

knew my new owner's past history as intimately as I know yours, my friend; and before I proceed with him another step on his journey, I will recount it in brief.

### SKYE.

#### UP THE CUCHULLIN.

PLEASANT is it to awake on the morning of some festivity or excursion, and find that the sun shines bright and promising. This was my good fortune one day last summer, when, at the little inn of Sligachan, Isle of Skye, I was intending an adventure. I had left the bedroom blind drawn up through the night, that I might the easier awake, and also at the earliest moment possible quiet my anxieties about the weather, which for many previous weeks had been uniformly bad. In order to experience such sensations of pleasant relief, one must needs live in an uncertain climate. It is really worth while to inhabit a country like Great Britain, where such wide variations of thermometer and barometer are possible and probable in any twenty-four hours, for the sake of the satisfaction with which one wakes and finds the brightness of the previous evening *not* succeeded by a dull or threatening or rainy morning. And if you wish to enjoy this sensation most advantageously, let me recommend you a summer's residence in Skye, where the chances of *bad* weather, at any rate, are considerably increased: they say it rains in Skye some five days in a week all the year round. And if you still do not find sufficient field for the trial of your contentment, and for the pleasantness of agreeable surprise, in other parts of the island, try a week in the neighbourhood of Broadford or Sligachan. The grim and lofty mountains above you are the first that the winds and clouds rising from the Atlantic have to encounter; and the obstruction is of so serious a nature, that it is only after a long and desperate effort, and with considerable effusion of rain and confusion of tempest, that winds and clouds move on, half-discharged and half-subdued, to the mainland. The peaks seem to entwine themselves in those heavy, thick-fleeced clouds. Fancy a portion of the "Black Country" so undermined, that at last its many chimneys have fixed themselves in every kind of position but the rigidly upright one, and you may help yourself to picture this *Cuchullin* range. You may compare it to the hundred pinnacles of some vast cathedral after an earthquake; or to an inverted comb, with some of its teeth broken, and the rest leaning towards each other at all angles of inclination. These similitudes might be almost indefinitely carried on; and yet no fancy can image to itself or invent a comparison that shall adequately represent these weird, eccentric, fantastic heights. But the simplest and best comparison is that which is implied in the meaning of their name. I was informed by a fair Gaelic authority—a gentleman occupying an exalted legal position in England—that Coolin (the proper pronunciation of Cuchullin) is the Gaelic word for a *holly leaf*; and truly the prickles of the holly are a very good type of the peaks of the Cuchullin.

But it is time to commence our ascent. The highest peak of all, Scur-na-gillean (the gillies' rock) was never reached, as far as is known, till 1836, when Professor J. Forbes, under the guidance of a forester named Macintyre, who had failed several times previously, was successful. Few attempt the climb even now—guide-books and landlords by no means encouraging the adventure. A gilly was, however, found by the inn-keeper, who undertook to get me up. He seemed about eighteen years of age.

"So you've been up Scur-na-gillean?" I inquired.

Boy answers in the affirmative, yet with some degree of reservation in his manner, as if from unwillingness to boast of the exploit. I confess, however, that my suspicions formed a different explanation of his tone of answer.

We set off, keeping the Dunvegan Road for about a quarter of a mile. The boy then led off to the left on to a desolate, rock-dotted moor. It began to be moist under-foot, or, as the Scotch say, *soft*. On these occasions you set out with strict scruples about wet feet, and at first carefully choose the driest spots; but you are soon compelled to be less and less particular, as one step after another leads you further and further across the morass. Squash, squash, splash, splash, splash; bog, heather, water, rock; hop, skip, and jump. As we were on the plain, on either hand lay a spur of the range, the one to the right a very lofty one, and at some distance from us; the one to the left nearer and lower. This latter we presently began to climb, and our path continued upon it for some distance. When at a considerable altitude, we struck off to the right, as it were across the breast of our mountain, meeting occasionally with a steep precipice, or some narrow, dark, gloomy corry that caused us some deliberation how we might evade them, and sent us many a round. This is one great difficulty of the ascent. The corries are sometimes deep narrow fissures, sometimes yawning gulleys, narrowing downwards like a wedge, at the bottom of which runs a tiny stream, which an hour or two, however, of Cuchullin rain will swell into a torrent. And unpleasant places they are to look at. No sun can ever reach those gloomy depths. I called my guide's attention to some of them, and was amused and interested to perceive his appreciation of the terrors of nature. It is sometimes denied that the rough peasant of mountainous districts imbibes any of the poetry with which the scenery is fraught. I am sure my young guide felt the desolation, weirdness, and grandeur of the whole locality. When I spoke about the corries, he answered: "Eh! but I'll show you some quare wild lookin' ones presently." And true enough he did—pits from which you would not soon extricate yourself, should you once get to their bottom.

