

grateful as the smell of sawdust and the aroma of maple sugar; and set them on a hill above Loch Corinsk over against the Coolin hills, and supposing that the day was gusty, and the sharp mountain peaks were at their usual occupation of catching a heavy cloud now and then, and forcing it to disgorge its contents, I don't know that they could wish for anything more in the shape of novelty. No rich intervals beside murmuring streams, nor clumps of luxuriant second-growth here, but savage sea, and "stern lake," weird mountains and a bare sterile country. There is Loch Seavaig to the left, like a sea of white horses, madly plunging; while to your right, Glen Sligachan stretches away down for miles, as grand as Glencoe, though the hills enclosing it are wider apart. Behind us huge two-headed Ben Blabhain, a veritable "biceps Parnassus," not looking so grandly proud however from the West as from the South where its ridge leans down to you like the back of a recumbent Nineveh winged bull. Surely nothing can surpass this. Where will you find the two distinctive classes of mountains so nobly contrasted as here, —the polished black trap rock of Blabhain beside the round lumping red hills of Sligachan? But "eyes front!" and now, "Saint Mary! what a scene is here!"

My dear Bluenose do not speak for at least fifteen minutes, on pain of excommunication. You will need that time, "smart" man as you are, to drink in somewhat of the spirit of the scene. At your feet is Coruisk, lashed and curled by wild gusts from the corries and the rifts between the hills, but still dull and dark looking as lead, a desolate Dead Sea, ashore into which you feel that no man hath come since making of the world. Rising sheer and stark above it, face to face with you, are ranged the Coolins, keeping—in sober truth, their eternal watches. I had often heard the expression before applied to hills, but I never realized its meaning till now. It was not interest, or delight, or wonder that I felt. I was filled with awe. Gaunt and grim, cut sharp or shattered into pinnacles, crags, masses, they possessed an individuality—a life so mighty that I felt my own shrivelled into insignificance. They had looked down upon Ossian and the Fingalians; and now like knights in mail who had been changed into stone but who waited only the "sound of that dread horn" to awake them into life, they stand, the awful sentinels and guardians of the enchanted lake. The belts of snow like mort-clothes make them look still more ghastly; and the previous showers have cleared the air, so that while they glisten in this gleam of sunshine, every crag and splinter though it were no larger than your finger—stands out clear and hard. But now see that your cap is tied to your button-hole; crouch behind a rock and hold on by the heather, for there's a blast shrieking and struggling in the gaps between the mountains, and when it gets

out and strikes where you are you will be of opinion that an aeriform body may at times marvellously resemble a solid. And here again comes a foe whom there is no resisting. Scour-na-gilleann has caught that tun-bellied cloud, fresh from the Atlantic, and is drifting him down his sides and across. He comes surging on like a drifting deluge. There! Coolins, glen, and sea are all wrapt from sight, entirely blotted out of existence as far as you are concerned. A gray liquid wall surrounds you. This is not so much rain falling surely, as the very windows of heaven opened. You are in the heart of the cloud, and if you have not a good water-proof on, you will be a fit subject for commiseration in one minute or less, water-proof or not we had better be off.

Nowhere have I experienced more genuine Highland hospitality than in Skye. The large farmers keep up capital establishments, and associate on equal terms with the gentry. The clergymen are the best specimens of educated Christian gentlemen. The people are poor, but brave and self-respecting. In the South (the parishes of Sleat and Strath) the Established Church greatly preponderates. In the centre, the majority is as much on the side of the Free Church; and in the North, the two bodies are more equally divided. In the centre, there are nearly 2000 people nominally in connection with the Free Church, who are unbaptized, inasmuch as their spiritual fathers consider that they have not yet attained a sufficient amount of saintship to entitle them to be received into the visible Church.

From Skye, I sailed across the Minch to Lewis, where I had the pleasure of meeting one of the old pillars of the Pictou Church, the Rev. J. McRae, who now ministers to a highly respectable congregation in Stornaway. But as my "notes" must come to an end in this number, I wish to answer first from my own observation a question interesting enough, and which is sometimes started,—viz. Was the Secession of 1843 a spiritual blessing to the Highlands of Scotland or not? Before any of my visits to the Highlands, I would have answered such a question in the affirmative. Now I would be obliged unhesitatingly to affirm that it was a calamity for them, for the interests of true Christianity, for church order and faithful church discipline. Churches have indeed been multiplied; so have catechists and ministers, and perhaps religious bustle. But I care very little for the mere increase of means and appliances, of the outward shell and mechanism of religion. I would not consider it any guarantee for the Christianizing of a country though it raised stone and lime churches till they were numerous as "leaves in Vallambrosa," or if the country were deluged with as many Protestant ministers, not even tho' they called themselves of the Free Church, as there are monks in Naples. I would prefer one parish