TRAVELLERS' TALES OF SCOTLAND

BY

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PREFACE

In preparing the following sketches I have been much helped by the work of Professor Hume Brown, whose *Early Travellers in Scotland* and *Scotland Before 1700* contain the older narratives in an admirably edited and conveniently accessible form. The article on "Captain Burt" first appeared in *Chambers's Journal*, and I have to thank the editor of that magazine for kind permission to reprint it.

R. H. Coats.

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THE EARLY TRAVELLERS

SCOTSMEN have no reason to complain that they have ever lacked opportunities to "see themselves as ithers see them." From the earliest times their country has attracted a goodly stream of visitors from every land, who have fully recorded their impressions of its scenes, its customs, its inhabitants. These writers have included monarchs, poets, statesmen, soldiers, and philosophers. They have been men and women who have brought with them great powers of observation and wide experience, and who have seen all parts of Scotland at different times. It is proposed, in the following series of sketches, to give a brief, readable account of some of these travellers and their impressions. Their vivid personal narratives may present a clearer picture of some aspects of the past than many a more learned and pretentious history.

We begin with the travellers who visited Scotland during the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries. This period extends roughly from Bruce to the Reformation, from the Battle of Bannockburn to the Union of the Crowns, and includes the great

struggle for national independence. It was a time when the Scottish kings were busily occupied, not only in warding off the attacks of the English on the south and the Highlanders on the north, but also in asserting and maintaining their royal supremacy over the turbulent nobles and reivers within their own borders. Not till the reign of James IV. was this unquestioned supremacy assured. An age of such fighting within and fears without was naturally unfavourable to commerce and the arts of peace. Yet Scotland in those three centuries was by no means without the refinements of culture and civilization. James I. was an accomplished poet and musician; James IV. ruled over an influential and brilliant court. It was the age of Barbour, Henryson, Dunbar, and Sir David Lyndsay. Indeed, everything combined to make it picturesque in the extreme. The day of mediæval feudalism was not yet over, and men still fought gloriously in jousts and tournaments. On the other hand, the new world of Renaissance, Reformation, and a divided Church was already at the door. Politically, Scotland leaned more to France than it did to England, and it occupied a position of great importance on the chess-board of European diplomacy and intrigue.

The travellers who have left us their impressions of Scotland during this period include the famous French chronicler, JEAN FROISSART, who ambled

through Scotland on a pony, accompanied by a greyhound, in 1385; JOHN HARDYNG, poet and antiquary, who spent three years in Scotland in the fifteenth century, searching for documents that should establish the supremacy of England; ÆNEAS SYLVIUS, an Italian humanist, who was one day to become the Pope of Rome, and whose business took him to the court of King James I.; JAQUES DE LALAIN, a chivalrous knight from the train of Charles the Bold of Burgundy, who visited Scotland for the express purpose of breaking a lance in tournament with the redoubtable James Douglas in 1448; DON PEDRO DE AYALA, ambassador to the Scottish court from Ferdinand and Isabella in 1498, who would fain have arranged a marriage between King James IV. and a Spanish princess; PEDER SWAVE, a Dane, and envoy from Christian II. in 1535; FYNES MORYSON, a lawyer and Fellow of Peterhouse, together with some others. A more cosmopolitan company it would scarcely have been possible to bring together, and we are fortunate in having their candid opinions on what they saw and heard.

No one of these writers, it is to be noted, seems to have taken the slightest interest in Scottish scenery. They had come on the much more urgent errands of diplomacy, and chiefly with the design of spying out the resources of Scotland in the event of war. Thus Hardyng, the Englishman, makes it his business to

jot down carefully for his royal master "the distance and miles of the tounes in Scotland, and the waye to conveigh an armie as well by lande as by water into the chiefest partes thereof." Dumbarton Castle, it seems, somewhat daunted him, and he was of the opinion that it could not be brought into subjection except by famine.

> "Upon a rocke so hye the same dothe stande,
> That yf the walles were beaten to the rocke,
> Yet were it full harde to clymbe with foot or hand,
> And so to wynne, yf any to them approche,
> So strong it is to get without reproche;
> That without honger and cruell famyshemente,
> Yt cannot be taken to my judgemente."

Estienne Perlin, on the other hand, who was a French ecclesiastic of the time of Edward VI., visited Scotland for a purpose altogether different, though hardly more disinterested. His aim was to promote a rapprochement between France and Scotland, on the ground that these two nations were natural and hereditary allies. "How happy oughtest thou to esteem thyself, O kingdom of Scotland, to be favoured, fed, and maintained, like an infant, on the breast of the most puissant and magnanimous King of France, the greatest lord in the whole world, and future monarch of that round machine, for without him thou would'st have been laid in ashes, thy country wasted and ruined by the English, utterly accursed by God!" With respect to this alliance, some strange ideas of history seem

to have prevailed. Thus Henri, Duc de Rohan, a soldier of fortune and the personal friend of Elizabeth and King James, was of opinion that "the two nations, the French and the Scottish, had stood by each other since the treaty made between Scotland and Charlemagne—a period of eight hundred and seventy-two years—during which time it had ever held firm, never had been violated, and never been altered." On the subject of geography the ignorance was equally amazing. It should be remembered, of course, that maps are modern inventions, and that Mercator's *Atlas* was not given to the world till 1595. Yet it is scarcely credible that even in the sixteenth century intelligent men should have believed that Scotland was an island, larger than England, and that it lay not north and south but east and west, in the direction of Norway. Even Ayala, writing in 1498, could inform Ferdinand and Isabella, whose ambassador he was, that "Scotland was nearer Spain than London was," and that it was "surrounded by Brittany, France, Flanders, Germany, Norway, and Ireland."

But if the geography of those early writers was vague and tentative, they spoke without any uncertainty on the subject of the climate. "Scotland," says one traveller, "is cold and septentrional. The cold in those kingdoms would even split a stone." Another complains bitterly that in Berwick there should be such blustering and wintry storms,

whereas "two months before the pleasant spring had smiled on him in London." A third explains the ebb and flow of the ocean to account for the fact that the atmosphere of Scotland is "for the most part misty." And a fourth, lamenting his enforced exile far from the sunny fields of Italy, shivers through winter months in which "the day is not above four hours long."

And a poor climate necessarily means poor soil and a poor people. There were many ecclesiastics to be found in Scotland, it was true, who were richer than some nobles, but the houses of the commonality were covered with roofs of turf, and the door, in many cases, was an ox's hide. It was this which rendered Scotland so indifferent to invasion. "If the English do burn our houses," said one to Froissart, "what consequence is it to us? We can rebuild them cheap enough, for we only require three days to do so, provided we have five or six poles and boughs to cover them." Æneas Silvius has informed us that the peasantry of southern Scotland gathered round him with every token of astonishment when he produced a measure of wine and a piece of white bread. Scotland in the middle ages knew little or nothing of wheat, save as it was imported from England by the wealthier classes. But the common people were already partial to the use of oatcake. Froissart tells us that it was the mainstay of the soldiers in the campaign of 1385.

"Under the flaps of his saddle each man carries a broad plate of metal; behind the saddle a little bag of oatmeal. When they have eaten too much of the sodden flesh, and their stomach appears weak and empty, they place this plate over the fire, mix with water their oatmeal, and when the plate is heated, they put a little of the paste upon it and make a thin cake, like a cracknel or biscuit, which they eat to warm their stomachs. It is therefore no wonder that they perform a longer day's march than other soldiers."

Other travellers remarked not the poverty of the country but its fertility and wealth. Ayala devotes many pages to the glories of the reign of James IV., his large revenues and splendid equipage, his kingdom of fifteen earls, thirty-five great barons, two archbishops, sixty-three rich abbeys, and seventy sea-ports. It is true that he was constrained to remark the absence of olives, oranges, and figs in Scotland, but he found in it rich fields, innumerable flocks, and such vast quantities of fish as could easily supply the wants of England, France, Italy, and Flanders. An object of great interest to travellers was the coal of Scotland, which had been dug out of the Lothians as early as the thirteenth century. "In this country," writes Æneas Silvius, "I saw the poor, who, almost in a state of nakedness, begged at the church doors, depart with joy in their faces on receiving stones as alms. This stone, whether

by reason of sulphurous or some fatter matter which it contains, is burned instead of wood, of which the country is destitute."

Yes, in its own characteristic products, Scotland was rich enough. Only capital was lacking to encourage trade. In the words of Estienne Perlin, "nothing is scarce here but money." The chief exports, we learn, were hides, wool, herrings, coal, pearls, and *aqua vitae,* the imports being yarn, salt, iron, pitch, and wines. Of the drinking customs of the people in the sixteenth century we have a full account in the journal of Fynes Morison. "The Scots drinke pure wines, not with sugar as the English, yet at feasts they put comfits in the wine, after the French manner, but they have not our vinteners' fraud to mixe their wines. . . . When passengers goe to bed, their custome was to present them with a sleeping cappe of wine at parting. The country people and merchants used to drinke largely, the gentlemen somewhat more sparingly, yet the very courtiers, at feasts, by night meetings, and entertaining any stranger, used to drinke healths not without excesse, and (to speake the truth without offence) the excesse of drinking was then farre greater in generall among the Scots than the English." Whisky, of course, was a drink unknown to the lowland Scot of the Middle Ages, that being a beverage introduced, together with tea, in the eighteenth century.

The impression which our visitors formed of the Scottish people themselves was partly favourable and partly unfavourable. Ayala found them bold, hardy, agile, inured to war, the kind of men who did not seem to know what danger was. Froissart, on the other hand, could see nothing in the Scots but a boorish rudeness. "In Scotland you will never find a man of worth; they are like savages, who wish not to be acquainted with anyone, and are too envious of the good fortune of others, and suspicious of losing anything themselves, for their country is very poor." Froissart complains elsewhere that the Scots are extortionate, ill-intentioned, and difficult to be acquainted with, "asking, for what was worth only ten florins, sixty or a hundred." The truth is that the peasantry of Scotland showed a rougher spirit of independence than the French knights were accustomed to at home, and when they saw their lordly visitors trampling disdainfully over their sparsely planted corn, they naturally demanded an indemnity, and refused to let the French admiral leave the country till the sum was fully paid. Æneas Silvius was chiefly impressed with the rude manners of the people. They stared at him "as in Italy people stare at an Ethiopian or an Indian." Ayala, on the other hand, thought the Scottish people most cordial and affable to strangers. "They like foreigners so much that they dispute with one another who shall have

and treat a foreigner in his house." A papal legate who visited Scotland in 1543 was so pleased with his reception that "wherever he went afterwards, he spoke of the magnificent civilities of the Scottish nation." One writer thought that Scotsmen were "vain and ostentatious by nature and envious to excess. They spend all they have to keep up appearances. They are as well dressed as it is possible to be in such a country as that in which they live." Several speak of their warlike pride and hatred of the English, a people whom they boasted of having "always repulsed," while even thus early it was noted that they made good philosophers. The women were considered to be fair and comely, but inclined to wantonness, "giving their kisses more readily than Italian women their hands." Ayala admired the Scottish fair sex enthusiastically, and surely, being a Spaniard, he was one who ought to know. "The women are courteous in the extreme. I mention this because they are really honest though very bold. They are absolute mistresses of their houses, and even of their husbands, in all things concerning the administration of their property, income as well as expenditure. They are very graceful and handsome women. They dress much better than the English, especially as regards their head-dress, which is, I think, the handsomest in the world."

We read such descriptive notes with the more

interest because it was during those three eventful centuries that the Scottish national character was chiefly formed. The poverty of the country, the rigour of its climate, its scanty uncertain harvests, its dark and troubled history of internecine feuds and incessant wars, all combined to instil into the people a spirit of sturdy independence and intense pride of race. The same influences fostered their religious susceptibilities and prepared the way for the somewhat gloomy fanaticism of the Reformation, as well as for the nation's subsequent intellectual and industrial development. But the beginnings of all these things were in the far-off centuries of the Middle Ages, the years of protracted struggle against the severities of nature and the threat of an invading foe, when curious and languid visitors from France and Italy and Spain could be not a little amazed at a Scotman's dourness, his grit, his stubborn pride.

II

HECTOR BOECE

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(1527)

WHEN the fifteenth century was drawing to a close, a young Scotsman of about thirty-five, named Hector Boece, returned to his native country from the University of Paris. He had already spent thirteen years in the French capital, during which time he had made the acquaintance of Erasmus, and eminently distinguished himself both as a student and as a professor. Now, in the year 1498, his services were solicited by Bishop Elphinstone, who was anxiously occupied in establishing King's College, Aberdeen, on the model of the seminaries of Paris and Bologne. The Pope's blessing on the scheme had been freely granted; King James IV. had promised his hearty co-operation in promoting it; and the good Bishop himself had already collected substantial revenues for his favourite project, which enabled him to offer Boece a yearly emolument of forty merks. The sum does not seem princely to us in its modern equivalent of £26 13s. 4d. sterling, but in those days it could

support learning, and it sufficed to attract a Scotsman to his own country. Elphinstone had provided for the future not only by collecting monies for his college. What interested the young scholar from Paris as much, or perhaps more, he had gathered together a unique store of MSS. and other materials of Scottish history, and Boece resolved to devote his life to their editing and elucidation. Hitherto the glories of Scotland's past had lain buried in chronicles like those of Wyntoun and Fordun, which were but little known. John Major, indeed, Boece's own countryman and fellow student in the old Paris days, was the first to write a connected history of Scotland, in a work which he published in 1521. But his style of composition was curt and pragmatical. He adopted a critical and detached attitude of aloofness towards his subject, and entered upon his task determined "not to credit the common Scot in his vituperation of the Englishman, nor yet the common Englishman in his vituperation of the Scot. It is the part of the sensible man," he wrote, "to use his own eyes, to put far from him at once all inordinate love of his own countrymen and hatred of his enemies, and thereafter to pass judgment, well weighed, in equal scales." To Boece all this seemed a woeful lack of patriotism and proper pride. John Major, in his eyes, was not glowing and oratorical enough. He did not swell and soar, as he should do, in relating the glories and sufferings

of his country. Nor was his narrative sufficiently embellished with liveliness and fancy. A corrective, therefore, was sorely needed, and in 1527, fourteen years after the disaster of Flodden Field, Boece published in Latin his own *History of Scotland*, a glorification of his country which quickly won its way into popular favour, and was soon afterwards translated into the Scots language by John Bellenden, the Archdeacon of Moray, at the command of James V.

To whet the appetite of his readers, and to prepare the ground for good things to come, Boece prefaced his history with a general description of Scotland, which must ever be a delight to all lovers of the marvellous. Let it be remembered that Scotland in those days was much reported of, but little known. Thrust out, as it was, into the dim romantic mists of northern seas, it was a country amid whose wealth of shaggy woods, and beetling crags, and eerie whirlpools, anything or everything might happen which the tales of popular imagination could suggest. Boece thirsted to gratify this widespread spirit of credulity, and indeed he largely shared it. Nothing was too wonderful or too grand to take place in Scotland, and all that reached his ears must be faithfully recorded, provided it held up his country to the envy and admiration of mankind. The consequence is that the reader of the history is made to pass gasping from one strange portent to

another. He is told of a mysterious rock in the neighbourhood of Ern, small in size yet baffling in its nature, which no force nor engine could move out of its place, no, not though a hundred men were to bend themselves to dislodge it; and of another in Kyle, the "Deif Stane," as it was called, possessing the weird characteristic that a man standing on one side of it was unable to hear even the loudest cannon shot fired upon the other. In Argyle there is "ane stane of sic nature that it kindlis cauld stra or hardis[1] in fire, quhen it is involvit thairwith;" and at the Bass Rock there is another, full of eyes and holes like to a sponge, of such virtue that all salt water washed therewith "becumis incontinent fresche and delicious to the mouth." The most favoured region, however, in respect of wonders, is Loch Lomond, in which we read "there are xxx Ilis, weil biggit with kirkis, templis, and housis; and in this loch ar thre notable thingis, fische swomand but[2] ony fin, ane richt dangerous and stormy wal[3] but ony wind, and ane Ile that fletis[4] heir and thair as the wind servis."

Nor do the animals of those parts come in any way behind its natural features in point of strangeness. Rats introduced into Buchan straightway languish and die, owing to the nature of the soil. No beast that is venomous to man can possibly survive in Orkney, any more than in Ireland. The

[1] Rags. [2] Without. [3] Wave. [4] Floats.

sheep of Garioch are saffron in colour, and have teeth like gold. Foxes in Scotland, it seems, will never invade a henroost where the fowls have previously been fed on morsels of fox flesh, since these animals refuse to touch anything that tastes of their own kind. Penetrate the depths of the Caledonian Forest and you will come upon white bulls with crisp and curly manes like fierce lions, creatures so disdainful of man that they will not only gore him if he approaches, but will even refuse to eat fodder that men have touched, and, if caught by any craft, they pine away and die in insufferable dolour. Sail the distant seas to far-famed Orkney, and possibly you may be so fortunate as to see the extraordinary fish which fastens itself by the teeth to a crag above water, then falls asleep. "Als sone as the marineris findis hir on sleip, thay cum with ane strong cabill [5] in ane boit, and, eftir that thay have borit ane gret hole throw hir tale, thay fesne hir to the samin. Als sone as this fische is awalknit, scho makis hir to leip with gret force in the see, and fra scho find hirself fast, scho writhis hir out of hir awin skin and deis." No less interesting are those sagacious creatures, the pearl-producing oysters of the river Dee. "This mussilis, airlie in the morning, quhen the sky is cleir and temperat, opnis thair mouthis a litill above the watter, and maist gredelie swellis [6] the dew of the hevin; and,

[5] Cable. [6] Swallows.

eftir the mesure and quantite of the dew that thay swellie, thay consave and bredis the perle. Thir mussillis ar sa doyn gleg [7] of twiche [8] and hering, that, howbeit the voce be nevir sa small that is made on the bank beside thaim, or the stane be nevir sa small that is cassin [9] in the watter, thay douk haistelie at anis, and gangis to the ground, knawing weill in quhat estimatioun and price the frute of thair wambe is to al peple."

