

FOR THE TRUE WITNESS.

NIGHT ON MOUNT ROYAL.

BY D. McK. MACARTHUR.

Before the black and silent city sleeping, As some faint monster in its pole's breath, While through its entrails throng, in eager rivalry, Great spirits who subsist within this atmosphere of Death.

BONNIE SCOTLAND. THROUGH "THE LAND OF CAKES."

The Lochs and the Trosachs—The Gray Metropolis—Scenes Peopled by the Pen of Sir Walter.

A brief ride by rail from Glasgow brings one to the shore of Loch Lomond, the "Queen of the Scottish Lakes." The train runs unto Balloch Pier, abreast of the jaunty little steamer that plies up and down the lake among a hundred islands, touching here and there at small hamlets, that grow suddenly gay during the short summer season, and then as suddenly relapse into their long winter sleep.

Loch Lomond! Dear old Kit North has chanted its praises in one of his poetical prose rhapsodies: "Sealike indeed it is—a Mediterranean sea,—and these are the Fortunate Isles." Sir Walter Scott seconds the enthusiasm of the most enthusiastic of Scotch writers. And there is not a Scot of them all but adores the classic tourist must admit.

Thirty miles in length and ten in breadth, though it nutrows to a single mile in some parts of it, sprinkled with islands of every conceivable description; surrounded by grand and gloomy mountains, grander for their gloom,—Ben Lomond, Ben Ledi, and others of that large family, some of them three thousand feet in height; its shores presenting every variety of romantic and savage beauty; its beauty heightened by cloud-effects that are forever changing; its fame associated with the adventures of Rob Roy and Robert Bruce; the theme of many a ballad by Scott and Wordsworth and a choir of nameless poets,—ah! Loch Lomond, with all that pertains to it, possesses an irresistible charm that no one can escape.

Cruising over the lake, which was anciently famed for three local phenomena—"waves without wind, fish without fin, and a floating island."—one naturally inquires for these celebrities. The waves without wind prove to be the ripples that follow the current down the lake and play along the lower shores; the fish without fin are thought to be the vipers that sometimes swim across from one shore to the other. As for the floating island, it was long ago drowned by the increase of the water in the lake; if it ever really floated, it must have sprung a leak. There are ruins of houses still visible beneath the water, a hundred yards from shore, in Camstradden Bay; and there are other evidences of a gradual and permanent rise in the tide.

The steamer almost grazes some of the delightful islands, sending long rollers tumbling up among the rocks and awaking echoes that mock the plash of our paddle wheels. At Inch-Caillach (the island of Women) there was once a nunnery, but the nuns have all withdrawn to their dark cells under the soil; there is nothing but the graveyard left to tell the tale,—a graveyard choked with weeds and ivy, the burial-ground of the MacGregors. Inch-Tavanach (the Monks' Isle) has fared no better.

There is one island sadder than all the others—Inch-Lonaig. (You know Inch is the Gaelic for island; but as for Lonaig, I give it up,—it isn't down in my pocket-dictionary.) Until 1820 this island was used as a retreat for drunken wives. Their husbands—who were of course sober at the time—were wont to land them on the island, with a loaf of bread and a pitcher of cold water, for mercy's sake; and there they were held captive until each forgiving lord chose to take pity on his repentant spouse. Many of the islands were found convenient for the detention of troublesome relatives; and not one of them all but might tell a startling tale, if only we could interpret the tongues of the trees that burden every zephyr with mysterious messages. At Inch-Cruin there was an asylum for the insane; Christopher North called it the Island of the Afflicted.

The times have changed of late. All these fairly haunts are now used as deer parks or picnic grounds. A fellow feels sighing as he marks the glitter of the filled sedan chair, and the shell of the lite hand-boiled egg; and thinks of the old days when monks and nuns and all the companies of gentle recluses paced each their several isle, secret and secure. I trust—for people didn't seem to know how to swim in those days, and there were no ferries to speak of.

the currant bushes; does one gather berries at this hour, I wonder?—or do two, for that matter? Somebody, inspired by the beauty of the hour, attempts to sing; but gets stopped up with midgets. We begin to yawn audibly, careless of what the world may think of us; then, one after another, we rise and retire without saying "good-night" to anybody, quite as if the general sleepiness were a profound secret. But, oh, how that little waterfall sings of a summer night at Inversnaid!

