

THE BATTLE O' GLEN TILT.

SIR DOUGLAS MACLAGAN, Emeritus Professor of Medical Jurisprudence and Public Health in Edinburgh University, died on 5th April last. He was a keen mountaineer, and had made one notable contribution to mountaineering literature in a ballad, titled "The Battle o' Glen Tilt". This ballad celebrates the successful resistance of Dr. Balfour, the Professor of Botany at Edinburgh, to the attempt made by the late Duke of Atholl to exclude naturalists from Glen Tilt. It appears in "Nugæ Canoræ Medicæ"—a volume of poems composed by Sir Douglas MacLagan for the entertainment of a social medical club in Edinburgh. It is well worth reproducing:—

O' cam' ye here to hear a lilt,
Or ha'e a crack wi' me, man ;
Or was ye at the Glen o' Tilt,
An' did the shindy see, man ?
I saw the shindy sair an' tough,
The flytin' there was loud and rough ;
The Duke cam' o'er
Wi' gillies four,
To mak' a stour,
An' drive Balfour,
Frae 'yont the Hielan' hills, man.

The Sassenach chap they ca' Balfour,
Wi' ither five or sax, man,
Frae 'yont the braes o' Mar cam' o'er,
Wi' boxes on their backs, man.
Some thocht he was a chapman chiel,
Some thocht they cam' the deer to steal ;
But nae ane saw
Them, after a'
Do ocht ava'
Against the law,
Amang the Hielan' hills, man.

Some folk'll tak' a heap o' fash
 For unco little end, man ;
 An' meikle time an' meikle cash
 For nocht ava' they'll spend, man.
 Thae chaps had come a hunder' mile
 For what was hardly worth their while ;
 'Twas a' to poo
 Some gerse that grew
 On Ben Mac Dhu
 That ne'er a coo
 Would care to pit her mouth till.

The gerse was poo't, the boxes fill't,
 An' syne the hail clamjamphrie,
 Would tak' the road by Glen o' Tilt,
 Awa' to whar they cam' frae.
 The Duke at this put up his birse,
 He vowed, in English and in Erse,
 That Saxon fit
 Su'd never get
 A'e single bit
 Throughout his yet,
 Amang the Hielan' hills, man.

Balfour he had a mind as weel
 As ony Duke could hae, man,
 Quo' he, " There's ne'er a kilted chiel
 Shall drive us back this day, man.
 It's justice and it's public richt,
 We'll pass Glen Tilt afore the nicht,
 For Dukes shall we
 Care a'e bawbee ?
 The road's as free
 To you and me
 As to his Grace himself, man "

The Duke was at an unco loss
 To manage in a hurry,

Sae he sent roun' the fiery cross
To ca' the clan o' Murray.
His men cam' down frae glen an' hill—
Four gillies and a writer chiel—
 In kilts and hose,
 A' to oppose
 Their Saxon foes,
 An' gi'e them blows,
An' drive them frae the hills, man.

When Hielan' chiefs, in days o' yore,
 Ga'ed oot to fecht the foe, man,
The piper he ga'ed on afore,
 The line o' march to show, man ;
But noo they've ta'en anither plan—
They ha'e a pipe for ilka man :
 Nae chanter guid
 Blaws pibroch loud,
 But a' the crowd
 Noo blaw a cloud
Frae cutty pipes o' clay, man.

Balfour he wadna fled frae fire,
 Frae smoke he wadna flee, man ;
The Saxons had but a'e desire—
 It was the foe to see, man.
Quo' he to them, " My bonny men,
Tak' tent when ye gang down the glen—
 Keep calm an' douce,
 An' quiet as puss,
 For what's the use
 To mak' a fuss
Amang the Hielan' hills, men " ?

To keep them cool about the head
 The Sassenachs did atten', man ;
The Duke himsel' was cool indeed,
 But at his ither en', man ;

For win' and rain blew doon Glen Tilt,
 An' roun' his houghs an' through his kilt,
 Baith loud an' lang,
 An' cauld an' strang,
 Wi' mony a bang,
 It sougheed alang
 Among the Hielan' hills, man.

The Sassenachs they cam' doon to Blair,
 And marched as bauld as brass, man ;
 The glen was closed when they got there,
 And out they couldna pass, man ;
 The Duke he glower'd in through the yet,
 An' said that out they shouldna get ;
 'Twas trespass clear
 Their comin' here,
 For they wad fear
 Awa' his deer,
 Among the Hielan' hills, man.

Balfour he said it was absurd ;
 The Duke was in a rage, man ;
 He said he wadna hear a word,
 Although they spak' an age, man.
 The mair they fleeced, the mair they spoke,
 The mair the Duke blew out his smoke ;
 He said (guid luck !)
 Balfour nicht tak'
 An' carry back
 His Saxon pack
 Ayont the Hielan' hills, man.

The gangin' back was easier said
 Than it was dune, by far, man ;
 The nearest place to rest their head
 Was up ayont Braemar, man.
 'Twas best to seek Blair Athole Inn,
 For they were drookit to the skin :

Sae syne they a'
Lap o'er a wa',
An' ran awa',
Wi' a guffaw,
An' left the Hielan' hills, man.

An' sae the battle ended then,
Afore 'twas focht ava', man ;
An' noo some ither chaps hae gaen
An' ta'en the Duke to law, man.
Ochon ! your Grace, my bonny man,
An' ye had sense as ye hae lan'
Ye'd been this hour
Ayont the po'er
O' lawyers dour,
An' let Balfour
Gang through your Hielan' hills, man.

The incident thus happily hit off occurred in August, 1847. (See *C. C. J.*, I., 319.)