Scotland's principal marvel in those days, however, was undoubtedly the far-famed barnacle that produced geese. This was a small mussel that attached itself to pieces of old timber tossed up by the sea. Being opened, it revealed in perfect miniature the claws, bill, wings, tail, and feathers of a tiny goose in embryo. As the animal grew, it fell from the trunk of the tree to which it had hitherto clung by means of its beak, and either was drowned in the sea, or flew about safely on dry land. Boece is most careful to give us a detailed and circumstantial account of this amazing phenomenon, and he brings forward the unimpeachable testimony of a clerical eye-witness to corroborate his statements. "The geis generit of the see ar namit Clakis, and becaus the nature and procreatioun of this clakis is strange, we have maid na litill laboure and diligence to serche the treuth and verite thairof. We have salit throw the seis quhare thir clakis ar

[7] Excessively quick. [8] Touch. [9] Cast.

bred, and findis, be gret experience, that the nature of the seis is mair relevant caus of thair procreatioun than ony uther thing. Treis cassin in thir seis be process of time apperis first worme-etin, and in the small boris and hollis thairof growis small wormis; first, thay schaw thair heid and feit, and last of all thay schaw thair plumis and wingis; finaly, quhen thay ar cumin to the just measure and quantite of geis, thay flie in the aire as othir fowlis dois, as was notably provin, in the yeir of God M.CCCC.XC, in sicht of mony pepill, beside the castle of Petslego. . . . Maister Alexander Galloway, Parson of Kinkell, was with us in thir Ilis, gevand his mind, with maist ernist besines, to serche the verite of thir obscure and misty dowtis; and, be adventure, liftet up ane see tangle, hingand full of mussil schellis, fra the rute to the branchis. Sone eftir he opnit ane of thir mussil schellis, bot than he was mair astonist than afore, for he saw na fische in it, bot ane perfit schapin fowle, small and gret an effering [10] to the quantite of the schell. This Clerk, knawin us richt desirus of sic uncouth [11] thingis, came hastely with the said tangle, and opnit to us, with all circumstance afore rehersit."

Professor Max Müller has investigated the history of this extraordinary fable, and finds that it was widely believed by the most learned men in Europe for more than five hundred years, traces of

[10] Proportioned. [11] Strange.

it being discoverable as early as the twelfth century and as late as the *Philosophical Transactions* of 1677.[12] Linnæus himself calls the barnacle in question *Anatifera*, and the goose *Bernicla*, and the Lateran Council of 1215 gravely discussed whether this puzzling creature was a bird or a fish, and might be eaten in Lent. Professor Max Müller's own conjecture is that the origin of the legend is philological. The curious little cirriped, with its fringe of feather-like antennae, is a barnacle without question. The goose referred to is probably an Irish bird, and may originally have been called *Hibernaca*, or *Hibernacula*. The very natural dropping of the aspirate, as in the word vernal, would account for the confusion. Be that as it may, the general belief in "Clakis" languished as knowledge and education spread northwards, and it retired, like the early Britons themselves, to the remotest fastnesses and islands. Æneas Silvius made diligent search for the marvellous birds, during his visit to Scotland early in the fifteenth century. "But when I made enquiries concerning this story, I learned that the miracle was always referred to some place further off, and that this famous tree was to be found not in Scotland but in the Orkney Islands."

When Boece is willing to descend from these imaginative heights to the more sober level of

[12] See *Lectures on the Science of Language* (1871), Vol. II., pp. 583-604.

ordinary fact, he can give us a narrative that is full of interest. Scotland, he maintains, was in his time rich in all kinds of cereals and minerals, and known all over Europe for its inexhaustible supplies of fish. John Major, too, had noted this fact, and piously commented upon it. "Whose ordination, if not that of Divine Wisdom, was this, that the northern people, far from the sun, should be blessed with deep waters, and in consequence with rivers that abound more in fish?" In one passage Boece depicts, with glowing patriotic pride, argosies of fleets sailing from all Europe, and even from the far Mediterranean, to relieve Scotland of its superfluities of fish in time of Lent. The only things lacking to the country are oil and native wines, for which, indeed, Boece is on the whole rather thankful, as he fears what might be the effect of too many and rich vineyards on the character of the people. "Thairfore the provident Beginnar of the warld has nocht without gret resoun maid thair regioun nakit and bair of winis; knawing, be His eterne wisdome, that winis, howbeit the samin ar richt necessar to all uther people, ar richt skaithfull [13] to the nature of Albianis; for thay ar gevin to sic unnatural voracite and desire of uncouth metis and drinkis, that thay can nocht refrene thaimself fra immoderat excesse, as apperis weill be experience." A similar spirit of reverence for

[13] Harmful.

the inscrutable decrees of Providence appears in Boece's remarks on the mysterious disappearance of the herring from the coast of Inverness, because of some slight done there to a holy saint. "Treuth is, quhen ony avaricius and unhappy man fechtis for the fische that God sendis, be his infinit gudnes, to the sustentatioun of the peple, and diffoulis the see of thair blude, mony yeris efter na fische swomis in that place."

A curious feature of the book is Boece's praise of antiquity and his lament over the degeneracy of contemporary Scotland. Boece is an inveterate *laudator temporis acti*. In the olden time Scotsmen were "maist hardy at jeopardyis, richt agill and deliver [14] of bodyis, richt ingenius to every new inventioun, maist sichty [15] in craft of chevalrie, and kepit thair faith and promes with maist severite and constance." The men were primitive in peace, and untamed in war. The women nursed their own children, fought desperately in battle beside their own husbands, and were prepared even to slay them if they proved cowards. Young and old disdained luxury, thought it a base thing to die in bed, and slept in the open on bare straw without a cover. They lived on oatmeal bread, prepared "on the samin maner as the Romans did, specialy Antonius Caracallus, Empriour." No meals were taken but at night and morning. "Trew, at the sowper thay

[14] Nimble. [15] Skilful.

war mair large, howbeit thay had bot ane cours." The flesh they ate was seized as prey from their enemies, and eaten half raw, "for the saup[16] is maist nurisand[17] in that maner." But alas! in these degenerate times, says Boece, everything is changed. Double courses and extra meals are the order of the day. Wines are fetched from France, Spain, Italy, and even Greece, and all Africa and Asia searched for new delicacies. The old people have become gluttonous and avaricious, and the young are given over to lust and insolence. It is interesting to note that the feeling of alarm because of the decay of manners was very widespread during this period. In the reigns of James III. and even James II., Acts of Parliament were passed to check the rising luxury. These sought to suppress mystery plays, which were rapidly becoming a cause of moral scandal, to restrain all but persons of consequence from wearing rich silks or costly furs, and to revive the interest in archery by imposing heavy fines on golf and football. It is not difficult to discern in these legislative enactments the first early mutterings and preludings of the storm that was soon to sweep over the country in the Protestant Reformation.

Boece did not hesitate to attribute the corruption of his time to the baneful influence of England, which began in the days of Malcolm Canmore and

[16] Soup. [17] Nourishing.

seemed, to the great grief of our historian, to be steadily increasing. "By frequent and daily cumpany of the Inglishmen we began to rute[18] thair langage and superflew maneris in oure breistis, throw quhilk the virtew and temperance of maneris of our eldaris began to be of litel estimatioun amang us. Than we war gevin, eftir the arrogance and pride of Inglishmen, to vane glore and ambitioun of honouris, and began that time to seke new namis of nobilite; howbeit afore thay dayis he was maist nobil that was decorit mair with virtew than riches, confiding mair in his awin dedis than in ony dedis of his eldaris."

Into one favoured district, at least, this mischievous southern influence had not yet penetrated, and that was the part of Scotland furthest removed from England, the happy, blissful isles of far-off Shetland. Boece gives us an idyllic picture of the contentment of the inhabitants of those regions, which reads like a description of the Golden Age. "Thocht the peple of thir Isles be pure,[19] yet thay leif langer and ar better content of thair livis than thay that hes mair welth and riches of the warld. Na contentioun is amang thaim for singulare[20] proffit. Thir peple ar nakit of all ambitioun and vice, and ar nevir trublit with uncouth weris.[21] Amang all pleseris quhilkis ar josit[22] be mankind, thay think

[18] Root. [19] Poor. [20] Individual.
[21] Foreign wars. [22] Enjoyed.

na thing sa gud as to leif in concord and peace, havand ane quiet life but ony uthir displesir. This perfectioun of life cumis to thaim onlie throw thair simplicite, and followis, be the samin, the futsteppes of Christ. Besides, thay have guid helth of body quhilk may be preferrit to all riches, as weill knawis thir men that hes experience of lang infirmiteis."

In the year of the publication of his history, Boece received a royal pension of £50 Scots. He was also honoured with a doctor's degree from his university, and the equivalent in value of a tun of wine. His remaining days were spent in studious leisure, and in imparting to Aberdeen University a reputation for sound learning, which it has ever since retained. Dr. Samuel Johnson had a kindly liking for Boece, and he has summed up his merits and defects for us in words which may fittingly form our conclusion of the whole subject. "Boece's history is written with eloquence and vigour, but his fabulousness and credulity are justly blamed. . . . Learning was then rising on the world, but eyes so long accustomed to the darkness were too much dazzled with its light to see anything distinctly. The first race of scholars in the sixteenth century, and for some time afterwards, were for the most part learning to speak rather than to think, and were therefore more studious of elegance than of truth."

III

BEN JONSON

III

BEN JONSON

(1618)

THE best known literary man in London during the opening years of the seventeenth century was probably Ben Jonson. He was admired and liked by King James and the members of his court. He was the friend of Camden, Donne, Bacon, Chapman, Beaumont, Fletcher, and all the most remarkable men of his time, for, as Lord Clarendon has testified concerning him, "his conversation was very good and with men of most note." The Earl of Pembroke loved him, and gave him £20 a year to buy books. To the general public, Jonson was known as the author of a number of masques and plays abounding in true poetry and lusty humour. But it was in the literary haunts and taverns of the city, "The Dog," "The Sun," "The Mermaid," "The Triple Tun," that his burly, jovial figure was most welcome and familiar. Here Jonson reigned supreme, the best talker, the wittiest jester, the most penetrating critic, and the heartiest drinker of any and every company that could be got together.

His most formidable rival in those scenes of revelry would be Shakespeare himself. Old Fuller has informed us that "many were the wit combats between him and Ben Jonson, which two I beheld like a Spanish great galleon and an English man of war. Master Jonson, like the former, was built far higher in learning, solid but slow in his performances. Shakespeare, with the English man of war, lesser in bulk but lighter in sailing, could turn with all tides, tack about, and take advantage of all winds by the quickness of his wit and invention." But such contests always were good humoured and remote from jealousy. Jonson could truly say of Shakespeare, "I loved the man, and honour his memory, on this side idolatry, as much as any," and in the lines he prefixed to the First Folio edition of the plays in 1623 he could speak of his great contemporary as "Soul of the age! the applause, delight, the wonder of our stage!" Jonson, if not the greatest poet of his time, was freely acknowledged to be its foremost literary oracle. His vast stores of erudition and his retentive memory enabled him to speak on all literary subjects as one having authority, and his masterful, quarrelsome, and dogmatic temper secured for his pronouncements on those topics a respectful and attentive hearing. In everything he said or did there was a strain of rough manliness. As he himself has told us, "of all styles he loved most to be named Honest, and

hath of that ane hundred letters so naming him." Yes, Jonson was "Big Ben," and big every way. He was large in body and massive in mind, a man well meriting that pithiest of epitaphs which has been inscribed upon his tombstone in Westminster Abbey, "O rare Ben Jonson."

We can well imagine, therefore, how startled London must have been when, in the year 1618, it was announced that Sir Oracle had taken it into his head to visit Scotland. Jonson was forty-five at the time, and it must have seemed a proposal of unexampled folly that he of all men should move his huge bulk and set out to *walk*, not the mere length of Fleet Street, or from the "Mermaid" tavern to the "Triple Tun," but from London to Edinburgh, a distance of 400 miles. Indeed, in all literary history there is no parallel to so unexpected and so strange a journey save that other, undertaken 150 years later, by his distinguished namesake, a lounger, a Londoner, and a Latinist like himself. But Jonson had reasons of his own, no doubt, for making this extraordinary expedition. A Scottish king had recently ascended the throne of England, and had brought with him a crowd of his own nobles to the English court, so that a lively curiosity was prevalent throughout the country about Scotland, the Scots, and everything Scottish. Shakespeare had taken advantage of this interest to produce, certainly not later than 1610, a tragedy on the

subject of James's great ancestor, Macbeth. James himself, "having had these many years a great and natural longing to see our native soyle, and the place of our birth and breeding," had visited his ancestral home in 1617, and on his return he may have urged Jonson to do the same. For Jonson too, let it be remembered, boasted the distinction of having Scottish blood in his veins. The Johnstons of Annandale were his immediate forbears, and he may have been anxious to see for himself "the rock whence he was hewn and the hole of the pit whence he was digged." But apart from all this, what need a swashbuckler look for nice reasons to warrant an adventure? Enough if it provide him an opportunity to revel in new sensations, and write a book about them afterwards, or perhaps win a wager over some boon companions.

Jonson was not permitted to leave London without being made the butt of his friends' merriment. Bacon remarked drily on his departure that "he liked not to see poesy go on any other feet than poetical *dactylus* and *spondæus*," and a fortnight after he left London, another poet, one Taylor, a whimsical Thames ferryman, set out to do the same journey without a penny in his pocket. Taylor averred loudly, "on the faith of a Christian," that his "shallow brained critics" were entirely misled in supposing that he had undertaken the tour "either in malice or mockage of Master Benjamin

Jonson." But Jonson, who good humouredly gave Taylor a piece of gold at Leith "to drink his health with when he returned to England," could not get rid of the suspicion that the fellow had followed him "to scorn him."

What route Jonson mapped out for himself and what scenes impressed him on his journey we do not know. An account of the manners and customs of rural England and Scotland in those days by such a man as Jonson would now be priceless. All we are told of his travels is that he bought a new pair of shoes when he arrived at Darlington, and that he intended those shoes to serve him till he should reach Darlington again. Whether he even visited the burial grounds of Annandale or no we cannot tell. We do know that he saw Loch Lomond and stayed much in Edinburgh, becoming very friendly with "the beloved Fentons, the Nisbets, the Scotts, the Livingstones," during his six months' sojourn in the north. But his time was mainly spent with a brother poet, William Drummond of Hawthornden. Jonson had probably heard of Drummond from their mutual acquaintance, Sir William Alexander, who came from Scotland with King James to be gentleman-usher to the young Prince Charles, and he would be interested to verify the rumour that a poet had been found in Scotland who could write English. After a few meetings in Edinburgh, probably, Drummond invited Jonson to spend the

Christmas season in his country home. Jonson accepted, and tradition says that when the two poets came together, they were in such excellent spirits and so pleased with one another that they must needs burgeon into rhyme, the host exclaiming, "Welcome, welcome, royal Ben!" and the guest as heartily replying "Thank ye, thank ye, Hawthornden!"

What happened during the cosy evenings that followed, when the frost was shut out, and the fire piled high, and the tankard was well filled and filled again, is not entirely a matter of conjecture. Doubtless some things must be imagined. We can fancy Drummond himself, for instance, then a young poet of thirty-three, modestly reciting a specimen of his recent verse, and Jonson perhaps capping it with "Drink to me only with thine eyes," or declaiming, as we know he did, Sir Henry Wotton's fine poem, "The Character of a Happy Life." Or we can picture them discoursing of London, and all the great men and women of the day, till the wine and talk were done, and it was time to light a taper and go to bed. But we are not left wholly to guesswork in those matters, for, by a happy inspiration, Drummond was led to jot down his recollections of Jonson's conversations, a copy of which has fortunately survived. There is very much that we miss in those reported talks. Not a

word about Scotland or the impressions he had formed of it. Nothing at all about Shakespeare except that he "wanted art," and that a careless, absurd blunder occurs in *The Winter's Tale*. Had but those two talked to posterity instead of to one another, what might we not know about the life, the character, the opinions of him who is now the greatest mystery of our literature!

But if Jonson talked little about Shakespeare, he talked much and to good purpose about other things. He told Drummond that Sir Philip Sidney had "a long face, spoiled by pimples," and that Queen Elizabeth "never saw herself after she became old in a true glass; they painted her, and sometimes would vermilion her nose." He also informed his host that that distinguished lady "had always about Christmas evens set dice that threw sixes or fives, and she knew not they were other, to make her win and esteem herself fortunate," besides retailing some other pieces of scandal concerning her of a more private nature. As the friends warmed to one another, they would descend to more personal matters, and Jonson would confide to Drummond how "he had consumed a whole night in lying looking to his great toe, about which he hath seen Tartars and Turks, Romans and Carthaginians fight in his imagination," and even that once, when he had taken charge of Sir Walter Raleigh's son during

a visit to France, the lad " was so knavishly inclined that he caused Ben to be drunken and dead drunk, so that he knew not where he was."

This reminiscence would be the signal for a fresh passing of the decanter, and the telling of stories would begin. Ben was a practised *raconteur*, and no fewer than a dozen of his favourite jests have been preserved in the Drummond MS. Here is one of them:—" One who wore side hair being asked of ane other who was bald, why he suffered his hair to grow so long, answered, It was to see if his hair would grow to seed, that he might sow of it on bald pates." Another is after this fashion:—" One who fired a tobacco pipe with a ballad, he the next day having a sore head, swore he had a great singing in his head, and that it was the ballad; a poet should detest a ballad maker." A third specimen is as follows:—" A cook who was of an evil life, when a minister told him he would go to hell, asked, What torment was there? Being answered Fire, Fire (said he) that is my playfellow." Such was the humour of the seventeenth century, somewhat flat, perhaps, and stale to us to-day, after the lapse of three hundred years, but sparkling enough, no doubt, when it was first decanted by a couple of merry and facetious poets as they sat together over their cup of wine.

Even such banquetings as these, however, must come to an end at last, and by January 25th Jonson

felt that it was time to go. His friends in London would be wondering what had become of him, and it was well that he should settle down to regular work again. Besides, if he were to delay much longer, his shoes might possibly not hold out so far as Darlington, and that would be a calamity indeed. So Jonson departed on his long return journey, and the darkness of unrecorded history envelopes him again till we come upon the following letter received some two months later by his friend Drummond. "Most loving and beloved Sir, Against which titles I should most knowingly offend if I made you not at length some account of myself, to come even with your friendship—I am arrived safely; with a most catholic welcome, and my reports not unacceptable to His Majesty. He professed, I thank God, some joy to see me, and is pleased to hear of the purpose of my book; to which I most earnestly solicit you for your promise of the Inscription at Pinkie, some things concerning the Loch of Lomond, touching the government of Edinburgh to urge Mr. James Scot, and what else you can procure for me with all speed. Especially I make it my request that you will enquire for me whether the students' method at St. Andrews be the same with that at Edinburgh, and so to assure me, or wherein they differ. Though these requests be full of trouble, I hope they shall neither burden nor weary such a friendship whose commands to me I will ever interpret a pleasure."