Our footing was now by no means firm or pleasant. We should presently arrive at rocks on which we might stand and walk at a steep inclination, owing to their roughness, and the small crystals that lie on their surface. But just now the loose shingle would float us downwards and

backwards an inch or two occasionally, and would fill our shoes with most unpleasant intruders. And while this was a difficulty with our feet, we had also to take care where we put our hands. Careful manipulation was required as well as good pedestrianism; for the projecting rocks in many places seem, as it were, only to be dovetailed into each other. Basaltic rocks, such as these, are often held together by mechanical pressure only, yet so closely and compactly, that you may easily take them for a firmly-consolidated mass; and the portions you extract might almost be again fitted into the mass in which they have been for thousands of years. If, therefore, you should be tempted to steady or support or raise yourself by laying hold of some erect projection of rock, it is very likely to break up into brittle, slaty laminae, and your safety may be imperilled.

I may here notice that my gilly betrayed, innocently enough, any doubts he had concerning our path, by the hesitation with which he answered my inquiries; but whenever he took to whistling, I knew that he was not only in doubt, but at a loss.

At length, however, we reached the Loat-o-Corry (or top of the Corry), the edge of the ridge, from whence we could look down on the path we had come, and, in the opposite direction, over the vast hollow, Hart-o-Corry, which lay at our feet. Hart-o-Corry is a tremendous barren black chaotic basin, surrounded on the west and north by the Cuchullin range, some 3000 feet high; Strona Stree, on the south, separating it from Loch Coruisk, and an entrance to it from Glen Sligachan forming its only gap on the eastern side. Those who think, with Coleridge, that there is scarcely a greater pleasure than rolling rocks down the sides of some high mountain, would find this edge a good starting-point for their projectiles; from the same spot they would have the choice of two opposite declivities, with some 2000 feet of uninterrupted fall.

The boy here manifested considerable glee at having obtained so high an eminence, and a homely but genuine and enthusiastic appreciation of the grand glories that already greeted us.

"Eh! but I'd rather come here once than three times to Coruisk. It is pretty!" he said, not having a very large vocabulary of words of admiration.

Our course—rather climb—now lay upon the ridge, in a south-easterly direction, and we had at times to scale the rocks hand over hand. Not very long, however, was it before my guide came to a stand. A bare pinnacle was in front, with a slight ledge on one side of it, which with very great and most necessary care the boy crept along, but soon came back with the intelligence that even the ledge continued for only a short distance. Whistle as much as he might, no way could he discover. In fact, it was so simple a case that no time was necessary for making up his mind. Only some fifty or sixty feet to the top, yet stopped!

It was vexatious; yet, to a well-balanced mind, what difference can a few feet make? Were we not, in fact, at the top of the Cuchullin, nay, even of Scur-na-gillean, although we had not reached its apex? You are at the top of a tree, albeit a slender

twig or two may be above your head: was not our case an analogous one?

All very true; still, we had *failed*; we were beaten. The "all but" would just mar the completeness of the adventure. And besides, the view did not convey that sense of openness, of unconfinedness, which is half the enjoyment of a culminating point.

And how did the gilly feel? My suspicions rose once more.

"I thought you had been up before, boy."

"So I have, sir."

"How is it, then, that you can't show me the way to the top?"

"I did not get higher than this."

"Oh!"

He had evidently taken the philosophical idea of a mountain's top which I have alluded to, and thought a few feet made no difference. Yet it was plain he was not satisfied.

"If we have got to the top," I said, "other persons have got to the *tip-top*."

"I dunna think ut," was his reply.

So we had to make up our minds to give it up, and began to descend into Hart-o-Corry, and to make for Loch Coruisk. We took the course of one of the thousand narrow clefts in the mountain side, through which cataracts foam and roar down during heavy rain, and which are empty soon after the rain is over, so steep is the fall. This was the worst piece of climbing we had come to in the whole day. I shall not soon forget one long reach of leg we had to make. We came to a fall of several feet, with so steep a declivity at its bottom, as to make a very uninviting landing-place. To jump it would have been very rash, so we had to "make a leg," and let ourselves down as best we could, the narrowness of the gully being, however, favourable to the process. The boy by no means relished the feat, as I perceived by his indecision as to which leg was the best one to make the essay. He afterwards acknowledged this, when, having noticed that he soon got out of breath, and sat down more frequently than most Highlanders would have thought necessary, I observed—

"I don't think you have a very strong heart, Donald."

