

T O U R S

TO THE

BRITISH MOUNTAINS,

WITH THE

DESCRIPTIVE POEMS

OF

LOWTHER, AND EMONT VALE.

By THOMAS WILKINSON.

**The Power that spread the seas, the heavens sublime,
Bade round our vales majestic mountains rise!
With interest high the fearful steeps we climb,
Whose tow'ring summits seem to reach the skies.**

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~~Renfrew, Dunglass, Dumbarton, Lord Glencairn's, Lord Semple's, Lord Erskine's, Lord Stonefield's, Campbell's Place, Smollett's Monument, Leven-Water, Loch-Lomond, Ben-Lomond, &c., with the beautiful windings of the Clyde. I talked a little with the old soldiers of the garrison, whose conversation, as usual, partook of the air of their profession: it was nevertheless manly, and often interesting.~~

Having become pretty familiar with the side of Scotland next England, I am now on the point of entering the part that is more remote. He who is about to change his life is full of glowing hopes and lively expectations: with feelings something similar to these I enter the Highlands of Scotland. I rode through Dumbarton (the key of the Highlands), a pretty, agreeable little town; and then proceeded on the banks of the Leven, a stream celebrated in verse. Many beautiful seats ornament its banks, and a tall plain monument to the memory of Smollett (perhaps forty feet high) is erected on the spot where he is said to have first drawn breath. Many of the family of Smollett still inhabit this neighbourhood.

Rode on to Loch Lomond. I was surprised that I should so soon arrive at the glory of the Highland lakes! What less can I denominate an expansion of water thirty miles long, and from one

to seven miles broad? Thirty islands rise above its surface, some of them large—the Duke of Montrose's and Sir James Colquhoun's two miles long: one of them, I was told, contains three hundred deer. On one of the islands was ripe corn: last week, in the shire of Ayr, we saw oats that had not arrived in the ear. Passed a female who was reaping alone: she sung in Erse as she bended over her sickle; the sweetest human voice I ever heard: her strains were tenderly melancholy, and felt delicious, long after they were heard no more.

Took a boat and sailed into the shire of Stirling: a great swell on Loch Lomond: four Highlanders attended me; they spoke better English than most I had heard in Scotland, yet conversed in Gaelic among themselves, and seemed deeply engaged: but this gave me no concern, for I had a confidence in them as if they had been my acquaintance. Landed, and, lest I should not be there again, went a little up the side of the gloomy and aspiring Ben Lomond. Re-crossed the lake, and found at the Boat-house a medical man, sociable and intelligent. We entered freely into conversation. He was waiting to cross the lake for Drymen; but we became so engaged in discourse, that he mounted his horse and rode twenty miles with me another way, for my permanent companion had not yet advanced

much beyond Glasgow. I derived agreeable information from the company of my new acquaintance, both as to persons and places. He gave me the names of the islands on Loch Lomond, on some of which are forts and castles : he also interested me with some anecdotes of Edmund Burke's visit to the Highlands : they fell in together at Luss ; our dignified senator was quite familiar, and talked as broad Scotch as any of them. In this day's excursion I was too much limited for time, having but eight hours to make my observations and ride above forty miles.

The second time I rode up the side of Loch Lomond it was a delightful day : the roads were excellent, and afforded peculiar variety, not only in the wonderful survey of Nature, but also among my own species. The nobility and gentry of Great Britain were rolling along in their carriages, or sailing from island to island : little boys would frequently run by our sides and hold converse with us a long way : 'tis the manner of the country. Many groups of the poor but happy Highlanders were sitting eating their humble messes by the road-side : troops of them were coming to the Low Countries against harvest : in one place was a number of that gentle race resting themselves by the way. These poor inhabitants of the northern mountains had brought their wives with them to

partake their labours; and though their naked limbs were exposed, yet their chaste and modest countenances gave an innocence to their appearance that would hardly have been known in the southern parts of the island.

At Luss, took a young Highlander up with me on an eminence; and there I saw one of the most interesting scenes I ever remember to have beheld. Twenty-one islands rising from the lake in a variety of forms, and beautifully shaded with trees. The points of the islands run past one another in the most picturesque manner. *Inchmarion*, two miles long: *Inchtavarnoch*, covered with oak and rising in three cones like Dunmorelet: *Inchevanacan*, a fir island: *Inchmone*, a peat island: *Inchcalig*; in this Island is an ancient burying-place, which is still used by the inhabitants of these romantic regions: *Inchfad*, a corn island: *Inchtonick* and *Inchgalbreath*, small islands, with old castles upon them. Near Luss is *Inchfrochland*, the prison of Luss, where delinquents in remote times were conveyed, and left, it is said, to shift for themselves as well as they could.

~~When I came opposite Ben Lomond, I took a boat and sailed over the lake, but could not meet with a guide: the day being fine, the people were engaged in their hay-harvest. From the shore we beheld, far up the mountain, something white, in~~