The information desired was duly sent, and a poem embodying Jonson's impressions of Scotland, "sung with all the adventures," seems to have been written. But alas! it perished with other valuable MSS. in the fire which destroyed Jonson's lodgings some time about the year 1623. We must, therefore, do without the *Loch Lomond Pastoral*, and content ourselves instead with *The Lady of the Lake*, while inwardly execrating the rage of the pitiless flames which have deprived us of so many priceless literary treasures.

IV

SIR WILLIAM BRERETON

IV

SIR WILLIAM BRERETON

(1635)

SCOTLAND was just entering upon its memorable struggle with Charles I., when a certain English knight, Sir William Brereton by name, rode through the lowland part of the country, accompanied by his servant, Will Baylye. Sir William was a landed gentleman from Cheshire, who had already represented his native county in Parliament, and was later to rise to the rank of General in the Parliamentary army. He was a man of strong Puritan leanings and "most considerable for a known aversion to the government of the Church," as Clarendon tells us. It is probable, therefore, that his journey northward in 1635 may have been prompted chiefly by an interest in the ecclesiastical situation in Scotland. Two years previously, Charles had been crowned King in Edinburgh, and he was now fully embarked on his mistaken policy of enforcing Episcopacy and flouting the nation's preference for Presbyterianism. Brereton could see plainly that a storm was brewing. The nobility of Scotland were incensed

by the efforts being made by the dignitaries of the Church to restore abbots and recover abbey lands, so that a third of the whole country might thereby come into possession of the party of the king, and his influence in Parliament be strengthened by forty-eight more votes. But while some of the Scottish clergy inclined to this way of thinking, Brereton found that "many also were mighty opposite and averse thereunto." At Ayr, the good people of the town complained bitterly of their minister because "he did so violently press the ceremonies, especially in kneeling at the communion, whereupon, upon Easter day last, so soon as he went to the communion table, the people all left the church and departed, and not one of them stayed, only the parson alone." Formerly, in Scotland, the sacrament had been administered by means of long narrow tables, at which the receivers sat, as in the Dutch and French churches. "But now," writes Brereton, "the ceremonies of the Church of England are much pressed, and conformity is much pressed, and the gesture of kneeling is also much pressed." It was just this "much pressing" which so galled, aggravated, and alarmed Scotland, and led two years later to a counter-pressure of some vehemence, for which the signal was the hurling of a wooden stool at the priest's head in St. Giles, when that pioneer attempted to introduce Laud's Liturgy.

As he rode from place to place, pondering those deep religious questions, Brereton had time to cast a glance on the country through which he passed, and he formed but a poor impression of it. Between Berwick and Dunbar was "the largest vastest moor he had ever seen," neither horse, sheep, beast, tree, nor fire being visible anywhere. Between Carrick and Galloway, too, on his return homewards, he traversed "exceeding much moorish barren land," and led his fainting horse up many a weary hill. At Wigtown he was shown what was reputed to be the fairest meadow in all Scotland, but it had no other effect upon him than to make him think yearningly of his own Broad Meadow at home, "an acre of which is worth two of this." Salmon, indeed, were plentiful in Scotland, and coal abounded, but the soul of the Englishman was grieved within him as he covered mile after mile of Scottish territory bare of all timber, and saw the poor exhausted fields amid which he rode but scantily manured with lime and seaweed.

Closely connected with this poverty was the passion for emigration which existed among the people. Brereton was informed that, within the two years previous to his visit, above ten thousand persons had gone to Ireland from the district between Inverness and Aberdeen alone. As many as three hundred had been shipped at a single tide. Few seemed to know exactly why they left the country. Some

thought their going was "a just judgment of God to spew them out of the land for their unthankfulness." Others blamed landlords and the rise in rents. Brereton's own opinion was that a culpable ignorance and neglect of agriculture was at the bottom of it, "so as that of the prophet David is made good in this their punishment: 'a fruitful land makes He barren, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein.'" Whatever might be the reason, of one thing the stout old Puritan was convinced, "*digitus Dei* was to be discerned in it."

But if Brereton was hardly satisfied with the country districts, he formed on the whole a good opinion of the towns of Scotland. The High Street of Edinburgh, with its graceful ascent and well-laid cobble stones, was "the most stately and graceful street he had ever seen in his life." "The channels are very conveniently contrived on both sides the streets, so as there is none in the middle; but it is the broadest, largest, and fairest pavement, and that entire, to go, ride, or drive upon." The glory and beauty of this thoroughfare, however, were somewhat marred by the absence of fair glass windows to the houses, and the strange custom which prevailed of covering the stonework with wooden boards, perforated with round holes to permit of a man's head being projected from them. Were these but removed, and the houses built uniformly of the same height, this would indeed be "the most com-

plete street in Christendom." At Glasgow, Brereton admired the gaily coloured cloaks of the university students, the Cathedral of St. Mungo, "which is the fairest and stateliest in Scotland," and the Tolbooth with its "closet lined with iron; walls, top, bottom, floor, and door, iron; wherein are kept the evidences and records of the city." No wonder the greatest precautions were resorted to, in case of fire, for Glasgow in those days, we learn, could boast the magnificent revenue of £1000 per annum! So great was the natural advantage of being situated on the Clyde. "This river," wrote Brereton, "is now navigable within six miles of the city; it ebbs and flows above the bridge, though now the water is so shallow, as you may ride under the horse belly."

What the English traveller could ill stomach, however, was the unsavouriness and filth of Scottish towns. His gorge rose within him to see so many open sinks and dirty dish clouts and pewter plates not scoured but simply dipped in sluttish greasy water. "The houses, halls, and kitchens have such a noisome taste, a savour, and that so strong as it doth offend you so soon as you come within their wall. . . . Yea, I never came to my own lodging in Edenborough, or went out, but I was constrained to hold my nose, or to use wormwood, or some such scented plant." Especially objectionable was the custom of tub-washing which he saw practised. "Their linen is as sluttishly and slothfully washed

by women's feet, who, after their linen is put into a great, broad, low tub of water, then (their clothes being tucked up above their knees) they step into the tub and tread it, and trample it with their feet (never vouchsafing a hand to nett[1] or wash it withal) until it be sufficiently cleansed in their apprehensions, and then it looks as nastily as ours doth when it is put unto and designed to the washing, as also it doth so strongly taste and smell of lant and other noisome savours, as that when I came to bed I was constrained to hold my nose and mouth together." Brereton was ready to acknowledge that one benefit at least was to be derived from this process. If it did not greatly improve the condition of the linen, it certainly had a marked effect upon the women's feet, to the neatness and handsomeness of which he bears ungrudging testimony.

In the matter of fashions, the women of the time wore garments which distinguished them as widows, wives, or maids, the last named going bare-headed, and the more elderly dames in good positon decking themselves forth in "satin straight-bodied gowns, short little cloaks with great capes, and a broad boun-grace[2] coming over their brows, and going out with a corner behind their heads." The Highlanders whom he saw in Edinburgh are thus described:— "Those who have doublets have a kind of loose flap garment hanging loose about their breech, their

[1] Clean. [2] Projecting bonnet.

knees bare; they inure themselves to cold, hardship, and will not diswont themselves; proper, personable, well-complectioned men, and able men; the very gentlemen in their blue caps and plaids."

Brereton was generally well pleased with the character of the people. In most places he found, to his surprise, that he could rely on "great entertainment and good lodging, a respective host and honest reckoning." Innkeepers did not at the beginning charge to excess, as the English did, but they kept more closely to the spoken word and would not budge from their original demand. The heart of the Puritan was gladdened at the discovery that "the greatest parts of the Scots are very honest and zealously religious. I observed few given to drink or swearing; but if any oath, the most ordinary oath was 'Upon my soul.'" The cause of so much virtue was not far to seek. Those were the days when ecclesiastical censures and deprivations were rigorously enforced, and the Calvinistic Church was making full use of its brief reign of terror. At the Greyfriars Church, in Edinburgh, Brereton saw three women sitting on the stool of repentance, undergoing penance for the sin of fornication, and exposed alike to the full gaze of the congregation and to the pointed rebukes and admonitions of the presiding minister. Adulterers had to make satisfaction to the Church by standing on the same stool, clad in a sheet of hair, every Lord's day for a period

of twelve months. Even to stay away from church was an offence likely to be visited with awful threatenings and judgments. "There are some officers made choice of to take notice of and apprehend all those that loiter in the streets upon the Lord's day, during service and sermon-time, these are punished by being committed to the Toll-bowth; and if any are found in any house tippling, or gaming, in church-time, they are committed to prison. Those also called to account that are met walking fromwards the church, and are detained in durance until they be brought before the bailiffs of the town, who punisheth them severely."

With so thoroughgoing an enforcement and application of his own most cherished principles, Brereton was no doubt delighted. There were times, however, when he himself found his strictness of loyalty to Puritanism rather severely tested, as once when the courtesies of hospitality were pressed upon him by the daughter of an archbishop! Fortunately or unfortunately, the girl was so winsome, and the quality of the entertainment so super-excellent, as to bear away all thought of religious scruples. "Here I visited the Archbishop of Glasgow's palace, . . . and going into the hall, which is a poor and mean place, the archbishop's daughter, an handsome and well-bred proper gentlewoman, entertained me with much civil respect, and would not suffer me to depart until I had drunk Scotch ale, which was the best I

had tasted in Scotland, and drunk only a draught of ale in this kingdom." Strangely enough, this was not to be the only occasion on which the worthy Puritan knight might have been found making himself at home in an archbishop's palace. At the conclusion of the war, he was rewarded for his services by the grant of some Church lands, and came into possession of the archiepiscopal residence at Croydon, where, if a scurrilous old pamphlet of 1663 is to be credited, he proved "a notable man at a thanksgiving dinner, having terribly long teeth and a prodigious stomach, to turn the archbishop's chapel at Croydon into a kitchen, also to swallow up that palace and lands at a morsel."

V

GEORGE FOX

V

GEORGE FOX

(1657)

IN the year 1657, an ardent English prophet and reformer set out from Westmoreland and turned his horse borderwards, intent on converting Scotland to a more enlightened and reasonable faith. It was a bold and hazardous enterprise for a young man of thirty-three to undertake, but the spirit of earnest missionary zeal which was later to drive George Fox headlong to Holland and the West Indies was already beginning to stir within his bosom, and it was only natural that he should feel that Scotland, which lay closest to hand, and which seemed to him shrouded in a pall of the grossest spiritual darkness, should first be visited by the preachers of the Gospel. Fox tells us that he had for some time felt drivings of the spirit to go to Scotland. It was his eager wish, he informed the Council of Edinburgh, "to visit the seed of God which had long lain in bondage under corruption" in that benighted land. Now, in the year mentioned, the way had been opened up. He had the good fortune to be accompanied in his

mission by one Robert Widders, "a thundering man against hypocrisy, deceit, and the rottenness of priests." So, with high hopes, the evangelist set forth.

It cannot be denied that Scotland in those days was in some need of illumination. Fox's *Journal* abounds in curious and interesting sidelights on the backward state of the country in the seventeenth century. On the very day on which he and his friends entered Edinburgh, "many thousands were gathered together, with abundance of priests among them, about burning a witch." When they came to the town of Johnstons, as Perth was then called, we read that they were fortunate enough to arrive there in the nick of time, "just as they were drawing up the bridges" for the night; and a certain Earl, who wished to see Fox, took care to advise him to make a point of coming early, as "there were three drawbridges to his house, and it would be nine o'clock before the third bridge was drawn." In theological matters a high Calvinism prevailed. It was but twenty years before that Scotland had set its seal to the Solemn League and Covenant. Everywhere the doctrines of John Knox were enthusiastically professed, and the Presbyterian form of discipline rigorously enforced.

One is not surprised, therefore, to find that Fox had no sooner set foot across the border than he was involved in a heated controversy on election and

reprobation. Scotsmen dearly love an argument, especially a theological argument, and in their strange visitor from England they found one who was as conversant with the Scriptures, and as eager a disputant, as they were themselves. It was all very well so long as the discussion was confined to Cain, Korah, and Balaam, and the Epistle of St. Jude. A man might be looked on as comparatively harmless who made it his humour persistently to maintain that "thou" and not "you" was the proper mode of speech in addressing individuals, and who openly boasted that he had kept on his hat in the presence of Oliver Cromwell. There would be some sympathy, too, with what he had to say in denouncing the sports and music and frivolities of the day. But when Fox began to maintain that "faith could be without sin," and that "every man had a light within him sufficient to lead him to salvation," Scotsmen had their doubts. And when the Englishman warmed still further to his subject, and went on to declare that the Scottish ministers themselves were no better than thieves and hirelings because they "made the gospel chargeable," and depended on preaching for their livelihood, these doubts rapidly resolved themselves into certainties that such teaching as this could no longer be tolerated on Scottish soil. A series of propositions was hurriedly drawn up by the indignant ministers; the Quaker doctrines were solemnly cursed, one by

one, in public worship; and all the people were invited to say Amen.

A curious light is thrown upon the manners of the time by an incident which Fox records of a certain pastor, who "continued preaching against the Friends, and against the light of Christ Jesus, calling it natural. At last one day in his preaching he cursed the light and fell down as dead in his pulpit. The people carried him out, laid him on a grave-stone, and poured strong waters into him, which fetched him to life again; and they carried him home, but he was mopish. After a while he stripped off his cloaths, put on a Scotch plaid, and went into the country amongst the dairy women. When he staid there about two weeks he came home, and went into the pulpit again. Whereupon the people expected some great manifestation or revelation from him; but, instead thereof, he began to tell them what entertainment he had met with; how one woman gave him skimmed milk, another buttermilk, and another good milk; so that the people were obliged to take him out of the pulpit again and carry him home. . . . By this people may see what came upon him that cursed the light, which light is the life in Christ, the Word."

Edinburgh endeavoured to deal with this troubler of Israel in a scrupulously orderly and legal fashion. On the 13th of October, 1657, Fox was summoned to Cromwell's Council, and asked what business it

was that had brought him to Scotland; and when no satisfactory answer was given, he was commanded to leave the country within a seven-night. In vain the prophet pleaded with his accusers that at least he might have as patient a hearing as Herod gave to John the Baptist, and even the heathen Pharaoh vouchsafed to Aaron and his friend Moses. These appeals to Scripture precedent only provoked a chorus of angry exclamations of "Withdraw, withdraw." But Fox was not the kind of man to consent to banishment. Like John Knox himself, he was one who never feared the face of man, and, some weeks after sentence was passed on him, he had the courage to return to Edinburgh and enter it in open day, "as it were against the cannon's mouth or the sword's point," fearlessly passing three sentries and a mainguard on the way.

The truth is that neither guard nor sentries took any notice of Fox, and the Council had ceased to trouble themselves about him. He had come to be regarded as an innocent enthusiast who might safely be permitted to go his own way in peace. Some degree of physical violence would occasionally be offered him. In one part of the *Journal* he records that "we went among the Highlanders, who were so devilish they had like to have spoiled us and our horses, for they ran at us with pitchforks." But for the most part the missionaries had the mortification to find that they were treated with an aloofness

and indifference which were far worse than opposition. In Glasgow "a meeting was appointed, but not one of the town came to it." When the travellers pushed northwards to awake the people of Stirling to a knowledge of the truth, "no meeting could be got amongst them in the town, they were so closed up in darkness." At Perth they fared no better. "Alexander Parker went and stood upon the market cross, with a Bible in his hand, and declared the truth amongst the soldiers and market people; but the Scots, being a dark, carnal people, gave little heed, nor hardly took notice what was said."

Scotland, it is clear, was not to be converted to the inner light. A few here and there did exhibit what Fox called a "tenderness" to the word preached. At one place he encountered a band of ruffianly looking robbers under a hedge, whom he so movingly exhorted that they vowed to turn over a new leaf and live honest. At another place "many were convinced, among whom was one called a lady, who afterwards went to warn Oliver Cromwell and Charles Fleetwood of the day of the Lord that was coming upon them." But on the whole it is to be feared that Fox turned his horse's head southwards and rode back to England a disappointed man. The seed he had brought with him was, no doubt, altogether a right seed, but alas! the soil in which he scattered it had proved sour and churlish. Only after many years could it be expected to yield much

fruit. "When first I set my horse's feet upon Scottish ground, I felt the seed of God to sparkle about me, like innumerable sparks of fire. Not but there is abundance of thick cloddy earth of hypocrisy and fulness atop, and a briery brambly nature, which is to be turned up with God's word, and ploughed up with his spiritual plough, before God's seed brings forth heavenly and spiritual fruit to his glory. But the husbandman is to wait in patience."

VI

DANIEL DEFOE

VI

DANIEL DEFOE

(1706-1708)

IN the autumn of 1706, Daniel Defoe was received in audience by Queen Anne, and humbly kissed her hand on being commissioned for secret services in Scotland. He was generally known at the time as an audacious politician and pamphleteer, who had rendered some journalistic service to King William, roundly abused his country in a humorously satirical poem, *The True-Born Englishman*, and suffered three days' pillory at Cornhill, and a year's imprisonment in Newgate, for infuriating the High Church Tories of the day in a tract called *The Shortest Way with Dissenters*. But Defoe had safely emerged from all these adventures and escapades, and was now in high favour, not only with the Queen, but also with Harley and Godolphin, her Ministers of State, who desired his services in promoting the long-projected union of Scotland and England into one United Kingdom.

It was certain that the preliminary negotiations would be delicate in the extreme. The Scots were

a sensitive and proud nation, mindful of Darien and the Massacre of Glencoe. The impression yet lingered in the north that the glory of Scotland had departed, and its wealth with it, when King James VI. exchanged Holyrood for London; and it was shrewdly suspected that the aim of the predominant partner in this proposed new alliance was to impoverish the country still more. At any rate the people were doggedly resolved that, whatever settlement might be arrived at in the thorny questions of law, commerce, taxes, and Church establishment, Scotsmen should come out gainers and not losers by the bargain.

For the task of grappling successfully with the problems here involved, no one could have been better fitted than Defoe. He possessed charming manners and an engaging personality. He was blessed, too, with a sense of humour and could keep his temper. As a dissenter, he could enter sympathetically into the point of view of Scottish Presbyterianism. He had also an expert acquaintance with the most intricate questions of excise, business, and finance. Above all, he had a marvellous facility for producing weighty and brightly written pamphlets which completely disarmed the prejudices of the most stubborn gainsayer, and no fewer than six of these appeared in rapid succession after his arrival in Edinburgh. Defoe does not appear to have been one of the commissioners actually appointed to

conduct the negotiations. His mission was to be constantly at hand with information and advice, and in every possible way to pour oil on the troubled waters. That the waters were troubled may be judged from the number of anti-union riots which broke out in Edinburgh and elsewhere during the crisis. Defoe himself was specially signalled out for attack in one of these encounters, and "his chamber window was insulted by the mob, and the window below him was broken by mistake." But, by the prudence of his friends, and also, Defoe does not hesitate to add, by the providence of God, he was enabled to escape.

