

"Tammany Hall," the doings of the "Empire Club," and the roar of Marshal Rynders's gun. "Union-saving" speeches and threats of disunion abound on all sides, and, to a superficial observer, the unwieldy republic may seem on the verge of severance.

Now all this is nothing but a chaos to most readers; and the American news in the "Times" is "confusion worse confounded," owing mainly to the singular and often unmeaning nomenclature of political parties. A person looking into the letters of an American special correspondent is puzzled by the terms "Democrat, Republican, Know-nothings," and, after querying what choice of evils lies between "Democrat" and "Republican," is reluctantly compelled to class himself with the "Know-nothings." He is disgusted as well as mystified by the barbarous jargon of any American paper to which he turns for aid, when he finds men classed as "South Americans, Old Line Whigs, Federalists, Garrisonians, Hunkers, Hard Shells, Soft Shells, National Unionists, Loco-focos," etc. In reality, the grand features of American politics are *very simple*, and we shall offer such explanations of their apparent complexity as will enable our readers to take an intelligent interest in the coming quadrennial crisis. These numerous erratic designations apply merely to sections of the two great parties, the Democratic and the Republican, and to the multifarious components of the "Constitutional Union" party. They may therefore be disregarded, as the contest lies between the Democrats and Republicans, each aided or embarrassed by the Constitutional Unionists.

The *Democratic* party, which, in 1856, elected Buchanan, until recently was united and compact, and is very powerful. It can command nearly the whole south, and is by no means feeble in the north and west. It has conservative traditions, hereditary influence, and a large share of ability. Its policy is strictly defined, and its organization complete. Its aims (some of which are partially carried out) are to acquire Mexico for new slave states, to conquer or buy Cuba, to abolish every geographical limit to slavery, to carry slavery into the territories by means of the "Dred Scott" decision, to procure a congressional code to protect it from the "unfriendly legislation" of territorial legislatures, and to make the executive power the instrument of pro-slavery aggression. It is the *pro-slavery* party, and is honest in the avowal of its tactics. Three months ago it broke into two parts, and the *ultra-slavery* portion nominated as its presidential candidate Vice-President Breckenridge, while the more moderate section, composed principally of the northern democracy, selected Judge Douglas. This division of course is a cause of weakness.

The *Republican* party, which, in 1856, ran Colonel Fremont for the presidency, has neither traditions nor inheritance, and a very recent organization. It is based upon the principles of freedom laid down in the constitution, and expounded by Washington and Jefferson; and it had its origin in the alarm felt at the encroachments of the slave power. Its policy is to restore the geographical limits of

slavery, and keep it within them, and to oppose the aggressions of the slave-owners on the free States and territories of the Union. It numbers in its ranks a large proportion of the aspiring and enthusiastic youth of the northern States. It is eminently constitutional and conservative, and its aims must not be confounded with those of the extreme Abolitionists. Its strength lies in the western and northern States, especially in New England. It has lately largely increased in power, both in and out of Congress, and is recognised as the constitutional Anti-slavery party of the United States. It has unanimously nominated Abram Lincoln, or "Honest Old Abe," as he is usually called, for its presidential candidate.

The American, or Know-nothing party, which nominated Fillmore in 1856, rose, a few years ago, with the object of excluding foreigners from exercising the elective franchise for twenty-one years after their arrival. It is now a comparatively small third party in the Free States, and its only reliable popular strength is in two or three of the northern Slave States. It has recently effected a temporary fusion between South Americans, Old Line Whigs, Conservatives, etc., and the resulting conglomerate is called the "*Constitutional Union Party*." It has nominated Mr. Bell, of Tennessee, as its presidential candidate, but it has no defined platform on public questions.

The "tug of war" will be over early in November, and up to the very day of election it would be unsafe to predict results. The real conflict is between north and south on the battle-ground of slavery, and the magnitude of the issue can hardly be over-estimated. There will be much talk about disunion, but we have little fear of it at present. The north has no desire for severance, and the south has "axes to grind" still at Washington.