"You are right, sir: I *am* a bit of a coward!"

"I didn't mean that, but I noticed you looked rather queer at that steep fall in the gully."

He candidly confessed to his misgivings then. Indeed, we could hardly have dared it, alone.

We had descended some 500 or 600 feet, when, on looking round towards the peak we had failed to attain, I thought I saw a way that seemed to encourage another attempt. This we determined to make, and after some minutes' hard but not dangerous climbing, we reached the actual summit of Scur-na-gillean. Now, we had not had to cut out stairs in any ice: we had waded through no treacherous snow: our waists were ropeless: no crevasses had yawned to receive us: we had no tie between us, save the day's adventure. We had had neither snow-blindness nor bleeding at the nose to hinder the enjoyment of our success and of the view. Still, though our little excursion had been without any of those exciting accompaniments, it had been

successful. Till some twenty-five years ago, no one had ever ascended to our present elevation, and it had always been previously spoken of as unattainable. Macculloch, writing in 1825, declares neither man nor beast ever stood on these heights, except perhaps the goats, when, according to the local legend, "they disappear once in the twenty-four hours to get their beards combed." Macculloch himself made seven unsuccessful expeditions in five successive seasons; and few, even now, ever attempt it. So we felt very pleased, although we could not claim the honour of a Mont Blanc ascent. It had taken us about three hours and forty minutes from the inn. Oh! what a glorious day it was. In general, even when it is pretty quiet elsewhere, the winds are wild and furious here: now, only as gentle breaths blow over us as were pleasant and safe after our exertions. Even in the midst of fine weather, clouds will descend from the sky above; mists will rise up from the sea on all sides, or will come out, as it were, from their hiding-places in those narrow, dark, cold corries, and congregate about these spires from all points of the compass, and that, on so short a notice as to constitute one of the difficulties and dangers of the locality: to-day, however, not a cloud was near, nor a mist to be seen, except at early morning and late evening.

[To be continued.]

## MEN I HAVE KNOWN.

SAMUEL ROGERS.

REMINISCENCES of the late poet and banker have recently been published; but they tell us little about him, except that he kept a sort of note memorandum of what happened to be said by certain distinguished men when in his company. The record is very scanty, and much of it so curt and fragmentary as to have no applicable meaning, and the bard of "Memory" himself has no figure on the cartoon. What I remember of him possesses little of "the pleasures of memory;" and may perhaps be as little interesting; but he filled for many years a singular space in the public eye, and a few touches may include him in my miniature gallery of "Men I have Known."

Rogers was reputed a wit, and did say some good things; but many of the best were said by others, and fathered upon him (as the use is), especially when there was any bitterness in the joke, which was his characteristic. His going to Holland House by the Hammersmith stage-coach (in days when cabs and omnibuses were unknown), and asking the loitering driver what he called it, is not one of his worst: being answered, "The Regulator," he observed that it was a very proper name, as all the rest *go by it*. Luttrell and Rogers were intimate friends and rival wits, and disliked each other accordingly. I have used the word friend, but it did not appear that the nonogenarian (whatever he might have enjoyed half a century before) had any friends. I never saw about him any but acquaintances or toadies. Had he outlived them? No; he was not of a nature to have friends. He was born with the silver spoon in his mouth, and

had never needed a friend in his long, easy journey through life. The posthumous laudation lavished upon him by his political cronies was purely of the *de mortuis nil nisi bonum* kind. He never received that coin when alive; for, if the truth be told, his liberality and generosity were small specks which could not bear blazon, and he was radically ill-tempered. Now, nobody can love a cantankerous person, even though placed in such fortunate circumstances as not to be always offensive. His whole career was too sunny. There were neither clouds nor showers to nourish the sensitive plants which adorn humanity—nothing but showy sun-flowers. No lovely dew-dipped blossoms; no sweet buddings of refreshing scent; no soft green tufts sending up grateful incense, as when varying seasons produce their beneficial influence, and the breezes and the rains (ay, the storms) from heaven serve but to root and expand the spirit's growth.