With the instinct of a true tactitian, Defoe quickly discerned that it was not controversy that was required so much as a little judicious and not insincere flattery, if Scottish sentiment was to be conciliated, and a lasting settlement arrived at. With this object in view, he published, before the close of the year, a small folio volume, entitled *Caledonia: A Poem in Honour of Scotland and the Scots Nation. In Three Parts.* It is not difficult to detect, in the somewhat turgid rhetoric of this production, a pamphlet in disguise. The avowed aim of the writer was, as the preface stated, "to rescue Scotland from slander in opinion and reproach in the mouths of the partial world, and clear the way to that general character in which Scotland shall in time come behind no nation in Europe, in

which she differs only thus, *That they obtain a glory they cannot merit, and Scotland merits a glory she has not obtained.*" The poem is a glowing panegyric on the climatic and other natural advantages of Scotland, with a reminder that these have never been adequately improved, and a hint that they will never be developed as they ought to be, until the Union with England has been accomplished. A few lines will serve to show the character of the poem:—

"*Britain's Left Hand*, which when she shall unite,
As Nature dictates, and the Fates invite,
And joyn *her younger Sister* on the right;
How shall they Mutual Wealth and Strength convey,
And with Contempt *the weaker World* survey!
TILL THAT BLEST HOUR, how does her *Injur'd Name*
Sleep in the Rubbish of her Ancient Fame?

. . . . . .

Nature, that well foreknows a Nation's Fate,
Thus fitted *Caledonia* to be great.
Her *various aspects* the Design explain,
And *circumstances* shall resist in vain.
Subject no more to every cross Event,
She shall *be Great* and *Rich*, as Nature meant.

. . . . . .

Wake, *Scotland*, from thy long *Lethargick* Dream;
Seem what *thou art*, and be what thou *shalt seem*;
To *Land Improvement*, and to *Trade* apply,
They'll *plentifully* pay thine *Industry*.
The *Barren Muirs* shall weighty Sheaves bestow,
Th' *Uncultivated Vales*, rich *Pastures* show,
The Mountains *Flocks and Herds, instead* of snow."

Defoe remained in Scotland till his labours had been crowned with complete success, and he had written, in his *History of the Union,* an exhaustive and valuable account of the proceedings in which he had played so conspicuous a part. But by January, 1708, the political exigences of the hour and the claims of literary work, as well as, let it be added, the urgent clamour of his creditors, obliged him to hasten back to London. In 1727, he published a fuller account of Scotland in the third volume of his *Tour through Great Britain,* and returned *con amore* to his favourite theme of the advantages that would accrue to a too long impoverished country if it would follow the example of its wealthy neighbour, now an acknowledged partner, and busily engage in trade and commerce. It seemed incredible to Defoe that the natural advantages of Kirkcudbright, for example, should be so woefully neglected. "Here is a harbour without ships, a port without trade, a fishery without nets, a people without business; and that which is worse than all, they do not seem to desire business, much less do they understand it. I believe they are very good Christians at Kirkcudbright, for they are in the very letter of it, they obey the text and *are contented with such things as they have.* They have all the material for trade but no genius to it, all the opportunity for trade but no inclination to it. Though there is an extraordinary salmon fishing, the salmon come and offer

themselves and go again, and cannot obtain the privilege of being made useful to mankind. . . . A man might say they have the Indies at their door and will not dip into the wealth of them, a gold mine at their door and will not dig it."

It was no consolation to Defoe that the energies which might have been diverted to trade and commerce were devoted to religion, much though he admired the sobriety and church-going fervours of the nation. "The people in Scotland do not wander about on the Sabbath days as in England; and even those who may have no more religion than enough, yet custom has made it almost natural to them, they all go to church. They have also one very good custom as to their behaviour in church, which I wish were practised here, that after the sermon is over and the blessing given, they all look round upon their friends and especially to persons of distinction and make their civilities and bows as we do here, for, by the way, the Scots do not want manners. But if a person come in when the worship is begun he takes notice of nobody, nor anybody of him; whereas here we make our bows and our cringes in the middle of our very prayers. . . Conversation is generally sober and grave. I assure you, they have no assemblies here or balls, and, far from what it is in England, you hear no oaths or profane words in the streets."

While in the neighbourhood of Enterkin, Defoe

had the good fortune to witness a Cameronian field-preaching. "Here one Mr. John Hepburn preached to an auditory of near 7000 people, all sitting in rows on the steep side of a green hill, and the preacher in a little pulpit made under a tent at the foot of the hill. He held his auditory, with not above an intermission of half an hour, almost seven hours, and many of the poor people had come fifteen or sixteen miles to hear him, and had all the way to go home again on foot. I shall say nothing to it, for my business is not to make remarks on such things. Only this I may add, that if there was an equal zeal to this in our part of the world, and for that worship which we acknowledge to be true and of a sacred institution, our churches would be more thronged and our ale houses and fields less thronged than they are now."

The solemnity of such a scene was much enhanced by the grandeur and weirdness of the setting in which it was placed. Defoe was greatly awed by the Southern Highlands. Even the approach to it was dreadful, and Drumlanrig was "like a fine picture in a dirty grotto, or like an equestrian statue set up in a barn. 'Tis environed with mountains, and that of the wildest and most hideous aspect in all the south of Scotland, as particularly that of Enterkin, the frightfullest pass and most dangerous that I met with." As the traveller crawled breathless along its shelving sides, he ventured to look

warily down o'er the precipice beneath and beheld, to his horror, "no less than five horses in several places, lying at the bottom with their skins off, which had by the slipperiness of the snow lost their feet and fallen irrecoverably to the bottom, where the mountaineers who made light of the place had found means to come at them and get heir hides off."

The aspect of the country became much pleasanter as Defoe drew nigh to Glasgow. Strange to say, the district between Paisley and that city seemed to him one of the most delectable in the whole of Scotland. "Take its situation, its fertility, its healthiness, the nearness of Glasgow, the neighbourhood of the sea, and altogether, at least I may say I saw none like it." The Clyde at Glasgow, it seems, could be forded in those days with the greatest ease. "Horses and carts passed it just above the bridge, but the children and boys playing about went everywhere, as if there was no river, only some little spreading brook or wash, like such as we have at Enfield Wash in Middlesex. And, as I told you, we crossed it dry foot, that is, the water was scarce above the horse's hoofs." Glasgow itself Defoe unfeignedly admired as the cleanest, most beautiful and best built city he had seen in Britain, next to London. The zeal of the inhabitants in accumulating wealth by trade may have had something to do with this enthusiasm, and Defoe did not fail to note

that Glasgow was already beginning to outdistance its proud eastern rival in this respect. "The merchants of Edinburgh have attempted to trade with the plantations, but they lie so out of the way, and the voyage is not only so much the longer but so much more hazardous, that the Glasgow men are always sure to outdo them and must consequently carry away that part of the trade from them, . . so that even in the insuring there is one *per cent.* difference, which is a great article in the business of a merchant." Yet Edinburgh could hold its own in other ways. Its High Street was the "largest, longest and finest street, for buildings and number of inhabitants, not in Britain only but in the world," and although the extreme density of the population and the scarcity of water made the stench intolerable, there was nevertheless a solid and substantial character about the buildings which was wholly commendable. "No blowing of tiles about the streets, to knock people on the head as they pass; no stacks of chimneys and gable ends of houses falling in to bury the inhabitants in their ruins, as we often find it in London."

The Bass Rock in the Firth of Forth was naturally visited by Defoe, but he saw in it only the spot on which the Covenanters had been imprisoned and the last stand made by the supporters of King James, "neither of which articles recommends it to posterity." When he was informed that

the solan geese of the island were considered a dainty by the people of the neighbourhood, Defoe only added the sour comment that so were onions and garlic considered delicacies in Egypt, and horses in Tartary. It interested him much more to be told that the district sent white fish by the boatload as far as Bilboa in Spain. Why was there not more of this profitable traffic? Why did not the people industriously develop the resources of their own country? Why did not the gentry show themselves true patriots and, pocketing their pride, apply themselves to merchandize and the exporting of fish, salt, wool to other lands? In the Pentland Firth the shoals of herring were so dense, he discovered, that the proportion was often one third water to two thirds fish. "As to the quantity, I make no scruple to say that if there had been ten thousand ships there to have loaded with them, they might all have been filled and none of them missed. Nor did the fish seem to stay, but passed on to the south that they might supply other parts, and make way also for those innumerable shoals which were to come after." It was represented to Defoe that one insurmountable difficulty lay in the fact that these northern seas were haunted by witches and evil spirits who sucked down mariners in whirlpools and drove their hapless vessels upon sunken rocks. But to all such stories the English visitor opposed a stubborn spirit of scepticism. "Such things I leave

to the people who are of the opinion that the devil has such retreats for doing mischief. For my own part I believe him occupied in business of more moment."

Defoe is to be ranked high among Scotland's most ardent admirers and benefactors. By his political services he did much to bring about that Union which has been so prolific of blessings to both countries. He also laboured indefatigably to promote religious tolerance, to moderate the heat of controversy, and to establish settled industry and commercial prosperity throughout the land. And it was largely owing to the success of these endeavours that the Jacobite risings of 1715 and 1745 proved so abortive. Defoe consistently maintained that the poverty of Scotland was traceable not to its climate but to its unfortunate history, and he claimed that, given favourable conditions of trade and commerce, its prosperity would advance by leaps and bounds. "They who fancy there is nothing to be had here but wild men and ragged mountains, storms, snows, poverty, and barrenness are quite mistaken, it being a noble country, of a fruitful and healthy air, well seated for trade, full of manufactures by land and a treasure great as the Indies at their door by sea. The poverty of Scotland and the fruitfulness of England, or rather the difference between them, is owing not to mere difference of climate or the nature of the soil, but to the errors

of time and their different constitutions. The lands in the north of Scotland are in general better than the lands in Cornwall, which are near six hundred miles south of them. But liberty and trade have made the one rich, and tyranny has made the other poor." Defoe himself did much to remove this stigma. He set over a hundred families to work on the linen industry, and contracted with English merchants for the purchase of Scots salt to the value of £10,000 per annum. Truly could he say, "I have told them of improvements in trade, wealth, and shipping, and am like to be one of the first men that shall give them the pleasure of the experiment." Defoe rendered these services willingly and wholeheartedly because he believed they would be appreciated by a nation which he sincerely loved. "The shrewdness of the Scottish people," writes one of his biographers, "their piety and hospitality, their love of liberty and the purity of the Church, were all congenial to him, and it is not saying too much, that the Scots never had a more sincere friend among the English people."

VII

JOHN MACKY

VII

JOHN MACKY

(1723)

VERY little is known of the John Macky who published *A Journey Through Scotland* in 1723. He was employed by the government of the day to suppress Jacobite plots and to prevent treasonable correspondence between France and England. In this capacity, he rendered good service to his country, and gave timely warning of a projected descent upon our shores in 1696, as well as of an arming of Dunkirk in 1708. But he subsequently incurred the suspicion of the government and was thrown into prison till the accession of George I. in 1714. Macky died at Rotterdam in 1723, and his valuable *Memoirs of Secret Services* was published, with notes by Dean Swift, in 1733. The date of his tour through Scotland is uncertain, but his book of travel remains to us as an interesting record of impressions made upon a man of singular acumen and keen powers of observation.

The general aspect of the country presented a strange appearance to our traveller on his first entering it. Like many another visitor, both before

and after, he was surprised to see houses built entirely of stone, and he remarked on the absence of hedges and ditches by the roadside. The dead, he noticed, were buried around churches, but never inside them as in England, since that "smelt too much of the Popish stamp." Macky was especially impressed with the roughness and wildness of Scottish scenery. The Enterkin Pass he found "more dreadful than Penmanmawr in Wales," and he made haste to escape from the bleak and desolate region of the Lowther Hills, speaking of it as "a desert," and "the wildest, poorest country I ever saw, worse by far than the Peak at Darby." On the East Coast he mourned to see the towns fallen into a lamentably ruinous and dilapidated condition. The College buildings of St. Andrews, though built of freestone, were "unaccountably out of repair, the masters and scholars being hardly at the pains of keeping out the rain or mending their windows." Burntisland and the other villages of the coast of Fife reminded him of nothing so much as "an old lady in decay." "A ship that comes up the firth, and never goes ashore, must have a fine idea of these towns at a distance, by reason of their stately appearance. But those large stone houses, which seem like palaces afar off, prove to be the heaps of decay when you approach them. . . The structures remain, but hardly a glass window or any furniture in any of the houses."

Over against these disappointing sights, however, were to be set scenes of wonder and delight which evoked the traveller's unbounded admiration. The bridge over the Nith at Dumfries had as many as thirteen arches, and was "the finest I saw in Britain, next to London and Rochester." The glories of Drumlanrig Castle filled him with amazement. Who would have thought to see "so fine a building in so coarse a country?" On Roslin Chapel he bestowed the highest praise it was in his power to give. "It would pass for a beauty in Rome itself." As for the seat of the Earl of Hopton, it provided "the finest view I ever saw anywhere, far beyond Frescati, near Rome, or St. Michael del Bosco, near Bolognia, for variety." The north, he thought, showed no architecture to speak of and very little gardening, but it abounded in hospitality and the gifts of nature. "The rivers Dee and Don afford salmon in the greatest plenty that can be imagined, to that degree that in some of the summer months the servants won't eat them but twice a week, they are so fat and fulsome. . . . From Banff I crossed the river Spey and came into one of the beautifullest countries I have seen in Britain, which very much surprized me, called the Shire of Murray. The Vale of Evesham, on the banks of Severn, is not comparable to it for fertility nor evenness of ground; for in twenty-four miles, from Elgin to Inverness, it is all a bowling-green."

No place, however, fascinated Macky so much as the Bass Rock, to whose legendary lore he gave easy credence and an attentive ear. "When the solan geese are coming hither, they send some before to fix their mansions, which for that reason are called Scouts. The inhabitants are careful not to disturb them till they have built their nests, and then they are never to be disturbed by what noise soever. They lay but one egg in a year, and fix it so dexterously to the rock by one end that if it be removed 'tis impossible to fix it again. They hatch it with their feet and scarce leave it till it be hatched. . . . They leave this island in September and where they retire in winter is not known. 'Tis said they cannot fly if they be out of sight of the sea. They have a crane's neck and a strong sharp bill, about the length of one's middle finger, with which they strike through their prey with such violence that it often sticks in a board, baited with a herring, so they cannot pull it out again, and are catch'd by the inhabitants."

Macky was very much pleased by the principal cities of Scotland. To Glasgow he frankly gave the palm. It was "the beautifullest little city I have seen in Britain." Not only were its streets regular and spacious, and its houses "of equal height and supported with pillars," but also it could boast that there arrived from the Plantations as many as "twenty or thirty ships every year, laden with

tobacco and sugar, an advantage this kingdom never enjoyed till the Union." What was more noteworthy still, the city was soundly Presbyterian in religion, and "the best affected to the government of any in Scotland." The attractions of Aberdeen were somewhat different. "This city hath not only a great air of trade, but the people are very polite. The ladies are more conversable, dress better, and are of easier access than in most of the other towns. They have their concerts of music, where strangers are always well received." Hardly less to be commended was Inverness, which had the exceptional merit of continually reminding the visitor of the speech and manners of the south. "There are two very good streets in this town, and the people are more polite than in most towns in Scotland. They speak as good English here as at London, and with an English accent; and ever since Oliver Cromwell was here, they are in their manners and dress entirely English. Here, too, are coffee-houses and taverns as in England."

In Edinburgh Macky admired, as every one else did, the glories of the High Street, "which is doubtless the stateliest street in the world, being broad enough for five coaches to drive up abreast. The houses on each side are proportionately high to the broadness of the street, all of them six or seven story high, and those mostly of freestone, making the street very august. . . . The High Street is the

best paved street I ever saw. I will not except Florence. One would think the stones inlaid." The narrowness and unsavouriness of the adjoining wynds, however, somewhat marred the favourable impression of the scene, and "made an English gentleman that was here with the Duke of York merrily compare it to a double wooden comb, the great street the wood in the middle and the teeth of each side the lanes." Macky seems to have been much impressed with the beauty of Holyrood Palace, and he genuinely believed that the series of historical portraits in the picture gallery faithfully preserved the tradition of an unbroken line of kings who had reigned for two thousand years, from B.C. 320 to the Revolution. A full list of these one hundred and fourteen monarchs is preserved in the body of the work, and we scan with interest and amazement the names of Josma, Feritharis, Fincormach, Athirco, Satrael, Crathilinthus and the rest. Macky, of course, was under no illusion as to the *authenticity* of the Holyrood portraits. "You must not imagine, my friend, that these are all original pictures. Buchanan, I believe, drew the originals in his history, and the painter gives the likeness according to their passions and inclinations. But those of the family of Stewart whom I have seen are extremely like, especially James the Seventh."

The defect of Macky's book is that it is overladen with irrelevant information as to the country seats

and ancient family history of the nobility of Scotland. No doubt all this was important to the author as a means of securing subscribers to his work, but the reader of to-day wades somewhat wearily through the tedious inventories of statues, pictures, looking-glasses, velvet beds, fine oak wainscotting, and marble chimney pieces that swell the volume. We are told in detail what some noble scion of an old stock did during the wars in Flanders, or whether a certain ancient family leaned to the Protestant or to the Popish interest at the Reformation. There is a full and minute account of the regalia of Scotland, and forty pages are devoted to a description of Scottish coats of arms. In such a wilderness it is a relief to come upon some oasis of information as to the whereabouts of the village tavern or a local bowling green, or even to be told that in a certain drawing room there is a billiard table, "both paved with stone."

In wandering about the country, Macky was able to pick up some scraps of ancient history and piquant gossipy tradition which do not usually find their way into the graver text books. Thus, of the saintly Queen Margaret, wife of Malcolm Canmore, he was informed that she "rectified many barbarous customs among the Scots, particularly the taking off that custom of the Lord of the manor's having the first night of the bride of all his vassals; and procuring a law that for paying a mark the bride-

groom should have the bride to himself." At Scone he learned something of the luckless James Stuart and his adventures of 1715. "The Pretender lived three weeks here, in all the grandeur of an English king. He dined and supped alone, being served on the knee by his Lord of the Bedchamber in Waiting, and admitted everybody to come into the room, whilst at table. His constant course was eight dishes of meat, a course of milks, and a dessert. He was never known to drink a glass of wine but at meals all the time he was here, but would sometimes drink coffee in the afternoon. He writ all his dispatches with his own hand, and went out every morning to see the guards relieved; and the Lord of his Bedchamber in Waiting always lay in a lobby joining to his bedchamber. He kept a very sumptuous table for his nobility, and a board of green cloth for all the country gentlemen that came to wait on him."