#### HIGHLAND SPORTS.

It was my good fortune in 1855, after taking my degree at Oxford, to spend some time in one of the finest parts of Perthshire, and to have the range of a very considerable tract of country abounding in all sorts of game. A few recollections of that time may be interesting to lowland readers. We stopped for a day on our way northwards, to explore the quaint old city of York, with its glorious minster, and lingered for some weeks among the beauties of Edinburgh, "the modern Athens," which I shall not attempt to describe. Suffice it to say that we did not omit to climb to the top of Arthur's Seat before breakfast, and were well repaid by the view. Sir Walter Scott (no mean authority) used to say that, of all the streets he had seen in Europe, he knew none that surpassed Princes Street, Edinburgh, excepting the High Street at Oxford. Pursuing our journey, the railway took us past the Bridge of Allan, Bannockburn, and Stirling, as far as Perth, from whence we posted up the country in open barouches. We soon found ourselves among the Highlands and their Gaelic inhabitants, whose dwellings, appearance, and speech were quite novel to most of us. Passing Scone, with its historical

associations, and Birnam Wood, well known to every reader of "Macbeth," we devoted a day or two to "fair Dunkeld," with its half ruined cathedral and its surpassingly beautiful neighbourhood. Perhaps the thing most to be remembered was the Rumbling Brig (bridge) in Strath Braan. Keeping up the form of a stirrup-cup, in a sip of the renowned "Atholl brose," we resume our course; past Grandtully, the original of Sir Walter's "Tullyveolan" in "Waverley;" past the Falls of Moness and the Birks of Aberfeldy, celebrated by Burns,\* we follow the course of the silver Tay, till we trace it to its romantic home. Our destination is in Strathsay, and the four steaming greys soon dash through the park gates of Castle M., the ancestral seat of the improvident chief of that ilk. Here we are to seek health and recreation for the next three months; and, sooth to say, the appliances thereto are not wanting.

Strathsay is a lovely valley, several miles long and one broad, formed by two parallel ranges of heathy and partially wooded hills. On the slope of one of these ranges stands our abode, a large, massive, and irregular pile of grey stone, surmounted by a waving flag. Before it lies the park, and behind it the spacious gardens and hot-houses, with a quadrangle of stables and kennels. Behind these again rises a wall of dense wood, broken here and there by jutting masses of heath-crowned rock. The valley is full of green crops, which promise well for partridges hereafter. Along the foot of the opposite hills runs the Tay, which issues a few miles higher up from the loch of the same name. And in this river and in its tributary the Lyon, which rises a little way up the country in the Glenlyon, we have six miles of capital fishing.

"This castle hath a pleasant seat. The air  
Nimble and sweetly recommends itself,  
Unto our gentle senses."

Our territory adjoined on one side the splendid domain of the Marquis of Breadalbane at Taymouth Castle, and on the other reached nearly to that of the Duke of Atholl at Blair Castle; and with both of these great potentates courtesies were from time to time exchanged. Lord Breadalbane, however he may look at court as Lord High Chamberlain, is not very aristocratic in his costume or appearance on his own domain, and tells good-humouredly a story of his being mistaken in his own park for a cattle-drover. But his estates include whole regions of Central Scotland, as do the Duke of Sutherland's in the north. They would cut up into several German principalities; for it is said that Lord Breadalbane could travel for a hundred miles in a straight line without putting his foot off his own land. But his title and property will pass away to a "Scotch cousin," who is now only plain Mr. Campbell. "Sic transit gloria mundi:" and so true is it that man

\* The braes ascend, like lofty wa's,  
The foamy stream deep-roaring fa's,  
O'erhung with fragrant spreading shaws,  
The Birks of Aberfeldy.

The hoary cliffs are crowned with flowers,  
White o'er the linn's the burnie pours,  
And rising, wots with misty showers  
The Birks of Aberfeldy.

"heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them."

The view of Taymouth from Kenmore is well described by Burns:—

"Admiring Nature in her wildest grace,  
These northern scenes with weary feet I trace;  
O'er many a winding dale and painful steep,  
The abode of covied grouse and timid sheep,  
My savage journey, curious, I pursue,  
Till famed Breadalbane opens to my view.  
The meeting cliffs each deep-sunk glen divides,  
The woods, wild scattered, clothe their ample hills;  
The outstretching lake, embosomed mid the hills,  
The eye with wonder and amazement fills;  
The Tay, meandering sweet in infant pride,  
The palace, rising on its verdant side;  
The lawns, wood-fringed in nature's native taste,  
The hillocks, dropped in nature's careless haste;  
The arches, striding o'er the new-born stream,  
The village, glittering in the noontide beam;  
The sweeping theatre of hanging woods,  
The incessant roar of headlong trembling floods;—  
Poetic ardours in my bosom swell,  
Lone wandering by the hermit's\* mossy cell."