Lochs are lakes, and lakes are very much alike. If there is anything prettier than Loch Lomond it is Loch Katrine,—smaller, daintier, even more picturesque; and, moreover, every ripple that falls upon its dreamy shore seems to rhyme with some couplet of Scott's "Lady of the Lake." The approach is like a prelude. You come from Loch Lomond by a road that winds over the rugged highlands, past Loch Arktel alone in its rocky bed, and so down through the meadows, purple with heather, to the wooded shores of Loch Katrine.

Now here we are in the very midst of that delightful poem. We gather on the narrow deck, studying out every rock and tree, the living illustration of the truth of Scott's graphic pictures. The lake grows as we voyage; it is like a winding river, along whose banks the brilliant and variegated foliage trails its boughs in the placid stream. Water-fowl dart out before us, and wing their way across our prow; half-swimming and half-flying, they leave a long wake upon the glassy tide.

We all greet E-len's Isle with speechless rapture. Probably there is not one of us but tries to picture the heroic Ellen as she, followed by the faithful hounds, bears the Knight of Snowdon to those delicious shores.

The landing at the Trosachs is a sensation such as one seldom receives in this practical age. You pass under a thatched roof, along a rustic bridge that is hidden away under a rocky ledge. On one hand a tapestry of ferns is dripping with spring water; on the other spreads the translucent lake, now narrowed to a mere rivulet; above you is a tropical roof of rushes, supported by light beams of wood that have not yet been stripped of their moss-covered bark.

We are at the mouth of the Trosachs. There are but two living beings to receive us,—two old Highlanders, who help to make the Rob Roy fast to the trees, and then assist in getting us well bestowed in three coaches that are to bear us on our way. Those old Highlanders talk to one another in Gaelic; they speak to us in Scotch so broad that we are lost in it.

The top of Loch Katrine is like a scene in "A Midsummer Night's Dream." You drift into it and out of it as if you were an involuntary actor in a pantomime. When daylight is so seductive, what may not moonlight be! It was from this point Scott wandered away into the realm of poetry, the secrets of which even the poet cannot make wholly intelligible to the world. Let the charmer charm never so wisely, it is but the faint echo that he interprets to us,—the faintest echo of the song that is in his soul.

The United Kingdom rings with the fame of the Trosachs—a ravine, a wilderness of rocks and foliage, "totally unexcelled, it is supposed, in the world," saith the guide-book. It is but a mile through the Trosachs; and a single mile of tragic scenery—he it never so tragic—can hardly hope to escape rivalry in some part of the globe. Had the British poet not struck their harps with such confidence and almost exhausted their vocabularies in praise of this one glen, I believe many a traveller would tread it without special wonder. It was here the Dermids and the Clan Alpin met in fierce combat. Out of this wilderness of birch, hawthorn, and oak tower the abrupt cliffs, and beyond their frowning brows the mountains lift their hoary heads crowned with sunlight. It is all very beautiful and very impressive while it lasts; but before we have fairly begun to realize it, our coaches wheel out into the open country,—and one of the great sensations of Scotland, and indeed of the United Kingdom, is at an end.

Highlanders are here, lost in admiration of the Trosachs, and looking very much as if they were a part of the landscape. Local worshippers at the shrine of Nature challenge the enthusiasm of the foreigner, who is usually too considerate to make odious comparisons. If the Trosachs may not be called an anticlimax, there is certainly nothing after it worth special mention,—nothing that appeals to us in any shape all the way down to Edinburgh.

