success she had in putting down smuggling, I know not.

#### THE FIRST LOCHLOMOND REGATTA.

After the *Isabella*, pleasure boats rapidly increased in the Leven and the loch, and the time came when a regatta was proposed—I think about the year 1827-8. I do not recollect the person or party who suggested it, but, at all events, the late Mr Alex. Smollett took an active interest in carrying it out. What with my experience in cobbles and in the *Isabella*, I had acquired at an early age a knowledge of boat management beyond that of most of my fellows. This, quite unexpectedly, led me into company, of which, with all humility I may say, was rather beyond what I had been accustomed to in the print-shops. Among the races announced in the programme was a gig race, to be pulled only by gentlemen. One crew was formed consisting of Mr Alexander Smollett, Mr Hamilton of Barns, Mr (afterwards Sir) James Colquhoun of Luss, and Mr John Stuart, son of the proprietor of the printfield. David, the younger brother of the last mentioned was to be steersmen.

Some days previous to the regatta this crew resolved to have a few hours' practice on the loch, but their steersman happened to be from home, and a boy was wanted to take his place. I was asked to go, and another boy being put in my place, away I went, thinly clad and barefooted, being ignorant of the character and standing of those by whom I was wanted. Although technically a "tearer," it is not likely they felt alarmed when they saw such a scarecrow coming to take command. At all events, I got into "leading strings" at the stern, and we were immediately afterwards on our way from Balloch Ferry.

Hamilton was stroke, and a finer looking or more athletic young fellow I have never seen. I soon found that he was as good at heart as he was handsome in personal appearance. The day was breezy and rather cold, and seeing me so thinly clad, he caused me to don his pea jacket, which was ample enough to come down nearly to my feet. I felt it a great comfort. Besides, he spoke freely and kindly to me, complimented me on my piloting, and all no doubt for the purpose of putting me at ease in good spirits. He was at least six feet in height, well proportioned, and flexible as a wand. When he rolled up his shirt sleeves he displayed an arm round and full as that of a well-conditioned lady, showing no muscular developments of any prominence. I afterwards came to know that in all feats of strength and in gymnastic exercises he could excel all competitors.

Mr Smollett sat next, and although he did not speak rudely to me, there was not the same frankness in his manner as in the other. Next to him sat Sir James, mostly silent, but always with a pleasant expression on his countenance, working earnestly with his eyes fixed on the blade of his oar, which once or twice was caught in a wave, nearly throwing him on his back. Hamilton would then give him a good-natured scolding, at which a quiet smile would pass over his countenance, while he tried to explain the cause of his mishap. Sir James was also well formed, of fully average height, had pleasing features and fresh-coloured cheeks, and seemed to be quite passive and

pleased to go or do as Hamilton desired. It has been said that when Queen Victoria was in the locality she had expressed herself to the effect that Sir James was as handsome a man as she had seen in Scotland. Mr Stuart was at the bow oar, the youngest of the four, and it was at his request I was there that day.

Our course was, in the first place, direct to Arden shore, thence across the loch to Ross Priory, then the residence of Lady Macdonald Buchanan and her family. Here we landed and went up to the house—they upstairs, and I, by Mr Smollett's command, taken down to the kitchen, where I was treated to "cakes and ale." I had the additional pleasure of seeing and scenting a fine cut of salmon, cooked for my crew upstairs. Attracted no doubt by the savoury odour, a young flunkey came dancing in, when the cook broke off a piece and chucked it into his mouth. By-and-bye I had a visit from the good and pleasant old Lady Macdonald herself. She kindly asked if I had got enough? I said yes; but at the same time, out of respect to the family's interests, I had been so sparing as to do less than justice to my natural cravings. She, however, broke off a portion of the remaining oaten cake, saying there were some poor people at the door to whom she would give it. I have to this day a perfect recollection of that nicely-formed hand as it bent to the task, chiefly on account of the flash of jewellery which came from it to my eyes. I had previously a tolerable acquaintance with oat cakes, but never in connection with a hand so richly bedizened.

After being in the house perhaps a couple of hours, I was summoned to the boat. The day was windy, and, coming direct from the hot kitchen, I felt very chilly, and had the comfort of hearing one young lady say to another, "Come and see how he is shivering." When however, in the boat, I again got into the pea jacket, and was soon comparatively comfortable. Mr Stuart and I were put ashore at the water mouth, and the others made across for Cameron.