The characteristic of Scotsmen which seems to have impressed Macky most strongly was their religious soberness and decorous observance of the Sabbath. "There is nothing of the gaiety of the English, but a sedate gravity on every face, without the stiffness of the Spaniards; and I take this to be owing to their praying and frequent long graces which gives their looks a religious cast. Taciturnity and dulness gains the character of a discreet man and a gentleman of wit is called a sharp man. I

arrived here (Kirkcudbright) on a Saturday night at a good inn, but the room in which I lay had not, I believe, been washed in a hundred years. Next day I expected, as in England, a piece of good beef or a pudding to dinner, but my landlord told me they never dress dinner on a Sunday; so that I must either take up with bread and butter and a fresh egg, or fast till after the evening sermon, when they never fail of a hot supper. Certainly no nation on earth observes the Sabbath with that strictness of devotion and resignation to the will of God. They all pray in their family before they go to church and between sermons they fast. After sermon everybody retires to his own room and reads some book of devotion till supper (which is generally very good on Sundays) after which they sing Psalms till they go to bed." Even where mirth and gaiety might naturally be looked for, as at spas and watering-places, they were woefully lacking. "The famous wells of Moffat, that purge like those of Scarborough, are much frequented. But here is no raffling, walking, and dancing, as at Bath and Tunbridge. An universal quietness reigns in the place."

Macky formed the impression that there was "no nation where a man had fairer play for his liberty than in Scotland," but he thought the common people "not near so clean or handsome as the English." Among the upper classes he was offended by a certain *hauteur* and aloofness of manner, de-

rived, he supposed, from residence in France. Indeed, he was of opinion that "a finer education than is necessary for trade hath been, in imitation of the French, the misfortune of this Kingdom." But the charms and accomplishments of the fair sex atoned for everything. "The ladies here are particular in a stately, firm way of walking, with their joints extended and their toes out. . . . The young ladies are all bred good housewives, and the servant maids are always kept at some work. The spinning wheels, both for woollen and linen, are always going in most houses, and a gentleman of a good estate is not ashamed to wear a suit of clothes of his lady's and servants' spinning. I have been at several concerts of music, and must say that I never saw in any nation an assembly of greater beauties than those I have seen at Edinburgh."

VIII

CAPTAIN BURT

VIII

CAPTAIN BURT

(1726)

WHEN General Wade was appointed Commander-in-chief of His Majesty's forces in Scotland, in the year 1724, and was instructed to discover the strength and resources of that country, and to reconnoitre it with a view to possible Jacobite risings in the north, he took with him into the Highlands a certain Edward Burt. Very little is known of this gentleman's personal history. He has generally been styled "Captain" Burt, but he held no officer's rank in the army itself, and seems rather to have been attached to the contract and commissariat department. He also served in making the well-known military road which was to be Wade's principal means of penetrating the Highlands, and connecting their remotest fastnesses with Edinburgh and the south. This highway ran northwards for a hundred and fifty miles from Crieff, through Glenalmond, to Dunkeld, Blair Athol, and Dalwhinnie, whence it branched off to Inverness, Fort Augustus, and Fort William. Five hundred soldiers were

employed in its construction for a period of three years, and sixpence a day extra was paid them for their work. So great a reputation did General Wade earn by the success of this undertaking that he came to be spoken of in the district as "the highwayman," and a humorous rhymed bull concerning him passed rapidly into circulation:—

> "Had you seen these roads before they were made,
> You would lift up your hands and bless General Wade."

The *magnum opus* of the whole enterprise was the building of a bridge over the Tay. This structure spanned that wild and rapid river in fifteen arches, the longest of which extended to fifty feet. It was built of ashlar stone, and bore on its central pier an inscription in Latin from the pen of no less a person than the headmaster of Westminster School, which was designed to carry Wade's fame to the farthest ages, and which rose to the following exultant climax:—

> Ecce quantum valeant,
> Regis Georgii Secundi auspicia.

General Wade now lies in Westminster Abbey, buried beneath a heavy monument by Roubillac. Could he rise from his grave at the present day and view the mighty girders which span the Firth of Forth, it is possible he might form a more modest estimate of his own achievements. But at least he

accomplished a feat that was noteworthy in his time, and he could boast, before he died, of being able to gallop for miles into the Highlands, where formerly he had been obliged to dismount every few yards.

Fortunately for us, this Captain Burt whom Wade took with him, devoted himself not only to the making of roads, but also, by way of relaxation, to the writing of letters, which describe in the greatest detail the Highlands as he saw them in 1726. Burt made it a rule to put nothing into those letters which he had not observed for himself, or at any rate learned from reliable sources of information, and he sat down to pen them in a genial, expansive frame of mind, determined to write colloquially of whatever might come his way. He was evidently a man with a whimsical vein in him, and given to simple and innocent delights. "You might have seen me throwing haddocks' and whitings' heads into the river from the parapet of the bridge at Inverness, only to see the eels turn up their silver bellies in striving one with another for the prey. At other times they might tell you they saw me letting feathers fly in the wind, for the swallows that build under the arches to make their circuits in the air, and contend for them to carry them to their nests. I have been jestingly reproached by them, *en passant*, for both these amusements, as being too juvenile for me. This I have returned in their own way by telling them I thought

myself at least as well employed as they when tumbling over and over a little cube made out of a bone, and making every black spot on the faces of it a subject of their fear and hope."

There are one or two references scattered among the letters which assist us in placing them in their historical setting. Witches, we read, were still tortured to death in pitch-barrels, and the recent Union of the Kingdoms was bitterly resented everywhere in Scotland. Burt tells us he met an old laird somewhere who remembered the stirring times of Oliver Cromwell, and recollected the day when his standard floated in the wind from Inverness Castle, with the word IMMANUEL written over it in letters of bright gold. Indeed, the terror of the Protector's name was still held threateningly over the intractable and disobedient youngsters of Inverness in the eighteenth century, although it was grudgingly admitted that not only the cabbages but also the pure and beautiful accent of that city had been introduced in the first instance by Cromwell's soldiers.

By the year 1726, when Burt was in Scotland, the country was hotly Jacobite. "Being at church in Aberdeen one Sunday morning, with another English gentleman, when the minister came to that part of the litany where the King is prayed for by name, the people all rose up as one in contempt of it, and men and women set themselves about some

trivial action, as taking snuff, etc., to show their dislike, and signify to each other they were all of one mind. And when the responsal should have been pronounced, though they had been loud in all that preceded, to our amazement there was not one single voice to be heard but our own, so suddenly and entirely were we dropped." Of the Glasgow of those days Burt tells us it was "the prettiest and most uniform town he had ever seen." Edinburgh he admired for its picturesqueness and beauty of situation, but he threaded its wynds and closes with trembling and apprehension, fearful lest the throwing up of a window-sash should expose him at any moment to a shower of filth, and led by a man who cried out incessantly, "Haud your haund," in order to give warning and prevent his discomfiture and disgrace.

Burt's duties, however, took him not to the cities of the south, but to the remote glens and mountains of the north, which were less known to Englishmen than the East Indies, and were seldom approached but by those who had been devout enough to make their testament beforehand. To the road-surveyor from England the Grampians seemed hideous in the extreme, especially if observed from east to west. "Then the eye penetrates far among them and sees more particularly their stupendous bulk, frightful irregularity, and horrid gloom, made yet more sombrous by the shades and faint reflections they

communicate one to another." Ben Nevis, which Burt understood to be three-quarters of a mile high, was attacked, he tells us, by a group of English officers who made every effort to reach the top. "But they could not attain to it, for bogs and huge precipitous rocks, and when they were got as high as they could go, they found a vast change in the quality of the air, saw nothing but the tops of other mountains, and altogether a prospect of one tremendous heath with here and there some spots of crags and snow." In addition to these awful deterrents, there were the pitiless rains. "At Fort William I have heard the people talk as familiarly of a shower (as they call it) of nine or ten weeks as they would of anything else that was not out of the ordinary course."

It is scarcely to be wondered at that in such a country the crops were scanty and the grain poor. Burt could find nothing but oats and barley in the north. A field of wheat, he writes, would be "as great a rarity as a nightingale in any part of Scotland, or a cat-o'-mountain in Middlesex." Once only did he come across a patch of real corn which, by favour of an extraordinary year, had been grown in the county of Ross. "But the owner made so much parade of it that the stack stood in his court-yard till the rats had almost devoured it." In many parts the agricultural implements in use were constructed entirely of wood, and ploughmen might be

seen walking backwards in front of their horses, guiding them to avoid the rocks, the share or harrow being in some cases attached to the animals' tails, without the relief of any sort of harness whatever. Even when harvests did ripen on those high altitudes, they were almost certain to be gathered wet because of the heavy rains, when the only chance of their ever being dried again was from the free passage of the wind through the barns in which they were stored. Of these damp oats a few ears would be roasted daily. The straw and husks were thus burnt off and the sooty remains ground and converted into bannocks, as the needs of the family required.

Burt willingly testified that he found every available foot of arable land thus cultivated in the Highlands, and even, so far as possible, improved. The great lack everywhere was a supply of good manure. Women might frequently be seen carrying dung in their creels from the garrison at Fort William, and then spreading it out on the land with their own hands, "even breaking the balls so that every part might have its due proportion." In a country of such barrenness and extremes of poverty one may sympathize with the feelings of an English officer of whom Burt gives us an account. He had ridden with a certain laird over several miles of waste moorland, when his companion turned to him and said, "Now, sir, all the ground we have hitherto gone

over is my property." "By G——," replied the other, "I have an apple tree in Herefordshire that I would not swop with you for it all!" On another occasion Burt himself, who had ordered his servant to use some lemons in preparing a bowl of whisky punch, was asked by a native if these were apples which his servant was squeezing. "And indeed," adds the writer, with feelings of silent pity, "there are as many lemon-trees as there are apple-trees in that country. The only fruit the natives have are bilberries."

But the open country of the Highlands, bleak and barren though it might be, was sometimes to be preferred to the wretched dwellings. The hovels which Burt saw in various parts of the country he could only liken to "fuming dunghills removed and fresh piled up again, and pretty near the same in colour, shape, and size." Outside these filthy huts would be a group of children, naked and overrun with vermin; and, inside, a group of old people, crouching over the smoke of a smouldering peat fire till their eyes were blinded and their feet scorched. "This long continuance in smoke makes them almost as black as chimney-sweepers; and, when the huts are not watertight, the rain that comes through the roof and mixes with the sootiness of the inside, where all sticks look like charcoal, falls in drops like ink." The excuse for all this, of course, was that the smoke kept the occupants warm, and cleanliness was a

luxury which could not be afforded. How was it possible for a starving crofter to invest in soap, towels, or a scrubbing brush, when even in Inverness the domestic servants counted themselves rich if they received three half-crowns a year and a peck of oatmeal every week?

The inns of the country were little better than the houses. The heart of Burt was strangely warmed within him on the first night of his sojourn in Scotland, when the landlady suggested that his supper might consist of a dish of potted pigeons. But, alas! the cloth on which they were served was so greasy, and the pigeons themselves floated in such a mess of rancid butter, that the traveller was thankful to exchange them for a crust of bread. Burt good-humouredly mentions in his letters that, being an Englishman, he was regarded by the Scots as a "pock-pudding," and in one place he interjects the remark, "And now, methinks, I hear one of this country say, 'A true Englishman! He is always talking of eating.'" But even a pock-pudding may surely feel justified in objecting to a cook who places a large lump of butter on the smoky chimney-piece, and then rakes out what she may want of it for the saucepan with her fingers!

Better fare than this, however, was sometimes to be had. Burt was often surfeited in the Highlands with what would have been esteemed in London the rarest delicacies; and grouse, trout, partridge

were common articles of diet. Especially was he fed to repletion on salmon, which could be bought in the market at twopence a pound; while beef and mutton would be sold in the autumn at half that price. And it was always possible to wash down these good things with a cup of fine claret or excellent French brandy. The glory of the country, however, was a drink by the natives called *Usky*, "which, though a strong spirit, is to them as water." Sometimes three or four quarts would be drunk by one person at a sitting; and Burt was informed by a collector of customs in Stornoway that about 120 families in the island of Lewis consumed every year as many as four thousand English gallons of that spirit. As for the honey of the district it was "in every respect as good as that of Minorca." The Lowlanders might talk to their hearts' content of a "land o' cakes." The Highlanders could boast of a "land of milk and honey."

Of the manners of the people, Burt had much to say to his English correspondent. He was evidently vastly entertained with the ceremony of a "penny wedding," at which the bride must go round and kiss every gentleman in the room, and a collection would be taken among the company assembled, sufficient not only to pay the fiddler and cover the expenses of the feast, but also to enable the young couple to start comfortably in life. The funeral customs were even more remarkable. "The friends of the deceased

usually meet at the house of mourning the day before the funeral, where they sit a good while like Quakers at a silent meeting, in dumb show of sorrow; but in time the bottle is introduced, and ceremony quite reversed. The company are invited to walk into a room where there usually are several pyramids of plumcake, sweetmeats, and several dishes, with pipes and tobacco. The last is according to an old custom, for it is very rare to see anybody smoke in Scotland. . . . When the company return to the house, all sorrow seems immediately to be banished, and the wine is filled about as fast as it can go round, till there is hardly a sober person among them. In the conclusion, some of the sweetmeats are put into your hat or thrust into your pocket, which enables you to make a great compliment to the women of your acquaintance." At funerals of a better class there would be dancing, a coronach, and the shrieking of hired mourners, till all ended at last in a confusion of drunkenness and bloody broils.

The women of Scotland were objects of great interest to our observer. He commended their industry in the spinning of wedding linen, and confessed that they were far more thrifty and well set up in these matters than their sisters in England who belonged to the same rank. A woman, on getting married, he found, immediately set about spinning her own winding sheet, and woe to the

husband who ever dreamed of selling or sending to the pawn so sacred a household treasure! This, of course, was reasonable enough, but Burt could not get over his astonishment when he saw Scotswomen treading their washtubs with their skirts tucked up about their waists, and even carrying their husbands ashore from the fishing boats to keep them from the wet. If anything could surprise him more than this, it was probably to find himself kissed quite frankly and ingenuously by well-bred hostesses on his bidding them farewell. "The two young ladies, on my saluting them at parting, did me a favour which with you would be thought the utmost invitation; but it is purely innocent with them, and a mark of the highest esteem for their guest. This was no great surprise to me, having received the same compliment several times before in the Highlands, and even from married women, who, I may be sure, had no further design in it. But I am not singular, for several officers in the army have told me they received the same courtesy from other females in the hills." A watchful eye, however, was kept on all such liberties by the Kirk. "The ministers here in Scotland would have the ladies come to church in their plaids, which hide any loose dress, and their faces too, if they could be persuaded, in order to prevent the wandering thoughts of young fellows, and perhaps some old ones too; for the minister looks upon a well-dressed woman to be an

object unfit to be seen in the time of divine service, especially if she be handsome."

As for the preaching of these watchful ministers themselves, Burt thought it savoured too much of dogma and too little of morality. "The subjects of their sermons are for the most part grace, free will, predestination, and other topics hardly ever to be determined. They might as well talk Hebrew to the common people, and I think to everybody else. But *thou shalt do no manner of work* they urge with very great success. Their prayers are often more like narratives to the Almighty than petitions for what they want, and the *sough*, as it is called (the whine) is unmanly, and much beneath the dignity of the subject. I have heard of one minister so great a proficient in this sough, and his notes so remarkably flat and productive of horror, that a master of music set them to the fiddle; and the wag used to say that in the most jovial company, after he had played his tune but once over, there was no more mirth among them all the rest of that evening than if they were just come out of the cave of Trophonius." Burt was much amused to find that whenever there was a bottle to be opened or a dram drunk, if a minister happened to be present a grace was sure to be called for and given at great length, unless indeed the company were hopelessly unmannerly and irreverent. At the same time he could not but feel the greatest respect for the Pres-

byterian clergy whom he met. "Although they have not the advantage of any outward appearance by dress to strike the imagination or to distinguish them from other men who happen to wear black or dark gray, yet they are, I think I may say, ten times more reverenced than our ministers in England. In business or ordinary conversation they are for the most part complaisant, and I may say supple, when you talk to them singly—at least I have found them so. But when collected in a body at a Presbytery or Synod, they assume a vast authority and make the poor sinner tremble."

Of the Highlander as he saw him, Captain Burt entertained a very high opinion, and he conceived the greatest reverence for the magnificence of a clan chieftain. Such a potentate in those days would not dream of visiting a brother-chieftain without taking with him a retinue which included a bard, a spokesman, a piper, a piper's gillie, a baggage-man, a man to carry his broadsword, and another to carry himself bodily across fords. The common people, however, seemed stunted in appearance, "nor is it likely that by being half-starved in the womb and never afterwards well fed they should by that means be rendered larger than other people. How often have I heard them described in London as almost giants in size." The truth is that probably the Highlanders whom he had seen in London *were* the giants of the race, who had gone to the metropolis

to seek their fortune, for Burt could not but notice that the tide of emigration had already begun to set southwards. "When a young fellow finds he has a genius for his trade or business, and has anything of spirit, he generally lays hold of the first occasion to remove to England or some other country where he hopes for better encouragement. Hence, I take it, arose a kind of proverb that "there never came a fool out of Scotland."

At the same time even those who remained were splendid specimens of humanity. Burt was especially impressed with their erect carriage. "The Highlanders walk nimbly and uprightly, so that you will never see among the meanest of them, in the most remote parts, the clumsy, stooping gait of the French *paysans,* or our own country fellows, but, on the contrary, a kind of stateliness in the midst of their poverty." Two causes, it seemed, contributed to this result. For one thing the Highlander wore light brogues which enabled them to skip easily from rock to rock, and did not have to drag heavy clouted shoes over ploughed claylands, as in the south. For another, he enjoyed the airy freedom of a kilt. How would he have been able to wade rivers, or climb mountains, or walk through bogs, with dignity, if clad in the unseemly impediments of breeches? Still more admirable for its purpose was the Highland plaid. It was a cloak for the day and a blanket for the night, and effectually concealed

the wearer when out upon the heather, intent on robberies and depredations. What Burt could not understand, however, was that the natives should sleep out all night in a plaid which not only was not dry but had been deliberately wetted. He was told that the cloth, when thus moistened, both kept in the warm air and kept out the cold wind. But indeed there was no limit to the hardihood of Highlanders. "The Laird of Keppoch, chieftain of a branch of the Macdonalds, once gave orders for rolling a snowball to lay under his head at night; whereupon one of his followers murmured, saying, 'Now we despair of victory, since our leader has become so effeminate he cannot sleep without a pillow.'"