As for myself, I begin to feel a little uncomfortable, and to wish that the crisis had not come so soon. To be sure we see the "Brig o' Turk," where the Knight of Snowdon outstripped his attendants; and a lake or two haunted of fairies—by the shore of one of them the hermit monk foretold the doom of Roderick Duin,—and these are pretty enough, as all Scotch lakes are sure to be. Then come the heathery moors and meadows, the lawns and streams; cottages, herds of sheep with shepherds in their plaids—the land and the outlook growing more and more commonplace until we reach Callander, which is the acme of stupidity. But there is consolation even here; for we get a bit of luncheon that serves to fill the aching void one is sure to feel after a season of emotion; and, moreover, we take train for Callander—always a pleasant feature in an unsettled life.

For some hours fellow tourists have been hobnobbing with us amicably; we have encouraged one another in all sorts of extravagances. Together we braved the lakes; together swarmed on the tops of the high couches, basking in the effluence of pompous drivers clad in radiant seraiet, and wearing white hats with a broad band of gold. There was a degree of style in all this that kept us in a lively humor so long as it lasted; but at Callander we quietly and cautiously dropped one another's acquaintance, sought the first, second or third class "carriages," according to our preferences, and scattered in a dozen different directions, just as if there had been a social explosion in our midst.

These are daily, almost hourly, experiences; yet somehow they never cease to divert me; and wherever I meet a familiar face nowadays, I always feel like taking it by the chin and saying, "Where have I met you, old fellow?"

But I don't do it; I merely out the owner of that face, and go my way, chuckling under my breath as if it were a capital joke.

Do you know that you can leave Glasgow or Edinburgh in the morning, go through the whole round of experiences hinted at in this letter, and return to either city on the evening of the selfsame day? That is, you can do it if you want to; but it is much better to tarry a night or two by the wayside. For so sure as you rush it, you will feel that you are getting altogether too much for the money.

THE GRAY METROPOLIS.

A week in the "Gray Metropolis of the North," and I have not yet begun to exhaust its catalogue of historical and literary associations; nor have I yet grown used to the marvellous picturesque-ness of this handsome and haughty city. The town is made up of hills and dales, crags and castles; of parks and terraces, where monuments are raised to the memory of the illustrious dead; of broad new streets and narrow old ones,—some of them so old and so narrow that they are completely buried away under rows of high houses, and are accessible only to such of the citizens as have learned to burrow like rabbits, and are not in the least afraid of dark and dusty corners.

In Edinburgh the scenic changes are very sudden and very striking. One drops from the stately Castle on the cliff, where Queen Mary gave birth to James VI., into the plebeian precinct known as the Grass Market. From the verdant slopes of the Princess Street Gardens, once upon a time the shore of a lake, one descends abruptly into the dry bed of that lake, now ribbed with railways, where billows of steam break noiselessly among the trees at the foot of the gardens; and there fifty locomotives rush to and fro like monsters sporting in their native element. Across this lake of vapor there are high bridges, that carry the streets on a dead level from the elegant and spacious square of the new town into the broken and irregular blocks of old Edinburgh. Two centuries meet and shake hands above the keystones of the bridges that span the vapory lake.

On the heights of Calton Hill the eye takes in at a glance the ponderous and inelegant Nelson memorial; also the chaste fragment of the National Monument, which, by the way, is a reproduction in part of the Athenian Parthenon; it must ever remain a strikingly classical feature in a landscape that is almost unrivalled for stately beauty.

