

THE LOCHS AND BENS OF SCOTLAND.

AT a more genial season of the year, during the bewitching month of June, we made a journey through the far-famed Trossachs, by one of the coaches of the much-frequented route, entering upon it at Callander, a small village of Western Perthshire, near the point where the Lochs Lubnaig and Venachar unite to form the Teith. The trip, coach and steamer alternating, passes through many of the scenes commemorated in "The Lady of the Lake," and we were hardly more than entered upon it before a hollow to the south was pointed out, by our communicative driver, as Coilantogle ford, the point where Roderick Dhu challenged Fitz-James to single combat, after having granted him, his enemy, life and protection—

See, here all vantageless I stand,
Armed, like thyself, with single brand,
For this is Coilantogle Ford,
And thou must keep thee with thy sword.

Shortly beyond, we came in sight of Loch Venachar, and then followed Lanrich mead, the gathering ground of the Clan Alpine; the highland huts of Dunraggan; the opening of the deer forest of Glenfinlas; and the bridge renowned for the couplet—

And when the Brigg of Turk was won,
The headmost horseman rode alone.

Here we reach the gentle Loch Achray, and where, indeed,

Shall one find, in foreign land,
So lone a lake, so sweet a strand?

Its peaceful character still perfectly preserves and answers to the description of the poem—

There is no breeze upon the fern,
No ripple on the lake,
Upon her eyrie nods the erne,
The deer has sought the brake;
The small birds will not sing aloud,
The springing trout lies still,
So darkly glooms yon thunder cloud,
That swathes as with a purple shroud,
Benledi's distant hill.

Near Loch Acray, the road makes a sudden turn, disclosing the spur of the mountain which forms the entrance to the Trossachs proper, a wild scene of mountain, rock and wood, and near the entrance of the gorge, or defile, we are reminded of the spot where Fitz-James "lost his gallant gray."

King James V.'s ready participation in the popular amusements of archery, wrestling, hurling the bar, and other gymnastic exercises of the day, was one cause of his acquiring the title of "King of the Commons"—another, his attention to the interests of the lowest and most oppressed class of his subjects. For the purpose of seeing that justice was regularly administered, and frequently from a motive of gallantry, he used to travel in various disguises.

Until the present road was made through the romantic pass, there was no mode of issuing out of the defile called the Trossachs, except by a sort of ladder, composed of the branches and roots of the trees, which Fitz-James is represented as making use of.

And now, to issue from the glen,
No pathway meets the wanderer's ken,
Unless he climb, with footing nice,
A far projecting precipice.
The broom's tough roots his ladder made,
The hazel saplings lent their aid,