But, after all, "description cannot suit itself in words."

We proceed in the first place to test the fishing, which proves quite equal to its reputation, and affords excellent sport for some time. Rod and net are busily plied, both in river and loch, to the sore discomfiture and ultimate decease of sundry fine salmon, grilse, trout, pike, eels, and perch. When we hit on the right fly to please those fastidious gentry the trout, three of us sometimes land sixty or seventy in the course of the morning. And people are to be pitied who know not what it is to breakfast on salmon cutlets of their own catching.

But, the shooting is our main object. The grouse are safe till the twelfth of August, many of them being as yet only "cheepers." So we decide on a foray against the mountain hares, which the keepers report to be very numerous and troublesome. They are thoroughbred caterans, the mountain hares, like their countrymen the Highlanders of old; descending in troops from their fastnesses by night, and committing sad havoc among the farmers' crops. They are smaller than the lowland hare, and not nearly so good eating, the flesh being lean and dry. They are blue in summer and white in winter, and half and half by the time we took leave of them in the autumn.

At early dawn we mount our stout shooting-ponies and ascend the ridge behind the castle. We are attended by a posse of keepers and gillies, another batch having gone on before. Emerging from the wood, we come upon an undulating expanse of moor, of about nine thousand acres, clothed with purple heather, varied with rising grounds which in England would pass for hills, intersected by gulleys and rippling burns, and full of grouse. Across this, in clear relief against the blue morning sky and at a distance of several miles, is the rugged outline of a chain of high and rocky hills, beautifully diversified by light and shade: and those hills are to be the scene of operations. Arrived at their foot, we send back the ponies in charge of a groom, and climb to the top, each armed with a double-barrelled Purday. Our numbers varied at different times from

two to ten guns, according to the size of the party staying at the house. The mountain hares when alarmed immediately make for the crags, where they take refuge like rabbits in holes and crannies. We take our measures accordingly. Each sportsman (sometimes alone, and sometimes with a keeper to load and carry his second gun) quietly occupies a spur of rock commanding some likely defile. The gillies meantime have been forming an extended line, one end of which rests on the base of the hills, while the other stretches far out into the boggy moor. They are under the command of old Hugh the hill-watcher, who joined us at the little "bothy" half-way up the ascent. When we are all ready, the signal is given, and the row of beaters slowly advances in a direction parallel with the line of hills. The scene as we move along the heights is most animated and exciting; but it requires no little activity and exertion to keep up with the beaters below. Up and down ravines, now on a patch of springy mountain turf and now on a projecting crag, we scramble along, firing as we go at the hares, which are scudding in all directions. After some hours, a truce is proclaimed. We halt round some bubbling spring, where the provision-pony has been ordered to meet us. We are fully prepared to do justice to the manifold good things which appear, as we had only a bannock and a cup of milk before starting. These pic-nic luncheon-breakfasts were equally pleasant and picturesque. Stretched by the side of a sparkling rill, in some soft and shady nook, we were busily occupied in satisfying the hunger produced by the exercise in the keen mountain air, and in comparing notes of our success. The keepers and gillies formed another group close at hand. After about an hour's rest we renew the war, and as the afternoon wanes we turn our steps homeward in time to dress for dinner; putting up coveys of grouse as we go, and chatting over the morning's adventures. At the close of one of these field days we counted our hares by scores, to the great joy of the farmers in the valley. The beaters were rewarded in kind, each getting a hare for his day's work, which however he seemed to enjoy as much as any of us, being "to the manner born." Even after this deduction, there would be enough left to supply the household with hares and hare-soup, till even the servants got tired of eating it. All this, however, was merely a sort of prelude to the grouse-shooting.

On the morning of the twelfth of August, and for some days afterwards, we were on the moors by four o'clock A.M., and were out for twelve hours. At the end of the first week, we found we had walked 100 miles, had been out fifty hours, and had shot 350 head of game, a large part of which was duly distributed far and near, and, we trust, thankfully received. It is amazing to find what an amount of exercise one can take in the Highlands without feeling fatigued. The pure mountain breezes have almost the effect of laughing-gas, which is probably due to that mysterious agent, ozone. We used to think nothing of following the dogs day after day for twenty miles, carrying our guns over hills, through heather, and across bogs. It would not be easy to do this day after day in a lowland atmo-

sphere: "the spirit of the hills," says Ruskin, "is action, and that of the lowlands repose." We thus laid in a rare stock of health, our best justification for thus spending our time.

