

GORDON CASTLE.

THE SEAT OF THE DUKE OF RICHMOND.

Gordon Castle, near the village of Fochabers, in the ancient province of Moray, is a mansion of the modern school. This is almost to be regretted, for the old, rude and varied Gothic, with its round towers and battlements, would harmonize better with the associations connected with the spot and the family that so long possessed it. In building Abbotsford, Sir Walter Scott is said to have made a romance of stone and mortar: it sets all the orders of architecture, as his genius set the canons of criticism, at defiance; yet its appearance is highly imposing. Gordon Castle is too regular; but its great height (four very lofty stories,) and its length, (in all nearly six hundred feet,) render it dazzling and overpowering at first sight. The situation is splendid. Around the town of Elgin the scenery is rather tame; but as you approach the bridge of Spey, blue hills, finely mapped and dotted on the horizon, begin to peep forth, and to impart a sterner and more impressive character to the landscape. It is like bringing John Balfour of Burley, or some old Cameronian veterans, down to a plain filled with gilded courtiers and youthful beauty. The river itself is no great ornament to the scene. There is too much of the bare shingly beach exposed—for the Spey is a stream that must have ample room for his winter floods; and the red freestone *scour* on the opposite bank is a poor substitute for the gray cliffs, lined with alpine shrubs and plants, which girdle in many of the Highland valleys. The Spey, though a bad master, is an excellent servant. It not only waters a long tract of country, but it produces abundance of exquisite trout and salmon. The Duke of Richmond receives yearly the sum of 8,200*l.* for the fishings of the stream—a revenue worth nearly all the feudal privileges of the former possessors of the estate.

In the castle were, and I suppose still are, some fine works of art. Marble full-length copies of the Venus "that enchants the world," and of the Apollo, by Italian sculptors, and busts of some of the ancients by Harewood, ornament the hall. In the dining-room are two busts, easily recognised to be from the chisel of Chantrey, of the Duke of Wellington and the Duke of Bedford—both excellent likenesses. The peculiar beauty of Chantrey's busts seems to be the marvellous felicity with which he imbues cold marble with life and expression. They are not mere casts or models of the head and face—the soul is visible through the features. Excepting one or two of Roubillac's happiest efforts in Trinity College Library, Cambridge, and old Nolken's statue of Pitt, in the Senate-house, also in Cambridge, (the latter is really a wonderful work) nothing in the way of portrait sculpture seems equal to Chantrey's busts. Mr. Lockhart says he would not give Chantrey's bust of Scott for all the pictures and portraits that were made of him, and he is right. I saw it once, and shall never forget it. The most valuable painting in Gordon Castle is a three-quarters portrait of an old man, by Rembrandt: it is full of dark kindling energy and expression. The most glittering and imposing picture in the castle is a full-length of the late king in his coronation robes, by Lawrence. It was presented to the late Duke of Gordon by William IV., and the gift is said to have provoked some envy and regret with the Duke of Devonshire, and other titled amateurs, who longed to possess the splendid prize. There is another *chef d'œuvre* of English art—a piece by Landseer, containing portraits of the Duke of Gordon, the Duchess of Bedford, &c., with dogs and dead game on the ground. Sir Joshua Reynolds has contributed three pictures, full-lengths of George III. and his Queen, who usually go together on canvass, as they went together in life, and a portrait of the celebrated Duchess of Gordon. The latter is peculiarly soft and expressive, and seems to unite the qualities, rarely blended in one countenance, of great beauty, intelligence, and sensibility. The duchess was a remarkable woman—"charming, witty, kind, and sensible," as Burns eulogistically styles her; and she appears to have been the idol of the wits, poets, artists, and fashion of the day. Several productions of Sir Peter Lely—soft and dreamy, with "the sleepy eye of love"—of Teniers, Wouvermann, Angelica Hauffman, and other artists, lend grace and interest to the ducal mansion.

The grand charm of Gordon Castle must ever be its situation, its woods, and parks. These have all the exuberance of the finest sylvan scenes in England, as seen in Hants or Nottinghamshire, or as described in *Ivanhoe*. The lime trees are particularly fine, and one is of such immense growth and spreading foliage, that his grace might dine a regiment under its boughs. The late Duchess of Gordon was fond of this tree, and had its branches propped up that she might enjoy a "spacious circuit for her musings" within its shade. It is now enclosed by a fence, to protect it from the cattle. Opposite the dining-room is a large and massive willow-tree, the history of which is somewhat singular. Duke Alexander (father of the late duke, "the last of his race,") when four years of age, planted this willow in a tub filled with earth. The tub floated about in a marshy piece of ground, till the shoot expanding, "burst its cerements," and struck root in the earth below. Here it grew and prospered, till it attained its present goodly size. The duke regarded the tree with a sort of fatherly and even superstitious regard, half believing there was some mysterious affinity between its fortunes and his own. If an accident happened to the one by storm or lightning, some misfortune was not long in befall-