Two things especially Burt noticed in the Highlander. He was thrifty, and he was proud. If a man stopped to give a beggar a half-penny in the streets of Inverness, he would wait to get back a plack or two bodles by way of change. The same man would consider it an indignity that a member of his pure, unmixed race should be joined in matrimony to a Lowlander. If such a thing were ever to be permitted, a goldsmith of Edinburgh might consider himself well-matched to be allied to a blacksmith of Lochaber. And, of all fine fellows, the finest was the piper. When one of the great players had roused the spirit of his clan by a strath-

spey or a reel, he would disdainfully throw his bagpipes on the ground. A *gillie* must come forward to do the carrying. Burt tells us of the fury of a certain piper belonging to a Highland regiment when the place of priority was given to a drummer. The contention waxed so hot between them that the captain called both combatants impatiently into his presence, and, after hearing all the arguments, decided in favour of the drummer. "Wuds, sir," said the piper, "shall a rascal that beats upon a sheepskin take the right hand of me that am a *musician?*"

There remains the vexed question of the morality of cattle-lifting. Ought it, or ought it not, to be described as thieving? Let an acquaintance of Captain Burt provide the answer. Being charged with stealing cattle and playing the part of a common thief, the man lost all patience, and exclaimed indignantly, "Common tief! common tief! Steal ane cow, twa cow, dat be common tief. Lift hundred cow, dat be shentilman trovers." Burt at least could testify that, so far as his own experience went, thefts in the Highlands were unknown. "I could ride to Edinburgh from the remotest Highlands with five hundred guineas in my portmanteau, and no apprehension of robberies by the way, though in my sleep any one with ease might have thrust a sword from outside through the

wall of the hut and my body together. I wish I could say I were as safe going from London to Highgate."

Burt well deserved to reach Edinburgh in safety. He rendered good service to Scotland in many ways, and had every justification for referring to some of them, in his last letter, with a touch of modest pride. "Whereas formerly there were none but squalid huts of turf for hundreds of miles, there are now houses with chimneys built with stone and lime, and ten or twelve miles distant from each other. Another thing is, there are pillars set up at the end of every five miles, mostly upon eminences, which may not only amuse the passer by, and relieve the tediousness of the way, but prevent his being deceived in point of time in rain, snow, drift, or the approach of night." For these and other services we may be truly grateful. Alas! that man's gratitude should have done but little for him during his own lifetime. Burt's later years were clouded with misfortune, and he died in abject poverty and distress in 1755.

IX

JOHN WESLEY

IX

JOHN WESLEY

(1751-1790)

ONE of the most remarkable men who ever crossed the Scottish border was the eminent saint, statesman, and evangelist, who revolutionized the religious life of England in the eighteenth century. John Wesley made more than twenty journeys into Scotland between his first visit in the year 1751 and his death in 1791. He travelled east and west and north and south, from Berwick to Stranraer, and from Annan to Inverness. As the Apostle of Methodism he found himself in journeyings oft, in weariness and painfulness, in perils by the sea and in perils among false brethren. Three times he lost his way between Dumfries and Moffat. Once his horse floundered in the Solway Firth, so that he was covered with soft mud from head to foot. Once he was all but imprisoned in the Edinburgh Tolbooth. Once he was snowed-up among the mountains near Dalwhinnie. Once he came near to being drowned at Broughty Ferry. But none of these things daunted the great preacher. His iron frame,

his inflexible will, his ardent missionary spirit surmounted every obstacle. Weariness and ailments of every kind fled from him the moment he stood up to proclaim the Gospel. Wesley attributed his phenomenally good health to the fact that for fifty years he rose every morning at four o'clock; preached generally at five, "one of the most healthy exercises in the world;" and never travelled less, by sea or land, than four thousand five hundred miles in a year. He was the sort of man who could write in his journal, "We met at five in the morning, at nine, at one, and at half-hour past eight. I expected to be a little tired, but was more lively after twelve at night than I was at six in the morning." Indeed, so indefatigable were his exertions in getting from place to place that in some instances we read that it was the horse that became exhausted before the rider, so that Wesley had perforce to hurry on by means of a stage-coach.

The *Journal* of such a man is of inestimable value to us, for he wrote down very fully his impressions of what he saw. In contrast with the experiences of other travellers, Wesley found the wayside accommodation of Scotland wholly to his liking. "What miserable accounts pass current in England of the inns in Scotland! . . . We were most surprised at the entertainment we met with in every place, so far different from common report. We had all things good, cheap, in great abundance, and

remarkably well dressed." At Stranraer he met with "as good entertainment of every kind as if he had been in the heart of England." Wesley had an eye for the beautiful in natural scenery, and often stopped to praise a noble prospect. The surroundings of Dunkeld especially pleased him; and he thought the Lowther Hills "the finest mountains in Europe, higher than most, if not any, in England, and clothed with grass to the very top." The towns, however, seemed to him, as to the Wordsworths and Keats later, queer and outlandish-looking. "They are like none which I ever saw, either in England, Wales, or Ireland. There is such an air of antiquity in them all, and such a peculiar oddness in their manner of building." Greenock reminded Wesley of Plymouth Dock, and he noted that "the trade, and inhabitants, and consequently the houses, were increasing rapidly. So was cursing, swearing, drunkenness, Sabbath-breaking, and all manner of wickedness." Inverness seemed to him "not very bad and not very good;" but it certainly had all things needful for life and godliness, and the people, he observed, spoke with an uncommonly fine accent. Perth he thought "the sweetest place in all North Britain, unless perhaps Dundee." As for Glasgow, its cathedral was equal to most of those in England, except that it was miserably defaced within. Wesley could not reconcile himself, however, to the appearance of the college students.

"They wear scarlet gowns, reaching only to their knees. Most I saw were very dirty, some very ragged, and all of very coarse cloath." Aberdeen he considered a city to be envied. The professors were friendly, the clergy were open-hearted and wished him good-luck in the name of the Lord. "Indeed I have scarce seen such a set of ministers in any town of Great Britain or Ireland."

But chiefly were Wesley's encomiums—and anathemas—reserved for Edinburgh. "The situation of the city," he wrote, "on a hill shelving down on both sides, as well as to the east, with the stately castle on a craggy rock on the west, is inexpressibly fine. And the main street, so broad and finely paved, with the lofty houses on either hand (many of them seven or eight stories high), is far beyond any in Great Britain. But how can it be suffered, that all manner of filth should still be thrown even into this street continually? Where are the Magistracy, the Gentry, the Nobility of the land? Have they no concern for the honour of their nation? How long shall the capital city of Scotland, yea, and the chief street of it, stink worse than a common sewer? Will no lover of his country, or of decency and common sense, find a remedy for this? . . . Edinburgh is one of the dirtiest cities I have ever seen, not excepting Cölen in Germany."

Wesley was much interested in Holyrood Palace, and warmly took up the cudgels on behalf of "that

poor injured woman," Mary Queen of Scots, on coming upon her portrait in the picture-gallery. "It is scarce possible for anyone who looks at this to think her such a monster as some have painted her, nor indeed for any who considers the circumstances of her death, equal to that of an ancient martyr." The bed-cover and hangings which Queen Mary wrought when a prisoner in Lochleven Castle, and which Wesley saw in Scone Palace, deeply moved him. "It is some of the finest needlework I ever saw, and plainly shows both her skill and her unwearied industry." The dilapidated condition of Holyrood itself Wesley attributed to the evil after-effects of the Jacobite rebellion. "The tapestry is dirty and quite faded; the fine ceilings dropping down; and many of the pictures in the gallery torn or cut through. This was the work of good General Hawley's soldiers (like General, like men!), who, after running away from the Scots at Falkirk, revenged themselves on the harmless canvas!"

The tedium of travelling Wesley relieved by reading. To his surprise, he thoroughly enjoyed Home's *Douglas*, the work of a Presbyterian minister which was then taking the literary world by storm. "I was astonished to find it is one of the finest tragedies I have ever read. What a pity that a few lines were not left out, and that it was ever acted at Edinburgh!" Dr. Beattie's *Inquiry after Truth* Wesley enjoyed immensely, for it gave a

good trouncing to the infidel David Hume; but Dr. Robertson's *History of Charles V.* he was like to throw away in his impatience. "Here is a quarto volume of eight or ten shillings price, containing dry, verbose dissertations on feudal government, the substance of all which might be compressed in half a sheet of paper." But none of these books so much displeased him as one which came into his hands when he was staying at Thornhill. "Here I met with Mr. Knox's *History of the Church of Scotland;* and could any man wonder if the members of it were more fierce, sour, and bitter of spirit than some of them are? For what a pattern have they before them! I know it is commonly said, 'The work to be done needed such a spirit.' Not so. The work of God does not, cannot need the work of the devil to forward it. And a calm, even spirit goes through rough work far better than a furious one. Although, therefore, God did use, at the time of the Reformation, some sour, overbearing, passionate men, yet he did not use them *because* they were such, but *notwithstanding* they were so. And there is no doubt He would have used them much more, had they been of an humbler and milder spirit."

The spell of reading over, Wesley would put his books away into his saddle-bag, and indulge himself in moralizing on the scenes around him. Was that the Duke of Queensborough's seat he had just

passed, an ancient and noble pile situated on a pleasant and fruitful hill? "Alas! how little did the late Duke imagine his son would plough up his park and let his house run to ruin! But let it go! In a little while the earth itself, and all the works of it, shall be burned up." Did he come upon the estate of the Earl of Haddington, beautifully situated between two woods? "The house is exceeding large and pleasant, commanding a wide prospect both ways; and the Earl is cutting walks through the woods, smoothing the ground, and much enlarging and beautifying his garden. Yet he is to die!" Strolling one day through Dumfries churchyard, Wesley noticed the following inscription on a much-decayed tombstone—

QUANDOQUIDEM REMANENT IPSIS QUOQUE FATA SEPULCHRIS.

The words could not but set the preacher on a train of doleful meditation. "What, do sepulchres themselves die? Strange that men should be so careful about them! So poor Mr. Prior, speaking of his own tomb, has those melancholy words, 'For this last piece of human vanity I bequeathe five hundred pounds.'"

But, as a rule, all Wesley's energies and reflections were directed to one urgent and supremely practical end, the evangelization of the country he had come to visit. His method was to secure the largest

building that was available, or, still better, to take his stand in the open air, and go on preaching till a number of people came. "I stood on one side of the main street, near the middle of the town. And I might stand, for no creature came near me till I had sung part of a psalm. Then a row of children stood before me, and in some time about a hundred men and women." Presently the crowd would swell in its proportions till its limits were determined only by the range of his far-reaching voice. At one place it was calculated that as many as two thousand had to turn away. Wesley was not particular as to where or when he preached, whether to many or to few. He was glad when the Principal of Aberdeen University placed the College Close at his disposal, or when he could address a vast multitude on the Calton Hill in Edinburgh. But he was just as pleased when called upon to preach the good tidings of salvation to wretched creatures in poorhouses, prisons, hospitals, and asylums. On one occasion, when he was walking through the square of King's College, Aberdeen, admiring the architecture, he encountered a company of ladies and gentlemen similarly engaged. "They looked and spoke to one another, after which one of the gentlemen took courage and came to me. He said, 'We came last night to College Close, but could not hear, and should be extremely obliged if you would give us a short discourse here.'" Nothing

loth, Wesley opened there and then on "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself," and he had every reason to believe that the Word fell as dew on the tender grass. It was the custom, when Wesley arrived in any sympathetic village, for the bell of the parish church to be loudly rung, and a sufficient congregation gathered in ten minutes. When at last, weary and worn out, the preacher retired in the evening to his inn or lodging, he would gather the company together for family prayer, not forgetting to give the backslider, if he found one, some plain yet kindly counsel concerning the state of his soul before God.

Wesley was the more fervent about these matters because he considered that religion in Scotland was in a very backward condition. The moment the border was crossed he felt the change. "O what a difference," he exclaimed at Alnwick, in Northumberland, "between these living stones and the dead, unfeeling multitudes in Scotland!" Driven by the rain into a house near Glasgow, he questioned his host's daughter, a girl of eighteen or nineteen years, as to her spiritual condition. "To my surprise, I found her as ignorant of the nature of religion as a Hottentot. And many such have I found in Scotland, able to read, nay, and to repeat the Catechism, but wholly unacquainted with true religion, yea, and all genuine morality." Wesley attributed much of this spiritual apathy to the

morose and chilling preaching which prevailed. "The people have been told frequently and strongly of their coldness, deadness, heaviness, and littleness of faith, but very little of anything that would move thankfulness. Hereby many are driven away, and those that remained were cold and dead." The typical Scottish sermon to which he listened "contained much truth, but was no more likely to awaken one soul than an Italian opera."

Wesley was much disappointed with the Church of Scotland Assembly, whose meetings he had once or twice the opportunity of attending. "I was extremely shocked at the behaviour of many of the members. Had any preacher behaved so at our Conference, he would have had no more place among us. . . . I was surprised to find that a single question took up the whole time, which, when I went away, seemed to be as far from a conclusion as ever, namely, 'Should Mr. Lindsay be removed to Kilmarnock parish or not?' The argument for it was, 'He has a large family, and this living is twice as good as his own.' The argument against it was, 'The people are resolved not to hear him, and will leave the Kirk if he comes.' If then the real point in view had been, as their law directs, *majus bonum ecclesiae*, instead of taking up five hours, the debate might have been determined in five minutes." In Wesley's opinion, the root of the whole mischief lay in the mode of appointing elders. "Lodging

with a sensible man, I enquired particularly into the present discipline of the Scotch parishes. In one parish, it seems, there are twelve ruling elders, in another there are fourteen. And what are these? Men of great sense and deep experience? Neither one nor the other. But they are the *richest* men in the parish. And are the *richest,* of course, the *best* and the *wisest* men? Does the Bible teach this? I fear not. What manner of governors then will these be? Why, they are generally just as capable of governing a parish as of commanding an army."

Yet Wesley saw much in Presbyterianism of which he could cordially approve. It is true he disliked the plainness of its worship, and the curtseying and bustling to-and-fro which preceded the sermon. A four hours' ordination service at Arbroath bored him very much, and he could not be reconciled to men sitting at prayer or standing with covered heads while they were praising God. He felt, too, that the Scottish mode of celebrating the Lord's Supper was wearisome and uninspiring. "How much more simple, as well as more solemn, is the service of the Church of England! I attended the Church of England service in the morning, and that of the Kirk in the afternoon. How dull and dry did the latter appear to me, who had been accustomed to the former! Truly no man, having drunk the old wine, straightway desireth the new." But Wesley, although he was a good Churchman

as well as a strict Methodist, loved the saintly members of every Church, and cared more for the souls of men than for any forms or ceremonies whatever. Accordingly, he freely availed himself of the opportunity to preach in Scottish churches, though conscious all the time of a certain strangeness and irregularity in so doing. "Surely with God nothing is impossible! Who would have believed, five and twenty years ago, either that the minister would have desired it, or that I should have consented, to preach in a Scotch Kirk?"

And his words, when he did open his mouth, whether in a kirk or out of it, were as the hammer of the Lord. Wesley believed in hard hitting and in speaking home. His aim was to "shake the hearts of outside Christians;" to deal "strongly, yea, roughly" with all hypocrites; and to leave his hearers not a loophole of escape. There must be an immediate verdict, there and then, for heaven or for hell, a choice between two alternatives, as they trembled fatefully in the balance, either the fiery judgment or the pardoning grace of God. To the credit of Scotland let it be said that his hearers liked it. The common people everywhere listened to him gladly. They were even "swift to hear," albeit "slow to speak," and seemed to like him better the more denunciatory he became. The rains descended often, when he preached, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon those

crowds. But still they listened on; for some had come on foot a dozen miles, remaining "like stone statues" for an hour and a half, while the impassioned preacher delivered his whole soul. Sometimes a band of strollers would pass by, but these only "stole away the gay part of his hearers." Wesley's most serious rival was the incomparable Mrs. Siddons, who easily succeeded in drawing off the bulk of his congregation, and that, too, during the sittings of the General Assembly! Once some rotten potatoes were hurled at Wesley by the mob; but the preacher turned on his assailants, and they were abashed. "Shame, concern, and a mixture of various passions were painted on most faces, and I perceived the Scots, if you touch but the right key, receive as lively impressions as the English."

With these results Wesley was fairly satisfied. He was too wise, of course, to suppose that, when people trampled on one another to hear the Word, such scenes necessarily issued in a change of life. Here indeed was the chief source of his anxiety. "There is seldom fear of wanting a congregation in Scotland. But the misfortune is they know everything, so they learn nothing. . . . I am amazed at this people. Use the most cutting words, apply them in the most pointed manner, still they *hear*, but *feel* no more than the seats they sit upon!" Wesley, therefore, was most desirous that little

Methodist societies should be formed in every place; and these he visited again and again with apostolic solicitude and love, exhorting them "not to talk loosely in general (as their manner had been) on some head of religion, but to examine each other's hearts and lives." We may safely conclude that Wesley took more pride in these little societies than in the charter which conveyed to him the freedom of the city of Perth, even although the latter was, in his opinion, couched in better and more pompous Latin than could reasonably have been expected from the city of London itself. Some of his little flock remained staunch and true. Others fell away when persecution came, for there were those who held tenaciously to the view that "the doctrine of perfection was not calculated for the meridian of Edinburgh." But at least it was something that a few here and there had been got together, and that the Scottish people generally were so willing to give ear to the message of the Gospel. "It is scarce possible to speak too plain in England, but scarce possible to speak plain enough in Scotland; as, if you do not, you lose all your labour, and plough upon the sand. . . . I never knew any in Scotland offended at plain dealing. In this respect the North Britains are a pattern to all mankind."

X

OLIVER GOLDSMITH

X

OLIVER GOLDSMITH

(1753)

IN the autumn of the year 1752 an odd, ungainly-looking youth of twenty-four arrived in the city of Edinburgh, intent on pursuing his studies at the University. With slow and stammering speech, and in a markedly Hibernian accent, he asked one of the street caddies to direct him to some humble lodging; and then, when he had secured for himself a room and deposited his trunk, he gaily sallied forth to view the town. Being a "good-natur'd man" and a "citizen of the world," he found plenty to interest him in the scenes around him. There were fine clothes to be coveted in the shop windows. There were beggars to be pitied and assisted in the street gutters. There was human nature in all its infinite variety to be observed and loved. At last the evening waxed late, and the traveller bethought himself of returning home, when, to his consternation, he discovered that he had completely forgotten to take note either of his landlady's name or of her

address. What was he to do, a stranger in a strange land,

> "Remote, unfriended, melancholy, slow?"

