

**BEVERLEY  
BAXTER**

# Heading North ... to life in the glowing manner

IN THE HIGHLANDS.

**T**HE mountains look on Dornoch and Dornoch looks on the sea. From our hotel room we can also look on the golf course with its inviting, deceptive simplicity. But perhaps all this deserves a word of explanation.

We had no intention of visiting Scotland, but towards the end of the parliamentary session I mentioned the subject to my friend Sir David Robertson, who sits for Caithness and Sutherlandshire. From that moment all initiative passed from our hands.

Dornoch is the fairest jewel set in the diadem of Sutherlandshire, and to Dornoch we must go. Robertson is the irresistible force that does not recognise the immovable mass. My wife and I would motor from London according to his instructions and reach our destination at 6.50 p.m. on the third day.

## Lorry-trail

**T**HERE is a thrill in the words "the Great North Road," and as we drew clear of London we had visions of sweeping swiftly and gloriously toward our target.

But the first 70 miles taught us our mistake. The southern portion of that narrow winding cattle path we call a road is a reproach to England.

Lorries the size of houses rattle on their way and although the drivers courteously wave you on the only gain is to get behind another group of lorries.

I cannot give the answer to the problem but this much is certain—our roads are being savaged and spoiled by heavy traffic which ought to be carried on the railways.



**B**UT now let us put away our grumbings and admit that motoring across the Yorkshire moors, as we did on the second day, is to experience an exhilaration of the mind and the soul.

England is such a little country and yet can create a sense of vast loneliness.

The great, grim sloping hills with their misty haloes made us feel we had invaded nature's forbidden temple and that the storm gods might turn their fury upon us.

We reached Dornoch at 7 p.m., ten minutes late, but David Robertson forgave us.

He had arranged a golf match for the morning, a game of Canasta at night, a speech which I would make to his constituents in a schoolhouse, a visit to a sheep sale, some salmon fishing, a jaunt to the falls of something or other, and a trip to a hosiery factory.

## 'Hooching'

**T**HAT night there was a great dance at the hotel when the male Scots turned up in their gorgeousness of costume and leaped into the air with wild shouts.

"The origin of the reel," said the lord lieutenant of the county to me during an interval "is the stag trying to attract his mate. She is very demure and gives him no encouragement but watches him out of the corner of her eye.

"But the men do not jump as high as they used to and their 'hooching' should be much louder."

There are two castles here within a few miles of each other, both of them steeped in

antiquity yet strangely significant of the modern changing world.

Skibo Castle was purchased by Andrew Carnegie, who declared again and again that nothing compensated a boy for not being born poor.

Dunrobin Castle is owned by the Duke of Sutherland, who might with equal sincerity declare that nothing compensates a boy for not being born to wealth and great position.

Yet modern taxation makes it impossible for any new Carnegie to acquire such riches and at the same time renders it increasingly difficult for dukes to keep up their vast estates.

## My castle

**I**N this particular case we are seeing the last Duke of Sutherland, for on his death his estates will pass to his niece and the famous dukedom will come to an end.

*I have never wanted to live in a castle, but if it had to be I would choose Dunrobin above any place I have ever seen.*

*It is set on a hill with gardens sloping to the sea, and from the terrace one can gaze on the shores where the Armada was wrecked.*

*It would be the perfect setting for a pageant of Tristan, with the ship bearing Isolde and her lover to the reluctant wedding with King Mark.*

When we arrived for dinner, it was a little disconcerting to walk up a great stairway covered with snarling tigers in their skins, but after that nothing but graciousness and comfort. There is even a music room with a grand piano actually in tune—a rare thing in the British aristocracy.

But then the pretty duchess, like Desdemona, is an admirable musician.

## A good man

**C**ARNEGIE'S Skibo Castle was originally a monastery, and is set on a small lake, but now it is a solid expression of Victorian affluence. One feels that the great man organised its furniture and decorations with the same exactitude that he did everything else.

Outwardly the centuries have left their mark on the place, but inside it is of the era when the Little Queen's name gave a new adjective to our language.

Andrew Carnegie's daughter and her American husband are there on a visit. There were also the three little children of Carnegie's grand-daughter, Mrs. Gordon Thomson, who died so young and so tragically of polio.

There is a fine church in Dornoch; in fact, it is a cathedral of the Church of Scotland. The minister preached a good sermon on Sunday morning, and the hymns were admirably chosen.

But the minister's good works do not stop with church affairs. Two days later, on the golf course, he cured me of a slice that has persisted for years.

We were caught in a storm, and arrived at the clubhouse half drowned, but I would not ask for better company.

A good man and a merry one.

**M**Y instinct tells me that a new resurgence is stirring in Scotland. The motor-car is revealing to the English that there is no place in the world more beautiful than the Highlands.

The Edinburgh Festival, from an idealist's dream, has become a thing of splendid reality. One feels this new strength and new spirit.

As for Dornoch . . . It has become my *Brigadoon*. I shall come back.