Few men who have had nothing but an even tenor of their way, are duly touched with feeling for the distresses of their fellow creatures, which they have never experienced. In the absence of any higher motive to benevolence, there was not even a trace of *bon hommie* about Rogers. Sarcasm and satire were his social weapons. Kindness and geniality do not crop out in any account of him that I have seen; and this negative describes the individual of whom I did not care to know much. The constant little bickering competitions between him and Luttrell were very entertaining to some minds. They met once, and did not squabble. It was in the Crystal Palace, into which they were both wheeled in chairs, when no longer able to walk!\*

Taste, or in another word, refinement, like avarice or gluttony, tends essentially to selfishness; and in Rogers I marked a signal type of the class, with a very small modicum of the redeeming feeling which occasionally qualifies it. I have known men of the most refined taste who were also distinguished by the sweetest of human sympathies. In these, however, taste was only a lesser component part of the being, not a ruling and engrossing passion—if passion it can be called, which is so abstractly passionless.

In his writings, as in his daily life, Mr. Rogers was fastidious. In correcting the press, only Campbell could equal him for anxiety to polish. On one occasion I chanced to see a sheet of one of his poems ("Italy," I think) as it was passing through the printer's hands, and pointed out some very slight errors. The reader told him of this hyper-criticism (for it was nothing more), and he cancelled the whole of the impression, and introduced the required alterations at the expense of above £100. In other respects he would not be guilty of anything like extravagance. On the contrary, there was a curious spice of the miser-economy in his nature. He was fond of going to evening parties, at-homes, conversaciones, or however called by fashion; and instead of being attended by his

\* This meeting reminds me of the story of Lord North and Colonel Barré meeting at Tunbridge Wells Spa, when both were blind with age. "Ah, Colonel," said the witty ex-Premier, "you used to abuse me much in the House, and I retorted; but now we should be very glad to see each other."

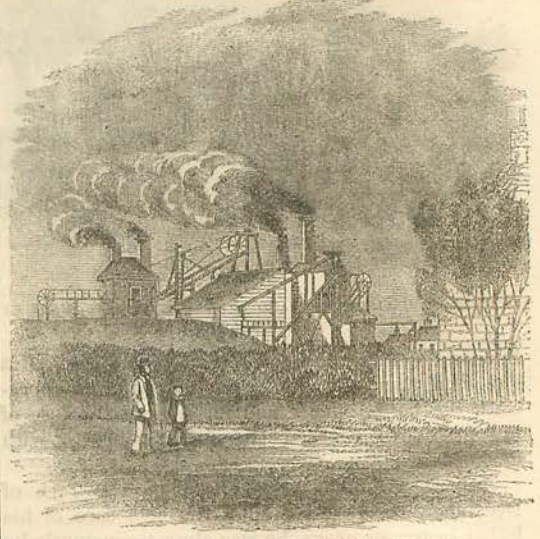
of detail were suggested; but both agreed in confident anticipations of its ultimate triumph over every other species of tractive power on railways. After assisting for a short time in the steam-engine manufactory, then in its infancy at Newcastle, Robert Stephenson accepted a mining appointment in South America, as it was conceived that the voyage thither, with change of climate, would be of service to his health, injured by severe application. From this engagement, which extended over three years, he returned towards the close of 1827, meeting with a singular adventure by the way.

Having reached Carthagena, on the Gulf of Darien, he was compelled to halt in that miserable town, one of the strongholds of the yellow fever, awaiting a ship to convey him to New York. In the comfortless public room of the wretched inn, he met with an Englishman, tall, gaunt, and careworn, evidently in the last stage of impoverishment. The stranger proved to be a brother engineer, well known by name, Mr. Richard Trevithick, the Don Ricardo Trevithick of Peruvian celebrity, to whom we have had occasion to refer.\* All the brilliant prospects placed before him by the authorities of that country, founded upon the drainage of the silver mines by steam-power, had been utterly disappointed; and he was making his way to England almost penniless, a living example of the truth of the Spanish proverb, that "a silver mine brings misery, a gold mine ruin." It was a most fortunate meeting for him, for he was at once relieved of further embarrassment by an advance of £50. The parties were soon in earnest conversation upon a subject in which both took the deepest interest—the steam-horse. But Trevithick's ideas never went beyond a steam-carriage adapted for use on common roads, an example of which, as successful as any other, he had invented and patented before Robert Stephenson was born. Coleridge used to tell an anecdote with great glee respecting this machine, during a trial of it, in an obscure district of Cornwall, by the inventor and his partner Vivian. While at the top of its speed, they suddenly saw a closed toll-bar before them. Vivian called to Trevithick, who was behind, to slacken speed; but the momentum was so great, that the engine was only brought to a stand close to the gate, which the keeper quickly threw open in utter consternation. "What's to pay?" shouted Vivian. But not a word could the man articulate. "What's to pay?" was again demanded. "No-noth-nothing to pay," he at last replied, shaking from top to toe; "do, my de-dear Mr. Devil, drive on as fast as you can; no-thing to pay." It is remarkable of the two Englishmen who so unexpectedly met at Carthagena, that some sixteen years previous, Trevithick had exhibited his steam-carriage in the metropolis, which conveyed a load of passengers in an inclosed piece of ground near Euston Square—the very spot from which, seven years later, Stephenson started the North Western Railway.