[To be continued.]

#### THE DAHOMIANS AND ASHANTEES.

A BIT of intelligence from Western Africa lately arrived, which many regarded as startling news, but which, in fact, happens to be no news at all. It is a mere reiteration of a stale subject, relating to nothing more than a common-place matter *there*, that is very offensive to our susceptibilities *here*, and we don't like to hear of it. We are told that "His majesty Baddahung, king of Dahomy, is about to make the 'grand custom' in honour of the late king Gezo. Determined to surpass all former monarchs in the magnitude of the ceremonies to be performed on this occasion, Baddahung has made the most extensive preparations for the celebration of the 'grand custom.'"

Well, there sounds no harm in this. We have our grand customs, anniversaries, and ceremonies. There is something charming, too, in celebrating, in a public festival, the memory of a great man, and that man a king. But the statement proceeds as follows:—"A great pit has been dug, which is to contain human blood enough to float a canoe. *Two thousand* persons will be sacrificed on this occasion. The expedition to Abbeokuta has been postponed, but the king has sent his army to make some excursions at the expense of weaker tribes, and has succeeded in capturing many unfortunate creatures. The young people among these prisoners will be sold into slavery, and the old people will be killed at the 'great custom!'"

And this, be it observed, is an *annual* "custom." I have stated that it has been going on for many years. I will tell you, good reader, presently, how many years I have traced it as a matter of certainty; and though the magnitude of the ceremonies in matters of detail may perhaps be surpassed in the present instance, I undertake to say that it will fall short in the number of victims on some former occasions, if limited to 2000.

But let us first see in what part of Africa these grand "customs" are, as far as we know, *exclusively* practised. If we trace the direction of the western shores of the continent from the northward, we find it inclining towards the south-east in the neighbourhood of Sierra Leone, till within the fifth and sixth degrees from the equator. It here turns more directly eastward, and pursues a tortuous course for nearly a thousand miles before it again curves round to the southward towards the Cape of Good Hope, and forms that extensive embayed region named the Bight of Benin. On this line of coast our earliest African settlement is identified with that portion of it known as the "Gold Coast," and we here exercise a sort of protectorate over the neighbouring tribes, considerably beyond our legitimate jurisdiction, or the limits of the territory we claim under the name of "Cape Coast Castle." With the two prominent exceptions

"I didn't think I should ever have seen such a sight within half a mile of *my* farm," said Farmer Jackson, as he strode away, wiping his moistened eyes. His adventures that night were, however, not yet ended.

## HIGHLAND SPORTS.

### PART II.

TRULY a splendid bird is your cock grouse, to look at, to shoot, and to eat. We ate him morning, noon, and night, in various shapes, and never grew tired. He is peculiar, I believe, to the British Islands. He gets up with a whirr, and skims away with a prolonged and reiterated note, which has a curious tone of remonstrance in it.

A still handsomer bird is the blackcock, of which we had a great many. Unlike most of the gallinaceous tribe, he is very strong on the wing; rising directly into the air, and going straight away for miles. The female of the black grouse is called grey-hen, and very much resembles the common red grouse.

Sometimes we made an expedition after ptarmigan, a beautiful sort of white grouse, which lives only on the highest mountains, and is quite distinct from the Norwegian variety. There was a noble mountain, called Schiehallion, at the furthest corner of the estate, where these birds were to be found; and in quest of them we more than once climbed to the very highest peak, about the height of Snowdon, which for some time afforded a hiding-place to Robert Bruce during his disastrous conflict with our Edward I. It is a huge pile of detached pieces of rock; among which sit the ptarmigan, uttering their odd croak. They are partly slate-coloured in summer; and however close they may be sitting to you, it is almost impossible to distinguish them till they rise; for these Perthshire mountains consist of stratified metamorphic rocks, of the mica-schist formation, and are bluish grey in colour. They are crystalline and siliceous, but come too early in the geologic scale to yield any fossils.