I have little recollection of how that regatta came off, although I was there with the multitude on the shore and in Auchenheglish Park, then open ground. Next year, however, I was officially engaged in steering a jolly-boat belonging to Mr George Stirling of Dalquhurn. Three of the crew were brothers of Captain Robert Ritchie, long known in the loch steamer service, and a man named Peter M'Arthur. We did not gain any of the three prizes; had there been a fourth we would have gained it. But we could not own to having been beat, as there were nine boats behind us.

## PART XVII

### MORE ABOUT MY CREW

I must here return for a short time to refer to my gentleman crew. Eight or ten years afterwards, Mr Smollett and Sir James Colquhoun became candidates for the honour of M.P. for the county. It was the custom then that the candidates should, on a certain day, at Dumbarton, at a public meeting presided over by the Sheriff, be duly proposed and seconded, and after that each of them should give an address in expression of his opinions. Both did so, and "the voice of the people," as here congregated, was overwhelmingly in favour of Sir James. Mr Cross-Buchanan, of Auchentorlie, in Mr Smollett's interests, then came forward on the platform, and was making a speech to show that the majority of electors were with them. He was interrupted, and finding he could not be listened to, he put his thumb to his nose and made bellowing sounds with his mouth. A young fellow near me, having a crooked stick in his hand threw it at the insulting agent. It struck him on the back and hopped over his head, but it was too light to do any injury. Mr Dunlop, of Keppoch, was present at this meeting, and either moved or seconded the Tory, Mr Smollett. Something was said that brought about a duel between him and Sir James. Shots were exchanged, but both escaped scathless. At the poll, however, Mr Smollett was victorious. And, strange to say, this Mr Dunlop was the same gentleman who became legal adviser to the Free Church party at the Disruption in 1843, and afterwards contested Greenock as the ultra-Liberal candidate.

### SAD ENDING

For nearly forty years after this first regatta on the Loch I had heard nothing whatever of Mr Hamilton, and what I did hear then was that he was alive, but, unfortunately, an invalid, from the effects of rheumatism. He was blind, bent, and so crippled that he could not move from his couch, and that the Free Church minister from Duntocher, Mr Alexander, went up every Sabbath afternoon to the house at Cochno there to rehearse parts of his sermons to him. This was sad news; yet I scarcely wondered at it, as he was, as it appeared to me, recklessly disregardful of the means by which health is secured and maintained. On the occasion I have referred to, when we neared shore, he leapt into the water to take hold of the boat so as to prevent her from grating on the stony bottom, and never cared to change shoes or socks. Although he seemed to feel no bad effects at the time it could not be expected that, if such practices were persisted in, they would not allow him to escape with impunity. He died shortly after the time I had received this information about him.

About fifteen years ago, amongst the last days of December, Sir James Colquhoun, with four of a crew, went in a small boat from Rossdhu to the Island of Inch Lonaig to shoot deer. Having accomplished their object, they set out again for home. The boat was deeply-laden with deer, and the wind was now blowing a gale. While crossing over the exposed stretch between Inch Lonaig and the Straits of Luss the boat was swamped, and the whole of the occupants were drowned. Sometime afterwards the bodies of Sir James and one or two of the crew were found but not all of them. A few years after that, when Lochlomond was frozen over, Mr Smollett then about eighty years

of age, went upon the ice as far as Inchmurrin, caught a chill, and died two or three days afterwards. Mr Stuart, I understand still lives, but has for many years been settled in the United States.