On returning again from the western world, Robert Stephenson again joined the factory at Newcastle. He had indeed been expressly recalled to aid his

father with the locomotive, and prepare the iron steel for the opening day of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway, the 15th of September, 1825. The triumph then was complete. Though clouded by the melancholy accident to Mr. Haskisson, yet that event served to illustrate its efficiency, for, to obtain medical help, the wounded body of the statesman was conveyed some fifteen miles in twenty-five minutes, or at the rate of thirty-six miles an hour—a speed which came upon the world with the surprise of a new and unlooked-for phenomenon. From this period, the establishment at Newcastle took a start as a manufactory of locomotives; it became one of the largest and most famous in the world, as it still is, sending out engines, as railways spread, to the various countries of Europe and the United States of America.

[To be continued.]



THE ENGINE-HOUSE AT KILLINGWORTH COLLIERY.

## SKYE: FROM THE TOP OF CUCHULLIN.

### PART II.

ON the far west, the Atlantic was scarcely hidden from us by the low-lying islands of North and South Uist, on which kelp fires were now sending forth long streams of smoke. North of these lay a more mountainous island, the upper part of which is called Lewis, and the lower, wilder, and more interesting, Harris. These are the Hebrides, or, if Skye be also admitted into their number, the Outer Hebrides. The word is literally a *mistake*, and has no meaning; it arose from some typographical error in reading the true name—Hebuda. On the south, and near us, were the Islands Canna, Rum, and Eigg, with its queer-looking scaur, something like a camel's hunch. The mainland from north to south presented almost every variety of surface. Here parallel vertebræ of mountain groups ran down to the sea; there a loch thrust itself for miles into the interior: here a crest rose eccentric and defiant; there a ridge, smooth, regular, and sloping, prostrated itself before some tyrant peak. East of us and almost at our feet, marked

\* No. 389. "First Steam Engine in South America."

by its ruined fort of Castle Moil on our island, and by its light-house on the opposite shore, was the narrow strait, called Kyle-akin, the northern outlet of the Sound of Sleat, which separates Skye from the mainland. A schooner or two was passing through this close channel.

Roughly speaking, the geology of Skye may be said to consist of trap. Trappa is Scandinavian for "stair," and looking northwards we at once saw the propriety of the term, as the various somewhat interesting-looking hills rose in wide sloping terraces, and at last often, as would naturally happen, became tables. It is remarked that these tabulated mountains often appear in pairs; and there is a notable instance of this on the north-west portion of the island, at the head of Loch Follart, and opposite to Dunvegan Castle, the seat of the Macleods, where there rise two of these fraternal mountains, which go by the name of Macleod's Tables. On their western side, some distance into the sea, some most curious rocks rise up from the water, bare, rough, slender, detached from each other, and the highest said to be 200 feet above the water, which, however, is gradually grinding them away. They are called Macleod's Maidens, and resemble the Needles off the Isle of Wight. In his account of a visit to Dunvegan Castle, Sir Walter Scott makes two amusing mistakes, when he says that from the castle he beheld "that part of the Cuchullin mountains which are called, from their form, Macleod's Dining Tables." First, you cannot see the Cuchullins from the castle; next, the tables are as much a part of the Cuchullins as the dome of St. Paul's is of Westminster Abbey.

The uninteresting appearance of the northern part of Skye is broken by a most remarkable exception to the general roundness or flatness of the mountains. On the western side, high up above the sea, and the base on which it stands, washed by it, there points skywards a rock, bare as a bone, almost as sharp as a church spire, and considerably out of the perpendicular. It is the Storr Rock. To a playful imagination it might seem as if one of the Cuchullin tops had been transported thither; or rather, as if the neighbouring tabled mountains had been all deprived of their proper summits, which had been placed on the Cuchullin ridge, while the Storr alone had been allowed to retain its pinnacle. There is more than one peak, but the one I have mentioned is so prominent as to serve for a landmark.