ing the other. The tree, however, has long survived its planter—the duke, at a ripe old age, yielded to the irreversible destiny of man; but his favourite willow, like the cedar-tree of the prophet, has reared its head among the thick branches, and is flourishing. Duke Alexander was a man of taste and talent, and of superior mechanical acquirements. He wrote some good characteristic Scotch songs, in the minute style of painting national manners, and he wrought diligently at a turning lathe! He was lavish of snuff-boxes of his own manufacture, which he presented liberally to all his friends and neighbours. On one occasion he made a handsome pair of gold earrings, which he took with him to London, and presented to Queen Charlotte. They were so much admired in the royal circle, that the old duke used to say, with a smile, he thought it better to leave town immediately for Gordon Castle, lest he should get an order to make a pair for each of the princesses! His son, the gay and gallant Marquis of Huntley, was a man of different mould—he had nothing mechanical, but was the life and soul of all parties of pleasure. There certainly never was a better chairman of a festive party. He could not make a set speech, and on one occasion, when Lord Liverpool asked him to move or second an address at the opening of a session of parliament, he gaily replied that he would undertake to please all their lordships if they adjourned to the city of London Tavern, but he could not undertake to do the same in the House of Lords. He excelled in short unpremeditated addresses, which were always lively and to the point. I heard him once on an occasion which would have been a melancholy one in any other hands. He had been compelled to sell the greater part of his property in the district of Badenoch, to lessen the pressure of his difficulties, and emancipate himself in some measure from legal trustees. The gentlemen of the district resolved, before parting with their noble landlord, to invite him to a public dinner! A piece of plate, or some other mark of regard, would certainly have been more *apropos*, and less painful in its associations; but the dinner was given and received. Champagne flowed like water—the Highlanders were in the full costume of the mountains, and great excitement prevailed. When the duke stood up, his tall graceful form slightly stooping with age, and his gray hairs shading his smooth bald forehead, with a general's broad riband across his breast, the thunders of applause were like a warring cataract or mountain torrent in flood. Tears sparkled in his eyes, and he broke out with a hasty acknowledgment of the honours paid to him; he alluded to the time when he roamed their hills in youth, gathering recruits among their mountains for the service of his country—of the strong attachment which his departed mother entertained for every cottage and family among them—and of his own affection for the Highlands, which he said was as firm and lasting as the Rock of Cairngorm, which he was still proud to possess. The latter was a statement of fact: in the sale of the property the duke had stipulated for retaining that wild mountain range called the Cairngorm Rocks. The effect of this short and feeling speech—so powerful is the language of nature and genuine emotion—was as strong as the most finished oration could produce. In its power over the audience (trifling as was the matter) it certainly rivalled anything that ever "fulminated" from the pnyx or the forum.

Gilpin in his "Forest Scenery," has denounced the hawthorn-tree as having little claim to picturesque beauty, and as a poor appendage to nature. The worthy recluse of the New Forest had never visited Gordon Castle; for if he had witnessed the gigantic hawthorns which mingle in the avenue, and the distant and shrubby grounds with the deep masses of the holly and the alder, and the ash and the oak, he would have recanted this opinion. Some of these fine trees are ten and twelve feet in girth, and tower up with their white blossoms to a great height. Duke Alexander exercised much judgment in laying out the grounds, so that the various parts might harmonise. Subsequent improvements have heightened the effect of the whole; the woods have been judiciously thinned in some places—new paths and drives are made in the park and lawn—a rich flower-garden is added—and walks extend from side to side, on height and hollow, which present rich and magnificent panoramas of sylvan beauty. The Spey, winding in the distance through the woody amphitheatre, gives additional interest to the scene, and the great variety of game, deer, hares, &c., which cross you at almost every step, impart life and vivacity to the whole. Much of this luxuriant beauty is owing to the excellence of the climate and the soil. A gentleman at the castle informed me that he kept a register of the flowering shrubs, that he might compare it with another kept by a friend in Devonshire, and he found the most delicate plants were nearly as early in the north as in the garden of England. This delightful amenity must have tended to the growth of the huge forests which in early times covered the country. In the hull of the castle there is an immense plank, apparently six feet in breadth, round as a shield, on which there is the following inscription, cut in a brass plate:—

"In the year 1783, William Osborne, merchant, of Hull, purchased of the Duke of Gordon the forest of Glenmore, the whole of which he cut down in the space of twenty-two years, and built, during that time, at the mouth of the river Spey, (where never vessel was built before,) 47 sail of ships of upwards of 19,000 tons burden. The largest of them, 1,050 tons, and three others but

little inferior in size, are now in the service of his Majesty and the Hon. East India Company. This undertaking was completed at the expense, for labour alone, of 70,000*l.* To his Grace the Duke of Gordon this plank is offered, as a specimen of the growth of the trees in the above forest, by his Grace's most obedient servant,
"W. OSBORNE."