By a fortunate chance he happened, in the moment of his distress, to stumble against the very porter who had helped him on his arrival in the morning, and through his kind offices was enabled to reach his abode. It was "Goldy," the good-hearted, happy-go-lucky Irishman, who was later to become the friend of Burke, of Johnson, and of Reynolds, and to enchant the world with the story of *The Vicar of Wakefield*, but who at this stage of his career had done no more than attempt in vain to become a parson, a tutor, or a lawyer, and was now arrived in Scotland resolved to be a doctor.

From the few scraps of information which have come down to us, and from what we know of Goldsmith's character and habits, it is not difficult to picture his life in Edinburgh during those early days. Sometimes he would be lounging on the benches of Professor Munro's classroom; sometimes enlivening his fellow-students, of an evening, with a droll story, a performance on the flute, or an Irish song; sometimes forgetting care, poverty, and exile in the joys of a dancing academy. From Goldsmith's account of the matter it would seem that the balls which he attended could hardly be described as hilarious assemblies. "When a stranger enters

the dancing-hall, he sees one end of the room taken up with the ladies, who sit dismally in a group by themselves. On the other end stand their pensive partners, that are to be; but no more intercourse between the sexes than there is between two countries at war. The ladies, indeed, may ogle, and the gentlemen may sigh, but an embargo is laid on any closer commerce. At length, to interrupt hostilities, the lady-directress, or intendant, or what you will, pitches on a gentleman and lady to walk the minuet, which they perform with a formality that approaches to despondence. After five or six couples have thus walked the gauntlet, all stand up to country dances, each gentleman provided with a partner from the aforesaid lady-directress. So they dance much and say nothing, and thus concludes our assembly. I told a Scotch gentleman that such profound silence resembled the ancient procession of the Roman matrons in honour of Ceres; and the Scotch gentleman told me (and, 'faith, I believe he was right) that I was a very great pedant for my pains."

A curious relic of those Edinburgh days has survived in the shape of a tailor's bill which was presented to "Mr. Oliver Goldsmith, student," by a certain Mr. Honner in 1753. From this interesting document we learn that our friend's slender purse of borrowed gold could spare nearly £6 for some "rich Sky-Blew sattin, white Allapeen, Blew Durant,

Black Shalloon, silver Hatt-Lace," and other articles, including "3½ yds. best sfine Clarett-colour'd Cloth at 19s. . . . £3-6-6." To what purpose was this finery, we may well ask. Doubtless, to gratify the vanity of "Master Noll," as well as to make an impression on the Scottish ladies, for whom he expressed the profoundest admiration. "To show that I love Scotland," he wrote, "and everything that belongs to so charming a country, I insist on it, and will give him leave to break my head that denies it, that the Scotch ladies are ten thousand times handsomer and finer than the Irish. To be sure, now, I see your sisters, Betty and Peggy, vastly surprised at my partiality; but tell them flatly I don't value them, or their fine skins, or eyes, or good sense, or ——, a potato; for I say it, and will maintain it; and as a convincing proof (I'm in a very great passion) of what I assert, the Scotch ladies say it themselves. But, to be less serious, where will you find a language so pretty become a pretty mouth as the broad Scotch? And the women here speak it in its highest purity. For instance, teach one of their young ladies to pronounce 'Whoar wull I gong?' with a becoming wideness of mouth, and I'll lay my life they will wound every hearer."

While Goldsmith was in Scotland he took the opportunity to spend a month in wandering through the Highlands. Evidently the whole aspect of the country was uncongenial to him, and he "dragged

at each remove a lengthening chain." But he has left us a humorously exaggerated account of his experiences which reveal much shrewd observation beneath its playful banter. "I set out the first day on foot, but an ill-natured corn I have got on my toe has for the future prevented that cheap method of travelling. So the second day I hired a horse of about the size of a ram, and he walked away (trot he could not) as pensive as his master. . . . Shall I tire you with a description of this unfruitful country, where I must lead you over their hills all brown with heath, or their valleys scarce able to feed a rabbit? Man alone seems to be the only creature who has arrived to the natural size in this poor soil. Every part of the country presents the same dismal landscape. No groves nor brooks lend their music to cheer the stranger, or make the inhabitants forget their poverty. Yet with all these advantages, enough to call him down to humility, a Scotchman is one of the proudest things alive. The poor have pride ever ready to relieve them. If mankind should happen to despise them, they are masters of their own admiration, and *that* they can plentifully bestow upon themselves."

Goldsmith left Scotland somewhat hurriedly after a residence of eighteen months. Bailiffs dogged his heels for the payment of a debt, and he had to spend some days in prison before he could escape the country and find a safe harbourage at last in

Leyden. But none of these things served to depress his spirits or diminish his ever-bubbling fountain of easy gaiety. When he found himself in Holland, and could look back with some composure on the scenes he had left behind him, the spirit of mirth moved him to sum up his impressions in one or two witty sentences. "Scotland and this country bear the highest contrast. There hills and rocks intercept every prospect, here 'tis all a continued plain. There you might see a well-dressed duchess issuing from a dirty close, and here a dirty Dutchman inhabiting a palace. The Scotch may be compared to a tulip planted in dung; but I never see a Dutchman in his own house but I think of a magnificent Egyptian temple dedicated to an ox!"

XI

BISHOP POCOCKE

XI

BISHOP POCOCKE

(1760)

"I HAVE often wished that no travels or journeys should be published but those undertaken by persons of integrity and capacity to judge well and describe faithfully and in good language the situation, condition, and manners of the countries passed through." So wrote Sir Alexander Dick on one occasion to Dr. Johnson; and if ever these qualifications of the ideal traveller were fulfilled, it was in the case of the Rev. Richard Pococke, a D.C.L. of Oxford and Bishop of Ossory in Ireland, who made a tour through Scotland in the year 1760. Pococke had already journeyed far in many parts of the world. He had seen France, Germany, Switzerland, Greece, and Italy, as well as the Nile, Jerusalem, Syria, and Mesopotamia. He had also visited Scotland itself on two previous occasions. But this, his third, tour was by far the most leisurely and extensive, embracing the whole country, Highlands and Lowlands both, from Berwick to the Orkneys and from Iona to Aberdeen. The bishop

travelled comfortably with two servants, and kept a minute journal of his wanderings in four large quarto MS. volumes, which have now been admirably edited for the Scottish Historical Society by Mr. D. W. Kemp. This work informs us that, from the day he set foot in Wigtonshire in April till the day he arrived in London in October, the indefatigable bishop covered the exact distance of 3,391¼ miles.

There is abundant evidence that Pococke was a hearty, good-humoured man, who made himself popular everywhere he went. Bishop Forbes has narrated an interesting anecdote of what took place in the house of a Mr. Murray, of Thurso, when a strange dish was put before the bishop, "which he thought to be Enammelet, but it happened to be Toasted Ears. 'Toasted ears!' said he, 'what is that?' 'Why,' said Mr. Murray, 'the ears of a calf toasted on bread.' He liked it much. But what surprised him most of all was the fine wheatbread he ate there. When they told him it was baked in a pot he was amazed, insomuch that it behoved them to assure him it was so before he could believe it, and he declared he had never ate better all his life. And so plentifully did he take of it that Mr. Murray joking said, 'Stop, my Lord, else your Lordship will raise a famine in ye country;' which pleased him so well that he called to his own servant, 'John, pray give me t'other cut of that

fine loaf!' " The good man, in fact, was quite embarrassed by the honours and hospitalities showered on him from place to place. He received the freedom of the borough from Glasgow, Perth, Lanark, and Aberdeen, as well as from such little townships as Tain, Forres, Nairn, and Dornoch, which were determined not to be outdone by the larger cities. There seems to have been very little ceremony connected with such functions in the eighteenth century, although, of course, there would be the inevitable banquet, sumptuously provided at the public expense. " At Aberdeen the Lord Provost came to see me, and would have engaged me to dine in their townhouse, but as I could not stay, they insisted on my supping with them and presented me with the freedom of the town." On all such occasions, the distinguished visitor would swear solemnly to be loyal to the king, and to preserve intact the ancient privileges of the borough. Then, in all probability, he would present to the astonished provost, as a memento of the occasion, a copy of his *Observations of Palestine or the Holy Land, Syria, Mesopotamia, Cyprus, and Candia, 1745.*

The real reason why the bishop could not tarry for these well-meant courtesies was that he was anxious to hasten on and view the antiquities of Scotland. The burgess ticket appointing him a citizen of Aberdeen might be couched in very good Latin, but it was not half so interesting as the

inscription to be seen on some ancient Roman altar a field or two away. And who was the provost of Tain, when all was said and done, when compared with Dervorgilla, daughter of Alexander, Lord of Galloway, wife of John Baliol, Lord of Castle Bernard, who died in 1260, and who founded convents? Pococke was the sort of man to flee thankfully from any banqueting-house in Scotland, if he could but behold the very spot where St. Ninian preached to the Picts in the time of Theodosius, or handle the mouldy remains of the *Urus* mentioned in Cæsar's *Commentaries*. And it is of such things as these that the diaries are full. Dumbarton is interesting to our traveller because it is the Alcluith of the Venerable Bede, Stranraer because it is the Perigonium of Ptolemy, New Kilpatrick because St. Patrick was born there, "and it is conjectured his ancestor was a patrician." Camden, Hollinshed, *The Chronicle of Melross* are quoted as familiarly as if the antiquary had carried them about with him in his knapsack, in lieu of sandwiches. Does the good man pause on the summit at Cairndow to wipe his perspiring brow and "rest-and-be-thankful"? How interesting then to reflect that he has been passing through the country of the Damnii and Epidii, and that Cantyre was formerly known as Epidium Promontorium! Does he stand on some lofty eminence from which he sees the county of Sutherland spread like a map before him? Then

be sure he is not at all thinking of the mists and the heather and the aspect of the hills. He is remembering with a thrill of pleasure that the district was once inhabited "by the Caroni to the west, by the Mortii to the east, by part of the Conavii to the north and part of the Cantii to the south." Pococke at one point suffered an agony of uncertainty and doubt as to whether the site of Caerlavrock Castle were the Carbantorigium of Ptolemy, or whether it should be identified with Uxellum, a little farther off. But all was changed to delight when, soon after, he was so fortunate as to come upon an ancient monument, and could trace with trembling hands the following inscription:—

ROBERT DE BRUS COUNTE DE CARRICK ET SENIOUR DE VAL DE ANNANDALE: 1300.

Especially was the Bishop delighted when he met with anything he could carry off with him and add to his unique collection of coins, ancient jewellery, and other treasures. Forts, barrows, crosses, and Gothic archways, of course, had to be left *in situ;* but the load on his servant's horse, alas! grew heavier every day, as now a Norwegian bowl-shaped brooch would be added to it, from the Isle of Lingay, and now a pigeon's egg embedded in white stalagmite, from the Cave of Slains. One thing particularly the bishop wished to take away with him, but it was not to be procured, and that was the nuptial

bedstead of Queen Anne. Pococke discovered this treasure in a house at Dunfermline, and straightway offered fifty guineas for it. But the owner, a Mrs. Walker, roundly told him that "all the gold and silver in Ireland was not fit to buy it," so the bishop had nothing for it but to remember the tenth commandment and withdraw disconsolate. This bedstead was subsequently presented to the Earl of Elgin, a heritor of the parish, and has since been converted into an ornamental chimney-piece at Broomhall.

But Pococke was not only interested in antiquities. As a man of science he had a quick discerning eye for natural history in all its branches. The reader of the journal is carefully informed that there were excellent fossils in one place and remarkably fine flounders in another. The mineral wells of Moffat, he is told, are "good in all scorbutick diseases." At Leadhills "no sort of fruit ripens except strawberries, not so much as a gooseberry." Pococke found at St. Catherines, in Loch Fyne, a kind of rock which "is soft when dug, and may be cut with a knife; it hardens in air; if oil is rubbed on the stone it turns black; burning turns it brown; rubbed with spermaceti it looks like a deep coloured serpentine." A stone which he discovered in Mull possessed still more wonderful properties. "A mariner's compass placed on it turned to the contrary point and veered everywhere about and would

not settle." Many strange things, too, were told him about eagles as he wandered through the Highlands. It was said that they killed the red deer "by seizing them about the neck, and fluttering their wings in their eyes," and one was known to have carried an infant in its beak for four miles to the mainland of Orkney from the Old Man of Hoy. In Sutherland Pococke was repeatedly told that goats in the heart of Scotland fed upon adders, "which I could not believe until it was confirmed to me here in such a manner that I could not withhold my belief in it; and 'tis added, they make a great noise when they kill them." Another strange animal he heard about was the wild cat "which is three times as big as the common cat, as the polecat is less; yellow-red in colour, their breasts and sides white. They take fowls and lambs and breed two at a time. I was assured that they sometimes bring forth in a large bird's nest, to be out of the reach of dogs."

Nor are the strange inhabitants of these regions altogether overlooked, although in the journals they occupy quite a subordinate position. The people of Shetland, we are told, differ considerably from those of Orkney in their dress, "in which they affect to be fine and have much of the German manners. They are very decent, and observers of form, extremely hospitable and civil to strangers." In Mull Pococke found the natives much addicted to the

chewing of a certain root called Charmele, "because it enabled them to drink whisky without being intoxicated." The inhabitants of Tiree, however, were more noble than those of Mull, in that "they were esteemed great natural geniuses, especially for poetry, chiefly of the lyric kind."

But Pococke, as became a church dignitary, reserved his warmest encomiums for those places in which the ordinances of religion were most observed. In this respect the honours seem to have been divided between Paisley and Kilmarnock. When the bishop arrived at the latter town "all the shops were shut, nor would they sell anything, and almost all the people were at church, it being the Fast Day before the Sacrament." Paisley he found to be no less seriously-minded. "The people here keep Sunday with great strictness. They all attend divine service and are not allowed to walk out on a Sunday in company. They have no holydays, and this preserves them perfectly sober and industrious, and if it could be kept to, it is certainly a very good regulation, even in a political point of view. They shut up their shops early in the evening and open late in the morning, and take proper refreshment."

Of the manners and customs of the people a few details are here and there inserted. "They spend commonly three days at funerals, one before and one after, and often more, especially those who are related and have any business to do, and those who

come from far; and this time is spent in eating and drinking very plentifully. The widow and children danced with others round the corpse till very lately." Pococke had a curious experience as he wended his way through Sutherlandshire. "Coming along the coast near a mile to Dunrobin, we were surprised at seeing half a dozen families, forming so many groups—viz., the man, his wife and children, each under a coverlet and reposing on the shore, in order to wait for the tide to go a-fishing." It appears that the good bishop was hospitably entertained everywhere, and could join in the general chorus in praise of a Highland breakfast. "There is always, besides butter and toasted bread, honey and jelly of currants and preserved orange peel."

Pococke was pleased with the country as a whole. He found it greatly prospering as a result of the Union, and, unlike Dr. Johnson and Captain Burt, he was impressed with the fine trees he saw frequently and the abundance of growing corn. Some places in particular pleased him exceedingly. Dumfries was "one of the neatest towns in Great Britain." The highway between Perth and Edinburgh he regarded as "the finest turnpike road in the whole Kingdom." "The most beautiful kitchen-garden, I believe, in the world" was at Blair Castle. Like all travellers, Pococke much admired the view of Inveraray Castle from the hills above Loch Fyne. He thought highly of Edinburgh, too, and praised

the clean flagstones of the streets "which are paved like St. James's Square." The only hint of a dislike is for the mists that chilled him in Aberdeenshire. "The easterly winds here bring rains, and in the summer fogs, which often come on early in the evening, continue all night and sometimes for whole days, and are very disagreeable though no way unwholesome, except that by their moisture they are apt to make people catch cold if they do not take care."

Pococke returned to Ireland after his tour in Scotland, and spent the remaining five years of his life in restoring the cathedral of Kilkenny and erecting there a college which still bears his name. But perhaps the most interesting monument to his memory is a huge granite boulder which is to be seen in the district of Chamounix. The brief inscription which it bears,

R. P. 1741

is intended as a record of the fact that it was Pococke who first guided a party of English tourists into that lonely valley. The visit to the Highlands in 1760 was almost as venturesome, and was undertaken into a region hardly less unknown. To-day the ever-increasing company of travellers who throng the remotest valleys of both Switzerland and Scotland may well look back with some interest and gratitude to the worthy bishop who entered them long ago as a pioneer.

XII

THOMAS PENNANT

XII

THOMAS PENNANT

(1769, 1772)

PENNANT is the conscientious traveller *par excellence,* the "chiel amang ye takin' notes." He visited Scotland in 1769 and 1772 and returned with so ample a record of his experiences that the reprint of them in Pinkerton's *Voyages and Travels* extends to over 550 closely printed pages of large quarto. Pennant brought to his investigations highly trained faculties and a cultivated mind. He was a landed gentleman from Flintshire, and one of the most learned naturalists of his day. Gilbert White's *Selborne* was first addressed to him in the form of a series of letters, and Linnæus was one of his correspondents. Pennant was a D.C.L. of Oxford, a Fellow of the Royal Society, and a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries. He wrote learned treatises on British, Arctic, and Indian Zoology, and the Natural History of Quadrupeds; and when he died, in 1793, he was in the midst of a vast projected work of fourteen volumes, to be called *Outlines of the Globe,* which was to describe im-

aginary journeys through every country in the world.

"Pennant is a whig, sir; a sad dog. But he's the best traveller I ever read. . . . He has greater variety of enquiry than almost any man, and has told us more than perhaps one in ten thousand could have done, in the time that he took." This is high praise from Dr. Johnson, but it is not unmerited. Pennant's book is a bewildering compendium of miscellaneous information respecting the climate, antiquities, customs, sports, industries, and superstitions of Scotland in the eighteenth century. The author sets down with equal impartiality and fulness the result of his enquiries into the government of the universities, the prevalence of blackmail, the revenues of the ancient monasteries, and the periodic migrations of shoals of herrings. On one page will be found a long catalogue of the pictures and curios to be seen in some old castle, and on the next, perhaps, a list of Highland diseases and their remedies. The reader has scarce begun to grasp, let us say, the details of the rental system in Scotland, or the use of the fiery cross, when he is treated to a dissertation on kittywakes and capercailzies, or drawn into the vortex of a description of Corrievreckan. Through all there is to be observed a wide knowledge of English literature, and an easy command of ancient learning. Our author quotes freely from Vergil and from Ovid, from Chaucer, Spenser,

Dryden, and Samuel Butler. He is as intimate with Agricola as with Macbeth or the Admirable Crichton. Now it is Sir David Lyndsay whom he quotes, in his description of a stag-hunt in the reign of King James V., and now an ancient statute of King Alexander I. respecting salmon. The foot-notes teem with references to Fordun, Boethius, and Olaus Magnus, while large appendices are devoted to the more leisurely discussion of such subjects as "The Gold Mines of Scotland," "The Massacre of the Colquhouns," "The Fasting Woman of Ross-shire," and "The Parallel Roads in Glen Roy."