And the sea view! What is there in the sea that constitutes the magnificence of its panorama, if one may so express it? Not the blending, contrast, or changing of its colours; not the white crests that top the blue or green waves; not the shadows that flit across its face; not its mirror-like smoothness; nor its ripple, nor its tumult, nor its expanse, nor its contractions where it meets some mountain shore; not its liberty in the ocean, nor its confinement in the loch; not its ships, nor fowl, nor islands; in none of these, nor even perhaps in the combination of these, lies the magic charm of a sea view. Is it the associations which stand connected with the sea, and which appeal so strongly to the human breast? Or is the explanation simply that, to the

sea God has given beauty, and to man an eye that can enjoy it?

The reader may imagine how well our scene was provided with sea, when he learns that though its extreme breadth is about forty-five miles, and its extreme width twenty-four, there is no spot in Skye which is five miles distant from the sea, so cleft is it with creeks and lochs.

Of course this affects the occupations of the people. Fish may be had in any abundance, though occasionally the herring season disappoints their expectations. Some additional capital and enterprise on the part of the people would make the fisheries a much more profitable source of wealth than they now are. Perhaps the inhabitants depend more on their little holdings of land for their livelihood than on the fruits of the sea; and so, owing to the dampness of the climate and the lateness and consequent coldness of their harvest time, they often are scantily provided for the year, and do indeed, especially in the spring, suffer great privations, as their looks too frequently betoken. Their cottages are most wretched. Often floorless and chimneyless, and (at best) inadequately windowed, they almost elevate the cottages of English villages into palaces. If, on entering one, you do not want to spend the first minutes in a fit of coughing, you had best squat down on the earthen floor, and so breathe beneath the smoke region. Cleanliness is, of course, out of the question. Notwithstanding their poverty, however, the Skye folk can hardly be persuaded to emigrate, and servants will often leave good situations in English families to return to their native homes and discomforts. Skye is very healthy. That ingredient in the atmosphere, ozone, which the reader may have seen attended in the meteorological reports of the newspapers by some decimal fraction, is here detected in great force. An officer in H. M.'s navy, on surveying service, informed me that he had never found it so abundant as in the air of Skye, and in the more western island of North Uist.

Skye is divided into seven parishes; but even since the erection of additional kirks by the Free Church, the public means of grace are not easy of access to many of the inhabitants, who are sometimes miles distant from any place of worship. My gilly told me that there was no kirk within eight or nine miles from the hamlet of Sconser, where he lived, and that, as he had to cross the sea to get to his, it was only in fine weather he could go. There was, however, a schoolmaster in Sconser, who held some kind of service on the Sunday.

We have already noticed the more distant objects; let us now look more to our feet. The little inn which we had left in the morning stands near the entrance of a glen, which runs in a south-westerly direction across the island, terminating at its western extremity at Camasunary on Loch Scavaig. This is Glen Sligachan. It separates the ridge we had ascended from another line of mountains, beginning with bell-shaped Glamaig and Marscow, near the inn, and ending with bold and stupendous Blaven over Loch Scavaig. Glamaig and Marscow strike the most ordinary observer as altogether different from the Cuchul-

lin. Those two are red, these are black; those are rounded like a dome, these are pointed as pinnacles; those are a conglomeration of large and small shingle, these are a huge unbroken mass; those are as flesh, these are as bones.

Ben Blaven, though on the opposite side of the glen, and apparently almost connected with the red lumps of Glamaig and Marscow, is yet of the same character, geologically and picturesquely, as the mountains from which it is separated. Black, bare, abrupt, though not so pointed as the Cuchullins proper, to them it clearly belongs.

The rock of which the Cuchullins may be said to be composed is called hypersthene, a name expressly invented for the mountains by Dr. Macculloch some thirty-five years ago. It is of adamantine hardness. Crystals of hypersthene are also found in the massive pavement rocks themselves, if I may be allowed the word. Try and hammer off the crystals from the rock in which they are imbedded, and you may wound your hand with a splinter or two, but your hammer will make but little impression on the hypersthene, which, indeed, derives its name from its *immense strength*. Professor J. Forbes calls it\* the "most solid of all rock formations." Yet, all over this district, you may trace long veins of claystone circulating through this adamantine rock. These veins often intersect each other, and so form squares and parallelograms; so that there was a time when even these rocks of iron were reft like a biscuit, and the chinks have been, as it were, perpetuated by the infusion of the liquid claystone. There are appearances also of the primitive fluidity of the hypersthene itself, veins of hypersthene having been found, as Professor Forbes believed he did, in the surrounding trap; for the hypersthenic rock lies upon that same trap which forms the island's foundations. In one portion of the Cuchullins the trap has been discovered at a height of above 2000 feet.