#### OUR MEDICAL MEN

With regard to our early medical advisers, I may say that, up till a few years before I came into the world, any regular medical attendance could be had only from Dumbarton. Doctors Colquhoun and Swan were the two I had often heard spoken of by members of the preceding generation. At length, Dr Thomas Leckie fixed his residence at Bonhill, and continued to practice for some years. His cousin, Alexander, a younger man, joined as his assistant and partner, and the two acted in concert for a short time, and were known as the old doctor and the young doctor. They ultimately parted, the younger setting up on his own account. When the old doctor died, his cousin, Alexander, was alone in the parish for many years. During the first outbreak of cholera in this country, Mr Humphreys, who had been a missionary in China, came to take charge of the hospital at Bonhill; when the disease disappeared he went to Glasgow, completed a medical course of study, returned to Bonhill, and there remained in practice until his death, many years ago. For a long time the only other practitioner in the Vale was Dr Cullen, of Renton. He had two sons who studied medicine, and he was succeeded in the district by the younger, John, who, in turn, has been succeeded by his son, now at Alexandria. Doctors, like ministers, are not now a scarce commodity in the Vale, but no doubt their services are all required. Alexandria alone has a population of 8262, which is, at least, ten times the number it had in my younger days. It was then called "The Grocery," a shop of that kind having been opened in the locality. There was not one completed street, unless a row of low-tiled houses, called the Red Row, was worthy that appellation. The population, for the most part, found employment at Leven Field, Messrs John Todd & Co. The great impetus was occasioned by two comparatively small bleach-fields, Ferryfield and Croftengea, having been turned into print-fields. The first of these was owned by a Mr M'Kinlay, but, about the year 1832 or '33, Messrs Guthrie & Kinloch there commenced printing in a small way. Steady progress was made till the works assumed considerable importance. A still greater impetus was given when, in 1836, Messrs Alexander & Co. commenced the dyeing and printing of Turkey-red cloth at Croftengea. The success, under the superintendence of Mr John Orr Ewing, was rapid, and what was formerly open fields has been gradually encroached on till it is now covered over with immense piles of building, and consequently the employees are very numerous. Bonhill has not increased in an equal ratio. It has chiefly been dependent on Dalmonach, but in the early Kibble days the employees were about as numerous as they are at the present day. Jamestown and neighbourhood have always been, for the most part, dependent on Levenbank, which may be said to have had quite an abnormal growth since the Turkey-red manufacture was introduced by Mr, now Sir Archibald Orr Ewing, Bart., almost half a century ago, and the population now numbers 2236—the entire population of Bonhill parish now being 14,379.

#### CONCLUSION.

I have thus skimmed over the Balloch district of my early days in a general way, so far as my memory serves, but I scarcely come down to the end of the

Stuart *regime* at Levenbank in 1845. So far as the population was concerned, I feel as if I had been picking up a few waifs on the shore of the great ocean of oblivion. For most part it was composed of the so-called common people, who are, in all ages, doomed to forgetfulness, and of whom we may in vain search even the tombstones for any memorial. Yet, amongst these there was the raw material which, by careful manipulation, might have been converted into worthy occupants of any public positions, from the throne downwards. Those soldiers and sailors, of whom I have been speaking, were in the ranks only because they were unable to purchase commissions. Had it been otherwise, who could tell but some of them might have become the idolized heroes of memorable battlefields, to rank with the Nelsons, the Duncans, the Wellingtons, and the Napiers. So uniform is the constitution of humanity that it is not unreasonable to suppose that if an allotment were made as to who should be our future statesmen, our clergymen, our lawyers, our doctors, our artists, our magistrates, our members of parliament, &c., and the parties early put into a suitable course of training, the result could scarcely fail to be an average competency, at least as efficient as what now obtains.

Until the period I have stated the people of the Balloch district were, for the most part, employed at the print-field, and for more than the preceding quarter of a century the works had been carried on in an unbroken sequence, seldom a day of idleness from year's end till year's end, and this was one reason why the regular annual holidays were looked forward to with so much interest and anticipation. The stoppage of the works, which was not directly a financial question, caused the dispersion of many families, who were thus compelled to abandon, perhaps for ever, the homes in which they were born, and the scenes with which they had all their lives been familiar. This class of evictions, to which factory workers are often liable, entail all the inconveniences, hardships, and regretful associations which attend those of the crofters in Ireland and the Highlands of Scotland.

In this case, the changes extended to the proprietor himself. At considerable cost he had converted a piece of rough land and bog into Lennox-bank, with its inviting house and gardens, and there for thirty years had moved about at his ease and will, the business being superintended by his son, and giving him little concern. He had, at this time, attained to the allotted three score and ten still there were fully twenty years before him, for he died at Helensburgh, about the age of ninety.

When the works were begun for Turkey-red dyeing, under the highly prosperous Ewing dynasty, Mr Ewing having come fresh from training in his brother John's works at Croftengea, the influx of strangers was so great as soon to completely overwhelm the remaining portion of the old inhabitants. The whole face of the country is now changed. A much greater number now find the means of subsistence, and there may possibly be a proportionate amount of worth, comfort, and happiness in the district as in the days of old. Of this I cannot speak from experience, but what with the facilities afforded by railways and telegraphs, a higher standard of education, and greatly developed means of acquiring knowledge, the external conditions of happiness are decidedly in favour of the present. The present, however, must speak for itself, through the medium of its own members.

The manhood and womanhood of my earliest days, are so far as I know, all asleep—blotted from the page of human life—and the object of the author of these reminiscences was to leave behind him some frail memorial, which he hopes may not be uninteresting to their descendants.