It is no joke carrying a gun up a mountain like Schiehallion, for the ascent is by real climbing. But what a view from the top! It is a complete panorama; for we are far above everything else in the district, except the still loftier Ben Lawers, which stands a few miles off on the edge of Loch Tay. Both of these we found capped with snow in July. Behind us lies the Black Mount, the conical peak of Benmore, near Killin, and Loch Rannoch, where Lord John Russell was astonishing the grouse. Far away on the left stretches the chain of the Grampians; their outlines gradually fading away in the blue distance, where they mingle with the summits of the Cairngorm Mountains. Before us to the eastward lies Loch Tummel; and beyond it Glen Tilt, Killiecrankie, and Blair Atholl, where the other day we witnessed the annual Highland gathering of the Murrays, to compete for prizes in all manner of sports, and to do honour to their bearded, kilted, athletic, otter-hunting and deer-stalking chieftain. On the right are our own moors and mountains, "in russet mantle clad,"

with glimpses of Strathlay beyond. All around us, in beautiful confusion and "most admired disorder," are grey and rocky hills, partly clothed with turf and heather. Among and between them are moors, glens, and woods, streams, lakes, and tarns, glittering in the morning sunshine or lying in deep shade. It is indeed a glorious prospect, "framed in the prodigality of nature," and makes one's heart beat quick. We reluctantly quit our exalted post of observation, and begin the descent, shooting ptarmigan as we go. We fill our pockets with rare mountain plants, which will hereafter adorn our herbarium; for the neighbourhood is very rich, botanically. Now and then we get a shot at a fine falcon, or at some other bird strange to our southern eyes. Eagles are no longer found in this part.

A day's sport in the valley was sometimes an agreeable change. This more resembles English shooting; the broad fields near the river yielding abundance of brown hares, rabbits, partridges, plover, landrails, and oyster-catcher, (a very handsome bird, about the size of a duck, but not eatable); together with an occasional heron, wild duck, widgeon, teal, or snipe, and no end of wood-pigeons.

It is very interesting to watch the sagacious dogs carefully quartering the ground, so as to let nothing escape them. Look! Grace is pointing, and stands as if carved in stone. You go up to her, and she draws steadily on, when suddenly up gets the covey with a startling clatter. You single out your birds, and fire right and left. "Down! charge, Grace." She needs not the command, but drops at the sound of the gun; never attempting to move till you have reloaded and are ready to advance, when she immediately begins to "seek dead." Good old dog! all the hares in the valley might get up under her nose, and she would not stir a step after them—not she; she is too well trained for that. Young Don there is not so steady. In spite of shouts of "war' hare," he is sometimes unable to resist the temptation, although he knows well enough that he will get a terrible whipping when he comes back. If he perseveres in his evil ways, he will be shot without mercy; and even now he occasions a guttural tempest of jaw-breaking, ear-splitting Gaelic expletives in the stalwart but somewhat choleric head keeper, which threaten to end in choking that important functionary. But superior to these dogs, both in beauty and intelligence, is the Scotch "collie," or mountain shepherd dog.

Sometimes our programme was varied by a day's cover-shooting on the "braes," or in the woods which (as has been said) clothed the slope of the hills forming our side of the strath. After placing ourselves in line across one end of a wood, there were two courses open to us—either to push our way straight through the thick underwood (no easy task), or to send in a line of beaters about a mile in front, and make them drive the game towards us. This was much the pleasanter and more effectual plan of the two, and we therefore generally adopted it. Each gun posts himself so as to command an open glade, concealing himself as much as possible, and waiting in silence for whatever the

fortune of war may send him. Everything is quiet around you, excepting here and there a squirrel or a bird.

"The green leaves quiver with the cooling breeze,  
And make a chequered shadow on the ground."

Presently the beaters begin to give tongue, and you hear the sound gradually approaching, like the voices in a (so-called) ventriloquial entertainment. The game soon take the alarm, and then it is very exciting work. First come the timid but mischievous roes, the smallest but most beautiful of our British deer. They are shot with cartridge. Sometimes a fox shows himself, and is executed without judge or jury, for we are not afraid of vulpicide in these parts. Then follow hares, rabbits, and pheasants, giving us and our loaders plenty to do. And perhaps we get a snap shot at a woodcock, or a huge capercaillie. This is a superb creature, as large as a turkey-cock, which he a good deal resembles. But he is not easy to bring down; for he is only met with in the thickest woods, flies very quickly, and carries so much plumage behind that you are very apt not to fire forward enough, "pat betwixt too early and too late." Besides which, he can go off with a very considerable dose of lead in him, and his feathers are strong enough to turn small shot. The cock of the woods (*Tetrao urogallus*) had become extinct in this country; but Lord Breadalbane reintroduced the breed, by importing some from Norway and turning them loose in his forests. There they soon multiplied exceedingly; and when the Queen, during her first progress through the Highlands, was staying at Taymouth Castle, where everything is on a scale of princely magnificence, Prince Albert was permitted to shoot them for the first time. They have now spread into all "the demesnes that there adjacent lie," and we had a good many. But they are not good eating. They live chiefly on the young shoots of the fir, and their flesh consequently is apt to taste of turpentine.

