

And as the iron horse hurried me towards Scotland I thought of the plain old shop-keeper who, in the leisure moments of his simple life, had been able to give to the world the quaint book by which he is remembered—of the genuine love for the Creator and His works its pages told of in unaffectedly simple diction—and I envied him the quietude of mind a life spent amid such peaceful surroundings enabled the writer to preserve. It was only when a nice old lady sitting opposite called my attention to the violent oscillations of the carriage, and asked in tones of alarm if there was anything wrong, that I awoke from my reverie to a sense of mundane things, and found that the telegraph-posts were flying past at a fearful speed, and that we were doing a mile in 52 seconds.

What an easy thing it is over a dinner-table to make plans for a cycling tour through the Scottish Highlands! How nice it is to talk of going from this place to that, without giving a thought to hills, mountains, and bad roads! I was never made for hard work. My friends tell me that where the broad principles of labour are concerned I have a great genius for superintendence, but that my heart and soul are above the drudgery of details. It was a very weak moment when I entered upon this undertaking, and if I had known what we were to experience in the way of—but there, I must not anticipate.

From Glasgow I started to ride to meet my friend at Oban, some ninety-six miles away. The route along the banks of the Clyde, past numerous shipbuilding yards in full swing, is not of great interest, but the roads were fairly good, the sun shone brightly, a slight breeze across my path sufficed to keep me from getting too hot, and my spirits rose to a high pitch of exhilaration. At Dunbarton I stopped to look at the Castle, where after his betrayal Wallace was imprisoned, which is built on an immense rock. There is a tradition that Satan threw this rock at Saint Patrick, who resided in Ireland at the time, but that owing to the Satanic arm being weak from want of exercise the rock fell short and landed here. The Castle played a prominent part in Scottish history from the earliest times. At the summit the remains of a Roman fort are shown. Continuing my way I soon arrived at Balloch Railway Station, after passing which I found myself flying along the margin of Loch Lomond, queen of Scottish lakes. A few miles further, from the window of a dear relative's house, who spends a life of quiet retirement on its banks, and upon whom I sprang a surprise visit, I gazed upon one of Lomond's lovely pictures. In front the clear waters of the loch had made such raids upon the shore that a little bay had been formed, in which were two or three small fishing boats idly swinging to their anchors. At the eastern point of the bay, upon a small rock to which he had waded, stood a little urchin of about ten summers, vainly trying to ensnare the guileless fish by means of rudely improvised tackle. Further out, where the deeper waters assumed a dark tint, were to be seen some of the many islands

that lend such charms to the perspective, and far away the snowclad mountains, among which proud Ben Lomond reigns king, reared their variously shaped crests against a light blue sky.

Mildly and soft the western breeze
Just kiss'd the lake, just stirr'd the trees,
And the pleased lake, like maiden coy,
Trembled, but dimpled not, for joy.

What a picture! How the eye loved to dwell upon it, and how readily the ear drank in the accompanying symphony played by soft breezes in their passage through the pines and bracken! And as we stood talking over the charms of the place where the childhood of those dear to us was spent, and recalled memories of days now, alas, numbered with the past, a strange mist seemed to creep over the landscape, and I was fain to turn away and profess sudden interest in the flowers tastefully arranged on the table. A hasty meal, a walk through the little garden, from which a rose is plucked, to be carried to those loved ones in far-away

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Adelaide; a fond good-by to one upon whose dear face I may have gazed for the last time, and I am off. The spell is broken; and I hurry along the winding road past Inchcailloch, burying-place of the Macgregors; through Luss, that picturesquely situated hamlet, with its clean old houses, half hidden amid the profuse growth of the hillside, and its old-fashioned pier, from which the steamer is just starting; past Tailbert, where there is one of the best hotels I have met amid all my journeyings; round the road to the left, reluctantly leaving Loch Lomond behind, and on across the wooded isthmus until Loch Long is reached. Now the way leads through the wild mountain pass of Glencroe (not Glencoe, of cruel massacre fame). The road is not so very bad, despite the evil character the guidebooks give it, and after one or two halts and refreshing drinks at the mountain streams the summit of the pass is reached. Here there is a stone cairn, upon which are inscribed the words—

Rest and be thankful.

I obeyed the injunction, occupying my leisure moments by gazing back upon the wild and desolate scene I had left behind. During all its nine miles of length the sides of the pass are covered with nothing but massive boulders and crumbled rock. There is hardly any vegetation about, and the only signs of life I had met were one or two forlorn-looking sheep, who had evidently lost their way. Gloomy surroundings are apt to give birth to