This morning, while the city was enveloped in a fog so dense that I could only guess at the nature of objects on the other side of the street, I went up to the Castle, three hundred and eighty-five feet above sea level. A fort stood here anterior to the Christian era; in the fifth century it was in possession of the Caledonian chiefs. Edwin, one of the Northumbrian Kings, rebuilt it in A. D. 637. Here the Scottish Kings sought shelter—Alexander I., David I., Malcolm IV., Alexander II., William the Lion, Alexander III., and others. In 1296 Edwin I. "pelted it night and day for a week" with three engines of war, and at last took it. For seventeen years it was in the hands of the English; then Randolph, Earl of Murray, retook it. Robert the Bruce dismantled it. Edward Balliol ceded it to the English. In 1337 it was refortified by Edward III.; and in 1341 was again recovered for the Scotch by Sir William Douglas, the "Black Knight of Liddesdale." Here James II. spent his minority, and here he was crowned. James III. was imprisoned within its walls; James IV. revelled in it. In 1566 James VI. was borne here; and 1650, after a short siege, the Castle surrendered to Oliver Cromwell. All this might easily be turned into an alphabetical nursery rhyme, and it would seem quite as real to me then as it now does—history read so like a fable, even when you are tracking her heroes step by step, from chamber to chamber, on to their bloody deaths.

St. Margaret's Chapel, atop of the highest ground within the walls, is more than eight hundred years old. Here St. Margaret, Queen of Malcolm III., the successor of Macbeth, was wont to hear Mass. Malcolm, poor fellow! her loving but illiterate husband, who could not read a syllable of any tongue, had her missals gorgeously bound, and used to kiss them frequently to show his reverence for religion. St. Margaret's life, a sorrowful romance, abounds in thrilling incidents; and a little pamphlet, sold for a trifle in the chamber that was once her chapel, reads like a fairy tale. The late, elderly woman who sat at the door of the chapel, as I entered it said to me, plaintively: "I am old and short o' wind. If you would know the history of the Chapel of St. Margaret, you had best get it for a penny, and save me the trouble o' telling it."

In front of the chapel door lies the great gun called "Mons Meg," a relic of the fifteenth century. It is thirteen feet in length, seven and one half in circumference, and has a calibre of twenty inches. Some of the big stone balls once discharged by it now lie quietly at its side,—they were found three miles away, and are supposed to have been fired that distance. Mons Meg is constructed on almost the same principle as the modern Armstrong gun. This old war-dog had a voice in the siege of Norham Castle in 1497. After he had reposed in the Tower of London for seventy-six years, he was restored to the Castle through Sir Walter Scott's influence with King George. Escorted by the 73d Regiment and three troops of cavalry, with pipers tapping jigs, and the whole populace with enthusiasm, old Mons Meg finally came home to his last rest, with a hole in his breast big enough to put your head in.

Everywhere one is reminded how thoroughly Sir Walter has grafted his memory upon the history of his native land. On the accession of James VI. to the crown of England, the insignia of royalty disappeared. The jewels were kept in the dark for more than a century,—at first purposely, for the Government feared to arouse the national feel-

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ing after the treaty with England; subsequently their hiding-place was actually forgotten. Now, Walter Scott was one of a committee that searched for the royal symbols. In 1817 an old chest in the Castle was forced by the King's smith, and there, covered with linen cloths, were the treasures that had been so mysteriously concealed for one hundred and ten years. One sees them now under glass, where they appear to be as gaudy and unreal as stage ornaments; crown-jewels, we must remember, are very apt to look like so much glass and tinsel.

There is a little chamber on the ground-floor of the ancient palace within the Castle walls. It is a very little chamber, its greatest length being not more than eight feet. It is irregular in shape, and has a small window looking down upon the old city three hundred feet below; there was a flourishing village on that very site as early as A. D. 854. Now the chamber is dark and dingy; people crowd into it, and stare about at the antique wainscot panelling, and up at the ancient ceiling, where the initials J. R. and M. R., surmounted by the royal crown, are wrought in alternate panels. Photographs and guide-books are on sale in the small chamber; and on one wall is a quaint inscription recording in three couplets the birth of James VI., with the date—19th of June, 1566. In Lord Herries' Memoirs is recorded the following scene, which was enacted in this closet-like room:

"The young prince was ushered into the world between nine and ten o'clock in the morning. Darnley came at two in the afternoon to see his royal spouse and his child. My Lord," said Mary, "God has given us a son." Partially uncovering the infant's face, she added a protest that it was his and no other man's son. Then, turning to an English gentleman present, she said: "This is the son who, I hope, shall first unite the two kingdoms of Scotland and England." Sir William Stanley said: "Why, madame, should he succeed before your Majesty and his father?" "Alas!" answered Mary, "his father has broken to me,"—alluding to his joining the murderous conspiracy against Rizzio. "Sweet madame," said Darnley, "is this the promise that you made, that you would forget and forgive all?"—"I have forgiven all," cried the Queen; "but I will never forget. What if Fawcotes's pistol [he was one of the conspirators] had shot [she had felt the cold steel on her bosom] what would have become of both him and me?"—"Madame," cried Darnley, "these things are past."—"Then," said the Queen, "let them go." And so ended this singular conversation."

The sun was high when I went out upon the battlements, trying to "forgive and forget" half that I had seen. If a man were to remember only a small portion of all he sees and hears in these historical latitudes, his brains would still be stuffed as full of horrors as is the Newgate Calendar. I stood upon the battlements. The mists had dissolved; and out of the thin, flowing fragments that were drifting slowly off to sea rose the splendid heights of the city. It seemed to bristle with turrets and towers; and, bathed in the rich morning light, it was as dazzling as an Eastern dream. Calton Hill was like a hanging garden, with its pale Greek temple rising naked above the groves. Near at hand the pleasure-grounds, where Sir Scott's elaborate monument is erected, sent up to us the summer song of birds and the perfume of a wilderness of flowers. Salisbury Crags and Arthur's Seat, still cloud-capped, watched over the city, as if it had been a child left in the keeping of these giant guardians. Away off in the horizon sparkled the Frith of Forth, with the Fife coast stretched like a thread in the distance; and Bass Rock seemed like a hard knot in that thread. It was an inspiration—the mere sight of it all!—and one never to be forgotten.

Standing upon the Castle wall, and looking over its roofs to Arthur's Seat, on the left are the highlands of the new town, with its grassy lake-bed and its billows of steam lying between us. At the further end of the highlands, toward Arthur's Seat, but separated from it by the vale of Holyrood, rises Calton Hill. On the right, at our feet, is the valley of the Grass Market, the site of the ancient and original village that grew up under the Castle cliff. This portion of the town spreads over a rolling country, and reaches even beyond the hem of Salisbury Crags, where there are villas and villages hiding themselves among the hills. Between the lowlands on the right and the lake-valley on the left there is a ridge sloping to the plains under Salisbury Crags. It has often been compared to a wedge. Along the top of this wedge runs High Street, the chief thoroughfare of the old town; it extends from the Castle to Holyrood,—and to Holyrood let us hasten; for there is a casket in that palace which has something to do with the chamber in the Castle. Indeed, Holyrood and Edinburgh Castle are companion pictures, that, for poor Queen Mary's sake, should never be separated.

There is a chamber in Holyrood, and there one sees the couch of the unhappy Queen, her portraits, and bits of dainty embroidery done by her one fair hands. At two corners of the room there are closets; one of them is known as the dressing-room, the other was a private sleeping-room.

One night when the Queen and that handsome Italian with the operatic cast of countenance who is usually painted with a mandolin in hand,—one night when Rizzio was supping with the Queen, innocently enough no doubt, a small door in the corner of the closet was pushed open and Darnley entered. He threw his arm fondly about the Queen as she seated herself at her side; then aimed men entered, until the supper-room was filled with them. All this was ominous, Rizzio, finding it impossible to escape, clung to the Queen's skirts for protection. Then and there the first dagger smote him; and how these murderers fell upon him as the sight of blood increased their frenzy! The wretched man was dragged through the bed chamber and the audience-chamber, and dropped like a dog at the top of the stairway up which we came just now. To this hour there is a dark stain on the oaken floor, where he lay all that hideous night, with five and forty gaping wounds in his soft flesh.

What a scene was this to be enacted within walls that were once monastic! In an obscure corner of the ruined abbey adjoining, Rizzio lies buried.—Charles Warren Stoddard, in the Ave Maria.

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