The beaters having now worked their way up to our hiding-places, we collect the spoils, and then proceed to take up a similar position a couple of miles further on, when the same process is repeated.

We had no red deer, but both our great neighbours had plenty, by which we profited. At a grand hunting party, got up by the Duke of Atholl while we were there, the keepers by a little management contrived that a herd of no less than 2000 should be assembled in the far-famed Glen Tilt. When you kill your first deer, the keeper with much ceremony puts a dab of its blood upon your cheek "for luck"—gaping Southrons fancying that the shrewd Celts believe in such folly! Our way to Blair Castle lay through the celebrated pass of Killiecrankie. The road is cut through the hanging woods which mantle both sides of the long and winding defile, and along the bottom of the ravine brawls the river Garrow. It is altogether most lovely.

Besides the Atholl district, we were within a long ride of Glenlyon, and some other parts of the finest scenery in Scotland, and we often explored the country on horseback. The manners and customs of our Gaelic neighbours afforded us not a

little amusement. We found them shrewd and inquisitive, but very cautious withal; seldom giving a direct answer to even the simplest question. Their superstitions were endless, and most curious. So was the love of whisky and of snuff, which appeared to possess them all, without distinction of age or sex. So was their consistent misuse of many English words. Their *ch* is terrible in its depth and roughness. It seems to scrape its way up from the very chest, and is enough to give a sore-throat to any but a German or a Highlander. Is this an effect or a cause of the acknowledged fact of Scottish unmusicality? The bagpipe is the only music (save the mark!) that they seem to care for, excepting those peculiar songs which (though some of them are very pretty) seem all to be cast in one mould. They all appear to finish with a note of interrogation, and to disdain ending, like well-conducted melodies, on the key note. The same curious upward inflection of voice may be noticed in their conversation.

The bulk of the population round us answered to the name of Menzies (pronounced Minghies), with a sprinkling of Campbells and Murrays. Much to their own astonishment, we taught these folk to play at cricket, with the able assistance of a reading-party of Oxonians, who had established themselves at Aberfeldy for the long vacation. We assembled in the park two or three times a week for the noble game. The only way of getting our Celtic recruits to comprehend their position in the field was to place them by the points of the compass, which Highlanders invariably employ in giving directions, and in the most trifling matters. Thus, if "point" was standing north, you had to tell "coverpoint" to go to the N.W. or N.E., according as you wanted him before or behind the wicket. And to a question whether that was "guard for the middle stump?" I have heard a grave reply of "Na, na; mair sooth!" Their national game is curling, but that requires ice; and in the Lowlands the great game is golf.

After three most enjoyable months spent in the manner I have attempted to describe, we wound up our campaign against the *feræ naturæ* by two grand battues, at which were assembled all the gentry within reach. We mustered about a dozen. Preceded by pipers in full costume, and attended by nearly a hundred beaters, we marched with much ceremony to the top of the valley, near Taymouth and Fortingal. A line was there formed three-quarters of a mile long right across the strath, our right flank reaching to the river, and the left stretching up the side of the hills to where the moor began, while the centre extended across the flat stubble fields and green crops. The sportsmen were disposed at regular distances along this line, the intervals between us being filled up with beaters, so that nothing could escape. Each was attended by a keeper, to carry his second gun and to load for him; for when once the line was in motion, no pause was possible. In the rear were carts to carry the spoils. We were all instructed to move straight ahead, suffering nothing to stop us or turn us aside, that the line might not be broken. These marching orders were in some