The peak of Scuir-na-gillean is considered about 3200 feet above the level of the sea. Other neighbouring peaks are supposed to be of nearly the same elevation. Ben Blaven also, the other side of the glen, is by some considered as a rival to its brethren, the Cuchullins—an idea indignantly scouted by my proud gilly as derogatory to our present position. It was rather mischievous of us to inform him of it.

As I remember the glories of the scene and the delights of our elevation, I don't seem to myself to have made a sufficiently long stay on the top. But we had considerable work before us yet, and we were therefore compelled to think of descending.

My guide had been compelled to relinquish the idea that we were the first who had ever succeeded in reaching the exact summit, by finding, close to the top, a rusty hob-nail; yet he would not descend without forming his initials with pebbles on the peak. When he had done this, we turned our backs on Glen Sligachan, and began to dive down into that scene of desolation I have already mentioned, called Hart-o-Corry. We did not, however,

descend into the bottom of the basin, but, keeping at a considerable height above it, we pursued a more easterly course, and at last descended into that valley which I have already mentioned as opening from Glen Sligachan into Hart-o-Corry. We passed "the bloody stone" in the vale, the scene of a horrid murder a long time ago; indeed, I think my guide said a double murder was done there. I think there is no doubt that the easier way to ascend Scuir-na-gillean is by the way we came down; that is, to go up from "the bloody stone." I do not believe that we met with anything in our descent which would be insuperable in going up.

Again we had to climb, but met with nothing worth recording till we reached the scene which alone is sufficient to bring hundreds to this island every year, and which alone is sufficient recompense for all the toil of travel. We at length stood over Loch Coruisk, about its middle, and on a portion of the mountain called Strona-strea. This is not indeed the best side to see it, for you do not have the fantastic and stupendous Cuchullins for your background, as you have when coming upon it from the landing-place on Loch Scavaig, or even when reaching the spot to which the guides bring their parties from Sligachan. We were, moreover, too far above the loch to appreciate the effect produced by the masses of rock that lie strewn about its margin, of every size and shape, and in every position. Some are so imbedded or firmly lodged, that no giant—not Cuchullin himself—could communicate the slightest thrill to them: some are so delicately poised that a child might rock them, though their weight may be reckoned by tons. And all these rocks are jumbled and tumbled about in indescribable confusion, and are unrelieved with one green tuft to soothe your amazement.

Yet we were not too high to enjoy the scene nevertheless, and especially the sea view. The hues around were no longer of the colourless noon-day sun, but of the sun as it nears its bed; and we lay, soothed by the repose into which nature seemed to be sinking, calmly enjoying the sweetness of the scene, all the more delightful after the wildness and weirdness of our late route and eminence. But these hues hinted that we had better be starting inn-wards. We felt compelled to turn our backs on scenes which have drawn out the praises of all that have an eye for beauty, and a heart that can sympathize with nature. Sir Walter Scott owes some of his most beautiful lines to the inspirations of the locality—(they are too long to quote, but may be found in the "Lord of the Isles"); and Cuchullin is the very name of one of Ossian's heroes.

It was my third visit to the spot, my third route, my third manner of seeing it. First, I had started from Sligachan, passing through its glen to Camasunary, and then over and to the top of Trodhu, at the southern extremity of Coruisk, and between it and the sea. On that occasion, a few clouds, light yet opaque, floated about, now concealing the tops of the mountains, and now descending or rising so as to reveal them. The

\* In a paper appended to Black's "Guide to Skye," to which the reader is referred for a fuller account of the geology of the Cuchullins.

second time, I had landed from Loch Seavaig, when mists and rain had given those gloomy desolations an extra gloom—not therefore altogether disappointing, though effectually shutting out the heights above. But this time and this route and this manner surpassed the former ones.