"Hull, September 26, 1806.

The sum at which the duke sold the forest of Glenmore (the finest fir-wood in Scotland) was 10,000*l.* It was contiguous to the noble woods of Rothiemarchus, and together they formed a region of great wildness, intersected by lakes, which for ages reflected the endless forests of pine that clothed its steeps and unbroken recesses. In obedience to the law of nature, the Glenmore forest is fast replenishing itself. "Nothing," says Sir Thomas Dick Lauder, "could be more savagely picturesque than that solitary scene when we visited it some years ago. At that time many gigantic skeletons of trees, above twenty feet in circumference, but which had been so far decayed at the time the forest was felled as not to be useful for timber, had been left standing, most of them in prominent situations, their bark in a great measure gone—many of them without leaves, and casting a pale, unearthly-looking light upon their gray trunks and bare arms, which were stretched forth towards the sky, like those of wizards, as if the act of conjuring up the storm which was gathering in the bosom of the mountains, and which was about to burst forth at their call." Sir Thomas Dick Lauder is an enthusiastic naturalist, and I like his observations and descriptions so well, that I would rather see him among scenes like the old forest of Glenmore than the "smoke and stir of that dim spot" which men call the city of Edinburgh.

The late Duke of Gordon was attentive to his deer park, and had usually about a hundred and fifty fallow deer, and forty large red deer, with a few roe, within its limits. In the forest, outside the park, the red deer swarm in hundreds. They approach sometimes to the front of the enclosure, toss their antlers, look around, and, as Campbell says,

"Unhunted seek their woods and wilderness again."

The accession of the Duke of Richmond to this extensive Scotch property has made comparatively little change in its management. His grace has introduced his English system of meeting all his tenants once a year at a round of dinners; he keeps up hospitality and state, and is a most liberal landlord.

THE ILLUSTRIOUS DUKE OF WELLINGTON.

The subjoined record of the leading exploits of our great Captain is from from Phillipart's Royal Military Calendar.

1787. March 7. Appointed ensign in 73d Foot.
Dec. 25. Appointed lieutenant in 76th Foot.
1788. Jan. 28. Exchanged into the 41st Regt.
June 25. Exchanged into the 18th Dragoons.
1791. Sept. 20. Received a company in 58th Foot.
1792. Oct. 31. Again exchanged to the 18th Dragoons—appointed Major in the 33d Foot.
1793. April 30. Appointed Lt. Col.
1794. Commanded a brigade of Infantry during Lord Moira's retreat through Flanders. Shortly afterwards was employed in the expedition under Admiral Christian, destined for the West Indies, and then accompanied his regiment to India.
1796. May 3. Received the rank of Col. by brevet.
1799. May 4. Col. Wellesley attacked and took Seringapatam, for which he received thanks in public orders from General Harris.
1800. Sept. 5. He intercepted Dhondia Waugh's force at Conaghull, when Dhondia himself and a great number of his followers were killed, and the whole body dispersed; for this, Colonel Wellesley received the thanks of General Braithwaite, then in command of the force at Madras, and also of the Governor General in Council.
1802. April 29. Obtained the rank of Major General.
1803. April 21. After a forced march of sixty miles, entered Poonah, possession of which had been taken by Holkor. Sept 23. Major-General Wellesley, with an army consisting only of 4500 men, of whom about 2000 were Europeans, attacked and defeated Assaye Scindeah's army, consisting of 38,500 cavalry, 10,500 infantry, 500 matchlocks, 500 rocket-men, 90 pieces of Ordnance. He next turned his attention to the Rajah of Berar's army, which he defeated on the plains of Agram.
Dec. 14. Carried by storm the almost impregnable fortress of Gawighar.
Dec. 16. Signed a treaty of peace with the Rajah of Berar.
Dec. 30. Ditto, ditto, with Scindeah.
1804. Appointed Knight of the military order of the Bath.
1805. Early in this year he returned to England, when a sword, valued at £1000, was presented to him by the inhabitants of Calcutta; thanks were voted to him by both houses of Parliament; and his companions in arms presented him with a gold vase valued at 2000 guineas. In the autumn, Sir A. Wellesley accompanied Lord Cathcart to Hanover, and on the return of the army was appointed to a district.