places hard to carry out, and gave us a practical lesson in steeple-chasing. My post was on the high ground towards the left flank, so that I had an admirable view of the whole proceedings, excepting when my path lay through some copse or dell. Next to me was posted a noble lord, who shot in first-rate style. Nothing could be prettier than the effect when at last we simultaneously moved forward. The various colours and costumes, the polished gun-barrels flashing in the sunshine, the puffs of white smoke, and the rolling fire along the line, all combined with the beauty of the scenery to make up a picture which has deeply engraven itself on my memory, and which presented somewhat of the appearance of an army advancing in line of battle. We fired at everything that got up, and could not in the least tell what the next thing might be. On the right wing it is chiefly water-fowl; in the centre, partridges and pheasants; and on the left, grouse and black game, but none of these exclusively. Hares, of course, were everywhere, and we all got a great variety; the result being an enormous heap of miscellaneous game, both beasts and birds, from roe-deer down to wood-pigeons. Thus we swept the vale down to the castle, from the turrets of which the ladies of the party were watching the animated scene. Next day we began at Aberfeldy, and worked our way upwards to the point where we had left off. Many laughable incidents of course occurred, and we had each some adventures to relate when we all met at dinner.

It was now the end of October, and was becoming very cold. Snow was lying on all the mountains; there were sometimes in the morning six degrees of frost; the ponds were beginning to freeze, the curling-stones to be furbished up, and the trees to look bare. The grouse had assembled in large packs, and, having by that time learnt by sad experience the meaning of powder and shot, they were as wild as hawks. We had, moreover, had our fill of sport. We therefore took leave of the "land of cakes," and turned our faces southwards, finding a most perceptible difference in the temperature as we increased our distance from the pole. Pleasant as had been our stay in the

"Land of brown heath and shaggy wood,  
Land of the mountain and the flood,"

there is something very delightful in returning home after a lengthened absence; and some of us perhaps felt something akin to Dr. Johnson's surly declaration, that "the finest view in Scotland is the road to England."

### THE TASSIE GEMS.

"Be mine to bless the more mechanic skill,  
That stamps, renews, and multiplies at will;  
And cheaply circulates through distant climes,  
The fairest relics of the purest times."

ROGERS.

BEING too late for the train at London Bridge the other day, and having before me two hours ere another started, it became a matter of consideration how best to fill up the time. The day was fine; I had never seen much of the Borough of South-

wark; I therefore walked on towards the church of St. George the Martyr, and soon arrived at a turning which led to St. George's Chapel of Ease. In former times there had been a burial-ground attached to this place: was it still used for the interment of the dead? Desirous of ascertaining, I turned my steps in that direction, and, upon inquiry, found that it had been closed up. There was, however, no difficulty in obtaining admittance to the ground; and accordingly I was soon engaged in surveying this quiet spot, and meditating among the tombs. Memories of the past imparted a deep interest to the scene, although the place itself wore the aspect of neglect and desolation. Near the wall to the left, as I entered this receptacle of the dead, a head-stone attracted my notice. More than half of it was sunk in the earth; but there was a well-executed profile medallion portrait on it of "James Tassie, Modeller;" and an inscription of some length informed the reader that the mortal remains of a gifted artist and an estimable man had been deposited in that obscure and unfrequented spot.

James Tassie was the first who effectually awakened public attention in this country to gem engraving—a branch of the arts with which many even in our own day are but little acquainted. For the information of such, I may briefly state that the art of engraving on precious stones is one in which the ancients greatly excelled. In the British Museum, and various private collections in this country, there are numerous antique agates, cornelians, and onyxes, both cameos and intaglios, which in beauty of workmanship surpass anything of the kind that has been produced in modern times. Among the Greeks, Pyrgoteles, and under the first emperors of Rome, Dioscorides, were the most eminent gem engravers of whom we have any record. The former was held in high esteem by Alexander the Great; and the portrait of Augustus, executed by the latter, was considered so admirable that the succeeding emperors used it for their seal. The polite arts in general were buried under the ruins of the Roman empire. No better fate attended the art of stone-engraving. In the beginning of the fifteenth century it was, however, revived in Italy, as we are informed, by John of Florence, and after him by Dominic of Milan, who are both said to have produced creditable specimens of this beautiful art. At a subsequent period, such miniature sculptures became better known in Europe, especially in Germany, from whence many found their way into other countries. But they were never considered equal in excellence to those of the ancients. "If," as a distinguished writer observes, "the statues of Greece had perished, the fame of her arts might have been sustained by the exquisite beauty of her gems." Among English artists who excelled as gem engravers, the names of Marchant, Burch, and Charles and William Brown, held the first rank about thirty years ago.

But to return to James Tassie. He was a native of Scotland, born at Pollockshaws, in the neighbourhood of Glasgow, in the year 1735, and commenced life as a country stone-mason. At an academy established in Glasgow by two eminent