Yet we must leave. Turning our backs on the loch and on the sea, we set our faces in a north-easterly direction, and began to cross large masses of hypersthene rock, which constitutes a pavement that is never to be worn out, even if it should be submitted to a Cheapside traffic. Much of interest stands connected with that same hypersthene pavement. Veins of sandstone traverse it, filling up a thousand fissures. Crystals lie on its surface, so imbedded that scarcely any force can detach them. But the chief interest of these rocks is the evidence they afford of the action of glaciers. What gave them their round smoothness? *Weather* has so little effect upon the hypersthene, that even where large fragments are found detached, no grit is sprinkled beneath them. It cannot be the torrents, that are so precipitous as to be full one moment and almost empty the next; and there are no reservoirs to retain the rain till a sufficient body of water is formed to feed the watercourses, and produce the force necessary for the effects noticed. And how is it, also, that the clay-stone veins are *flush* with the hypersthene rocks they traverse? As an explanation, the glacier theory is adopted. We learn from present existing glaciers in the Alps, etc., the effects that are now being slowly produced by their action: in these Cuchullins and other mountainous districts we trace marks similar to those which the Alpine glaciers leave behind them; and, though no human life—scarcely the whole epoch of authentic history—is long enough to register anything approaching to the effects that have been produced in the Cuchullins, yet it is believed that it is only a sufficiently long period of time that is needed, for masses of ice in slow motion to round and groove by abrasion these rocks as they are now seen.

Our path lay for some distance up and down these glacier-moulded formations; but, at last, our final descent began. We crossed the morass in the glen below, and reached the rough road that, alternating with shingle and bog, leads to Sligachan. The glen itself is a sight well worth a journey. It may hold its own with Glencoe, and is often thought superior to it. We had joined it about midway between our inn and Camasunary, and the half towards Camasunary is at least as beautiful as the half towards Sligachan. As we turned to look towards Ben Blaven, the setting sun had coloured its gloomy rocks with a rich purple, as if its barren side were one mass of heath-blossom, and we stopped some minutes to watch the shadow creep up towards its summit. Then, for a few moments, with its crown of glory on it, it seemed like “the hoary head when found in the way of righteousness,” and then it gently lapsed into repose, clad in its grey evening robe. As we passed the base of our friend Scur-na-gillean, he donned his fleecy nightcap, and we felt glad that he had refrained so long and so unwontedly. We passed a herd of red deer, about to settle for the night, and at length, a little

tired, but none the worse for a twelve hours' expedition, we reached the inn. I trust I felt thankful for having had such a pleasant adventure, and for being permitted such a sight of the glorious beauties which an almighty and gracious Father has lavished on this locality, and all without a misadventure—not so much as a sprained ankle—to mar the enjoyment of the day.

## THE BLACK COUNTRY.

### CHAPTER VI.—EDUCATION IN THE BLACK COUNTRY.

In this nineteenth century, the English nation may be denominated a vast academy, over which her Majesty exercises a gentle supervision, and regards with anxious solicitude the progress of *her pupils*. A paternal government corrects with mild severity the dictation of its working classes; benignantly smiles over their multiplication, and reviews their “seams” with critical but not malignant glance. “My Lords” in council are filled with sorrow when Jones, a candidate for pupil teachership, pronounces “man” to be an “indefinite article,” or asserts with confidence that our island home is encircled by the Mediterranean. They implore of Brown to pay more attention in future to his orthography; and it is in grief, rather than in anger, that they declare the button holes in the shirt sleeve sent up for inspection by Mary Robinson to be anything but what they ought to be. My lords have a right to expect, from Jones and his comrades, some return for all that has been bestowed upon them, in the shape of pounds, shillings, and pence; and when we take into consideration the almost incredible sums of money advanced yearly by Government in favour of the national schools, it ceases to be a matter of wonder that a sharp look-out is kept over their appropriation, or that statistical inquiries are frequently more minute than agreeable. My visit to the Black Country tended, more than anything else, to convince me that the schoolmaster was not only abroad, but wide awake; and, though not flogging, which in our era is vulgar, exercising a moral influence, infinitely more harassing to the undisciplined or refractory mind, than strokes of Solomon's remedy would have proved to the body impolitic.

“There will be a meeting to-morrow at D— of the ‘Schoolmasters’ Association;’ it may be rather interesting, and, at any rate, as you are so great on the subject, you cannot do better than go.”

Such was Mrs. Barry's counsel; and, having a great respect for her judgment on all matters, I followed her advice, and went to the meeting. It was a quarterly affair, and well attended. A large room was nearly filled, principally by the masters from different schools in the neighbourhood, though there were also present many of the clergy, and a sprinkling of mistresses. The latter looked as if they had plenty to say, and could, only that sex forbade, have said it full as well as the legitimate orators. I was one of the earliest arrivals, and had leisure to comment upon the varied looks and manners of the learned academicians who presented themselves. My guide, philosopher, and friend for the occasion