gloomy thoughts, and I wanted no such companions, so I jumped on my Rover and began to negotiate the steep descent. Much care had to be exercised and several dismounts made at steep pinches or sharp turns ere I was able to give my gallant steed his head; but at last the opportunity came, and soon I was coasting speedily along. Gloomy little Loch Restal is presently reached, and I stop for a few moments to watch a couple of Cockney sportsmen gloriously arrayed in full Highland costume, and properly accompanied by gillies, industriously engaged fishing for salmon. They had no success while I stood there; so, voting it poor fun, I again started, and after a nice bit of pedalling found myself at Cairndow Inn—a clean little place where good whisky can be obtained and an equally good cup of tea, accompanied by bread and butter whose sweetness defies description. As I sat indulging in the latter trio a dog-cart stopped at the door and a lady and gentleman alighted. In such an out-of-the-way place society customs are not strictly adhered to, and we were soon talking together. They proved to be visitors from South Africa, come home to pay their respects to the Queen, and, having done so, they were now revelling amid the beauties of Scotia's fair scenes. A run round the head of Loch Fyne soon brought me to Inverary, where I rested for the night. Who has not heard of Loch Fyne herrings? I had not tasted one for twelve years, and my mouth quite filled with moisture as I thought of their sweetness. So I asked my host specially to add one as an accessory to my evening meal, and while this was being done I strolled round the little town.

Inverary is the Highland head-quarters of the Duke of Argyle (the MacCallum Mor). The castle is somewhat plain, if not ugly, but it stands in the midst of beautiful grounds. In time past it has been used as a prison, and, if some of the stories told me by an old fisherman are to be believed, its walls have witnessed horrible scenes of cruelty. The old man was not dull. I wished to acquire information as to local manners of salutation, so I asked—

“Ought I to say ‘Will you have a drink?’ or ‘Wull ye tak a dram?’”

He replied “Aye, thank ye; awl just tak a wee drap whusky; here’s the hoose,” pointing to the hotel.

I took my lesson bravely, and followed him in. That night he told me some fearful yarns about the castle and its occupants in the past. Only a desire to spare myself several possible libel actions prevents me reproducing them here. My Loch Fyne herring went down so

nicely that I asked that the dose might be repeated at breakfast.

Having cleared the board, I rode through the main street, with its lining of sign-boards showing that most of the little shops were kept by either a McCallum, a McDougal, a McIntosh, a McDonald, a McGregor, or some other Mac. Then followed a long run across ever-changing country—over hills covered with heather, through delightful glens, amid the deer forests, and by gentle murmuring “burns” on whose banks the wild mosses and ferns grew in wild profusion. At last I arrived in sight of Loch Awe. Here two routes offered themselves for my choice. I knew not which to take. Of course I ended up by taking the wrong one. This is a curious feature in my nature. I do not know if others have similar experiences, but whenever two courses do offer themselves for my selection I invariably get hold of the wrong one. One would think that the laws of chance would step in now and again and permit one to get hold of the right one. The road I selected went right round the head of Loch Awe—not along the edge of the Loch; for that I should not have minded; but away back from the water through uninteresting gullies and over rough roads. As I plodded on I saw on a hill higher than its fellows, making a prominent landmark amid my otherwise tame surroundings, a large stone monument upon which, on climbing up, I found inscribed:—

Duncan Ban Macintyre, the Glenorchy Poet, born 1724, died 1812.

Now the hardest part of my day's work was over, the highest point of my journey reached, and a sharp run down a welcome decline soon brought me to Dalmally. Continuing my journey after a short spell, I rode round the head of the loch, past the beautiful ruins of Kilchurn Castle, the fairylike falls of Cruachan, leaving Ben Cruachan on the right, and through the dark pass of Brouder, until I found myself at another sheet of water, which proved to be Loch Etive. Feeling hungry, I stopped at a cottage to ask if there was a hotel near, but a nasty little rough-coated terrier disputed my right of entry, and fastened upon my nether garments in quite an artistic fashion. Fortunately the good housewife, attracted by the noise, rushed out to my rescue; and, learning that I was not far from the village of Taynault, I hurried off. A good luncheon, in which fresh salmon played an important part, helped me to forget my canine friend's close regards for my person, and after a smoke I was soon again skimming along the Oban - road. The afternoon passed pleasantly until I reached Connel Ferry, where I dismounted to get a cup of tea. Unlucky halt! So far my ride had been made pleasant throughout by bright sunshine; but as I lingered over a cup of good tea, with a nice warm scone and butter, the clouds began to moisten the landscape with their tears. The dear old body who brought my refreshments told me that the rain would soon be over—'twas only a sunshine shower—but the longer I waited the worse things got, and in the end I had to do the remaining five miles amid a perfect down-pour of rain and against a dead head wind. I arrived in Oban, looking like a drowned rat.

arrived in Oban looking like a half-drowned rat and feeling as miserable as a bandicoot. Despite my new (guaranteed) waterproof cape, there was not a dry shred about me. And yet this was but the beginning of my troubles.

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Mr. C. Lee Williams, the Examiner for the Associated Board, who is to assist Professor Ives at our next University examinations, is now in Sydney conducting the tests for the English institutions. Mr. Williams has among his other musical studies made a speciality of campanology, and has had at home considerable experience in matters relating to bells. While in Sydney his attention was attracted by the F note of the Post-Office peal, which he declares to be out of tune. He has also suggested that the tone of the hour note would be improved if an extra second were allowed between each stroke.