From such a mass of material it is difficult to select what will give one a representative picture of the whole. Pennant visited Scotland when bogs were being drained and a way cut to make the Forth and Clyde Canal. Mr. John Golbourne, of Chester, "that honest and able engineer," had just entered into a contract with the magistrates of Glasgow "to deepen the channel of the river Clyde to seven feet at the quay, even at neap tides." Loch Lomond, it seems, was then encroaching on the shore, and it was proposed to lower the level of the lake a few feet so as to recover some thousands of acres of agricultural land then under water. It was the time when three separate congregations met for worship in Glasgow Cathedral, one of them in the crypt, "where they may truly say, *De profundis clamavi*;" and when a fine organ had recently been erected in

the Tron Church of Edinburgh, greatly to the concern of the godly in that city.

Like many another traveller into these regions, Pennant was greatly impressed with the poverty of the land, and he gives some harrowing pictures of scenes of misery in Islay, and of wandering groups in Skye, who "prowl like other animals along the shore to pick up limpets and other shellfish, the casual repast of hundreds during a part of the year." When we speak of the poverty of Scotland, however, it should be remembered that the wants of the people were few, and the food prices of the time extraordinarily low. Pennant could have bought beef in Aberdeen at 2½d. per lb., eggs in Inverness at seven a penny, and coal in Dunfermline at twenty-pence a ton. And if the people were poor, at any rate they thrived. Luss, when Pennant visited it, could show no fewer than six hale and hearty patriarchs, whose ages varied from eighty-six to ninety-four, and in Jura he met with an old woman of eighty "who could run down a sheep." Nor were the natives any less vigorous in mind than they were in body, if we may judge by the extraordinary craftsmen of genius whom Pennant met at Wick. "In this town lives a weaver who weaves a shirt with buttons and button holes entire without any seam, or the least use of the needle. But it is to be feared that he will scarce find any benefit from his

ingenuity, as he cannot afford his labour under five pounds a shirt."

The large towns of Scotland had already acquired something of their modern character when Pennant saw them. Paisley, in 1772, was famous for its industry in soap and tallow candles, "both of which are esteemed excellent of their kinds, as the gentlemen concerned spared no expense to bring their manufacture to perfection. Their candles, especially their moulded ones, are reckoned the best and most elegant that have been made in Scotland. They are made after the Kensington manner, and with this view they had a man from London at very high wages." Still more important was the thread industry, which had been introduced fifty years previously by a Mrs. Millar of Bargarran. "In other places girls are bred to it, here they may rather be said to be born to it, as almost every family makes some threads, or has made them formerly. It must be extremely agreeable to every man who wishes well to his country to see, in the summer season, both sides of the river and a great many other fields about the town covered with cloth and threads; and to hear, as he passes along the streets, the industrious and pleasant noise of weavers' looms and twist mills." Campbeltown was then, as now, noted for its whisky. "This seems a modern liquor, for in old times the distillation was from thyme, mint,

anise, and other fragrant herbs, and ale was much in use with them. The former had the same name with the usquebagh or water of life; but by Boethius' account it was taken with moderation. . . . At night am admitted a freeman of Campbeltown, and according to the custom of the place consult the Oracle of the Bottle about my future voyage, assisted by a numerous company of brother burgesses."

Pennant was much shocked by the position accorded to women in some parts of Scotland. "The tender sex (I blush for the Caithnesians) are the only animals of burden. They turn their patient backs to the dunghills and receive in their keises, or baskets, as much as their lords and masters think fit to fling in with their pitchforks, and then trudge to the fields in droves of sixty or seventy." Fishwives might be seen tramping to Peterhead market, a distance of sixteen miles, each carrying a load in her basket such as only two men could lift. Yet life even for them was not *all* drudgery. "These women are very fond of finery, and will load their fingers with trumpery rings, when they want both shoes and stockings." Like Captain Burt, Pennant noticed that the women of the Highlands wore a plaid over their heads during divine worship. But he was charitable enough to suppose that this was done "so as to exclude every object that might interrupt their devotions," for "they

keep drawing it forward in proportion as their attention increases."

With the reverent demeanour of Scotsmen during the ordinary religious services Pennant was much impressed, but he thought that the mode of observing "the Sacrament" left something to be desired. "It is celebrated but once in a year, when there are sometimes three thousand communicants, and as many idle spectators. Of the first, as many as possible crowd on each side of a long table, and the elements sometimes are rudely shoved from one to another; and in certain places, before the day is at an end, fighting and other indecencies ensue. It has often been made a season for debauchery; and to this day, Jack cannot always be persuaded to eat his meat like a Christian." Pennant had a poor opinion of the church architecture of Scotland. He was indignant that God should be "worshipped in a stable," and lost no opportunity of execrating the memory of that arch-devastator and iconoclast, John Knox. "How great is the horror of reflecting that the destruction of the cathedral of St. Andrews was owing to the barbarous zeal of a minister who, by his discourses, first inflamed and then permitted a furious crowd to overthrow edifices dedicated to that very Being he pretended to honour by their ruin!" Yet Pennant, ardent Episcopalian though he was, could not restrain his admiration for the Scottish Presbyterian ministers. "The clergy of

Scotland, the most decent and consistent in their conduct of any set of men I ever met with of their order, are at present much changed from the furious, illiterate, and enthusiastic teachers of the old times, and have taken up the mild method of persuasion, instead of the cruel discipline of corporal punishments. Science almost universally flourishes among them, and their discourse is not less improving than the table they entertain the stranger at is decent and hospitable. Few, very few, of them permit the bewitchery of dissipation to lay hold of them, notwithstanding they allow all the innocent pleasures of others, which, though not criminal in the layman, they know must bring the taint of levity on the churchman. They never sink their character by midnight brawls, by mixing with the gaming world, either in cards, cocking, or horse-races, but preserve with a narrow income a dignity too often lost among their brethren south of the Tweed."

No parts of Pennant's book are more interesting or valuable than those which describe the superstitions of the Highlands. The belief in witchcraft he found to be dead or dying, chiefly on account of the repeal of the Witch Act in 1736; but large numbers of people were still firmly convinced of the existence of ghosts and fairies. Charms and incantations were invoked to avert the evil eye. Circle would be formed within magic circle to exorcize "the thin gigantic hag called Glas-lich."

Weird rites and ceremonies of all kinds attended the mysteries of birth, of marriage, and of death. Women formed a cross on the last oatmeal bannock of their baking. Midwives gave new-born babes a spoonful of earth and whisky. Water acquired curative powers if stirred with some old flint arrow-head that the elves had buried. In some cases, there even survived the sacrifices and libations of early paganism. "Every one takes a cake of oatmeal, upon which are raised nine square knobs, each dedicated to some particular being, the supposed preserver of their flocks and herds, or to some particular animal, the real destroyer of them. Each person then turns his face to the fire, breaks off a knob, and, flinging it over his shoulder, says, 'This I give thee, preserve thou my horses; this to thee, preserve thou my sheep,' and so on. After that, they use the same ceremony to the noxious animals, 'This I give to thee, O fox! spare thou my lambs; this to thee, O hooded crow! this to thee, O eagle!'"

Of the national characteristics of Scotsmen, Pennant has much to say, chiefly by way of compliment. He was much surprised to meet so few beggars on his travels, which circumstance he attributed to the fact that "the people are possessed of a spirit that will struggle hard with necessity before it will bend to the taking of alms." He greatly admired the national love of sound learning, "for in North Britain there is no gentleman of ever so

small an estate but strictly attends to the education of his children, as the sure foundation of their future fortune." As for the common people, they were chiefly characterized by good manners, pride, inquisitiveness, and a genius for hospitality and religion. "They are much affected with the civility of strangers, and have in themselves a natural politeness and address, which often flows from the meanest when least expected. Through my whole tour, I never met with a single instance of national reflection; their forbearance proves them to be superior to the meanness of retaliation. I fear they pity us, but I hope not indiscriminately. They are excessively inquisitive after your business, your name, and other particulars of little consequence to them; most curious after the politics of the world, and when they can procure an old newspaper will listen to it with all the avidity of Shakespeare's blacksmith. They have much pride, and consequently are impatient of affronts and revengeful of injuries. They are decent in their general behaviour, inclined to superstition, yet attentive to the duties of religion, and are capable of giving a most distinct account of the principles of their faith."

Pennant was genuinely concerned for the welfare and prosperity of Scotland. He longed to see the power of feudalism broken, rents lowered, emigration stopped, the distress of the common people

relieved, and "the wealth of the Antilles" spread throughout the land. And he left it at Berwick with kindly feelings of regret. "I look back to the north, and with a grateful mind acknowledge every benefit I received from the remotest Hebrides to the present spot, whether I think of the hospitality of the rich, or the efforts of unblameable poverty, straining every nerve to accommodate me amidst dreary hills and ungenial skies. The little accidents of diet or lodgings affect not me. I look further than the mere differences of living or of customs to the good heart and extensive benevolence which softens every hardship, and turns into delicacies the grossest fare."

XIII

SAMUEL JOHNSON

XIII

SAMUEL JOHNSON

(1773)

"A GENEROUS and elevated mind is distinguished by nothing more certainly than by an eminent degree of curiosity, nor is that curiosity ever more agreeably or usefully employed than in examining the laws and customs of foreign nations." Such were the sentiments of the most representative Englishman of the eighteenth century when he set out for Scotland in the year 1773, dressed in "a full suit of plain brown clothes, with twisted hair buttons of the same colour, a large bushy, greyish wig, a plain shirt, black worsted stockings, and silver buckles." Dr. Samuel Johnson was certainly designed by nature to be a traveller. Had he only been rich enough, he once remarked, he would have loved to "go to Cairo and down the Red Sea to Bengal and take a ramble in India." It was also a fond ambition of his to "leave some Latin verses at the Grand Chartreuse," and on one occasion, says Boswell, he "expressed a particular enthusiasm with respect to visiting the wall of

China." But poverty first of all, and then old age, prevented the realisation of these happy dreams, and Johnson had perforce to content himself with such nearer flights as a tour in Scotland or in Wales or a flying visit to Paris might afford.

Of these the journey into Scotland was by far the most difficult and perilous. The average Londoner of the mid-eighteenth century regarded the Highlands as a wild, inhospitable region, from which had just descended hordes of savage warriors in the train of the Young Pretender. To leave the safe and comfortable haunts of the metropolis, and penetrate into a land of bogs and Jacobites, was to face risks which might well strike terror into the heart of even the most foolhardy adventurer. Johnson especially was a Londoner of Londoners, and it must have seemed incredible that he of all men should ever be willing to exchange Fleet Street for Corriechatachin, or venture his unwieldy body in an open boat among the swirling eddies of the Western Isles. But that "eminent degree of curiosity," which marks the generous mind, was strong enough in Dr. Johnson to bear down every obstacle. The philosopher was attracted by the prospect of "contemplating a system of life almost totally different from that which he was accustomed to see." Ever since Martin's *Account of Scotland* had been put into his hands, as a young man, he had conceived an insatiable desire to look on the face of the country for himself,

to see its rocks and waterfalls and frowning mountains, to hear old traditions and observe antiquated manners. And if the venture meant incessant movement and activity in the open air, what could be imagined more calculated to recommend it? Was it not just the occupation for which he had often longed? "If I had no duties," wrote Johnson once, "and no references to the future, I would spend my life in a postchaise with a pretty woman."

In the present instance, horseback had to be substituted for the postchaise, and, instead of the pretty woman, there was—James Boswell. A stranger complement to himself could scarcely have been imagined. Johnson was sixty-four at the time, and Boswell thirty-three. The former was a moralist and a profound thinker, gifted with an unusually masculine and robust understanding. The latter may best be described as a fop of genius, who had not wit enough to discern when he was making himself ridiculous. Boswell was the sort of person who could write gravely of himself that "he had thought more than anybody supposed, and had a pretty good stock of general learning and knowledge." He had a way of producing Ogden's *Sermons on Prayer* during the tour, in season and out of season, and was fastidious enough on one occasion to fold himself delicately in sheets and sleep off like a gentleman, while Johnson was content to pass the night in a riding-coat on the floor.

Maclean of Coll took the true measure of James Boswell when he bade him hold on to a rope during a storm at sea, not because there was any need for his doing so, but simply to keep the fellow out of mischief. Yet Johnson had a great liking for Boswell. His name was a password everywhere, and "his gaiety of conversation and civility of manners were sufficient to counteract the inconveniences of travel" in the barren and cheerless regions they were about to enter. And if annoying and fatuous remarks did occasionally fall from him to try the doctor's patience, still, Boswell was "the best travelling companion in the world," and he had the distinguishing merit of being "a Scotchman without the faults of one." "Sir," said Johnson to him in a word of generous praise, "you are the most *unscottified* of your countrymen. You are almost the only instance I have known who did not at every other sentence bring in some other Scotchman."

The compliment, it is to be feared, was but a left-handed one, for, in thus eulogizing the man, the sage somewhat vilified the nation. That Johnson had a prejudice against Scotsmen is well known. He scrupled not to define *oats*, in his dictionary, as "a grain which in England is generally given to horses, but in Scotland supports the people," and when the offence was pointed out to him, he candidly admitted that the words were intended to wound.

But the cause of his antipathy is not so easy to discover. One theory is that Johnson never could forgive the Scots for having delivered King Charles I. to his persecutors; another, that he had a violent dislike to the statesmanship of Lord Bute. Reynolds was of opinion that the prejudice was aroused by the tendency of Scotsmen, when in England, to employ none but Scottish tradesmen and Scottish servants. Boswell concluded that he must have been soured by meeting so many Scots adventurers in London who had been advanced beyond their merits, and he tells us how indignant he once was on hearing that a Scotsman had promoted a friend of his to the headmastership of an English school, merely on the ground that he was a fellow-countryman. The probability is that Johnson was more amused than anything else by the inveterate disposition of Scotsmen to stand by one another through thick and thin, and to uphold the honour of their country at whatever cost. "A Scotchman must be a sturdy moralist who does not love Scotland better than truth; he will always love it better than inquiry; and if falsehood flatters his vanity, he will not be very diligent to detect it." It is not that he did not like individual Scotsmen when they merited his favour. Six out of seven of his amanuenses were of that nationality, and he once said to Boswell, "When I find a Scotchman to whom an Englishman is as a Scotchman, that Scotchman is as an English-

man to me." One thing, however, never failed to tickle him. If Scotsmen were so proud of their country, why did they ever leave it? Leith, he said, might well be pronounced Lethe, "for when a Scotchman sets out from this port for England, he forgets his native land." Scotland, it was true, might have fine prospects. So had Norway fine prospects. And Lapland had fine prospects. "But, sir, let me tell you that the finest prospect a Scotchman ever sees is the high road that leads to England."

This was the high road, then, which Johnson himself was now to travel, but in an opposite direction. The route lay round the east coast of Scotland, from Berwick to Inverness, and thence across country to the Isle of Skye. From this point the travellers wended their way southwards through Coll and Mull, returning to London by Oban, Inveraray, Glasgow, and Auchinleck. During the ninety-four days which this journey occupied, Johnson constrained himself to put forth an incredible amount of personal exertion, and met with a bewildering variety of scenes and incidents. He visited dukes in their mansion-houses, professors in the universities, and interviewed the poorest crofters in their miserable hovels. He was taken everywhere and shown everything, from the Buller of Buchan to the horn of Rorie More in Dunvegan Castle. He met Flora Macdonald

in her ancestral home, and slept in the self-same bed which Bonnie Prince Charlie had once occupied. And some things he saw which were probably not pointed out to him. He noticed with surprise that in Scotland there were "stone hedges," and houses that turned their gables to the street. He marvelled to find a harpsichord in Inchkenneth, gooseberries in Skye, and an orchard in Fochabers. He saw, what he had never seen before, "limpets and mussels in their natural state," as well as boys and girls in a similar condition, running about, that is to say, without shoes and stockings. Caves were were shown to him where once entire clans had been smoked and smothered, and he was called on to speculate on the mysteries of druid temples and of hornless cattle.

How vividly the observer of all this is brought before us in those incomparable journals which both he and Boswell have left for our edification! Anon he is displaying himself to the citizens of Aberdeen, proudly wearing his new burgess ticket like a feather in his cap, or he is strutting about Coll with broadsword and target, and a blue Highland bonnet perched upon his wig. We see him now being carried ashore by the stalwart boatmen of Iona; now sleeping peacefully in a wayside hut, with a coloured handkerchief about his head; now solemnly declaiming on a wild moor, and in the midst of a storm of rain, the lines spoken by Macbeth when

he met the witches; and now standing for some time with his ear to the drone of a bagpipe. Johnson could do this with impunity because, on his own confession, "to know a drum from a trumpet, and a bagpipe from a guitar" was the utmost extent of his musical knowledge. Perhaps the most amazing scene of all was that which might have been witnessed in the Isle of Raasay when, to beguile, let us suppose, the tedium of a wet evening, a certain married lady of the company seated herself on Johnson's knee, put her arms round his neck and began to kiss him. The doctor was in no way embarrassed by these attentions. He had already exalted to the same honoured position a certain young woman "who came to consult him on Methodism." On this occasion, he good-humouredly responded to the attentions he received, and challenged his fair admirer to make a kissing-game of it. "Do it again," he exclaimed, after one taste of the ruby lips, "and let us see who will tire first."

These, however, were but occasional relaxations. Usually he was claimed by much more serious pursuits. He had come in search of knowledge, and most diligently did he probe about in all sorts of corners to acquire it. It is interesting to find how extensive was the range of subjects on which Johnson was prepared to exercise that "eminent degree of curiosity," which he had noted as the distinguishing mark of a generous and elevated

mind. He enquired into funeral customs and marriage dowries. He endeavoured to learn what were the relations subsisting between laird, factor, and tenant; how many fighting men each of the islands had been able to raise in the Jacobite Rising and in the American War; and what had been the effect of depriving the natives of their arms and Highland dress. Why was it that in certain places eels had come to be generally disliked? What was peat made of, and why was it combustible? How did foxes and other preying animals find their way over from the mainland to the Isle of Skye? For what mysterious reason was Loch Ness never frozen over, and how was it to be explained that two huge rocks were perched on the top of the island of Coll? Why should castles be built on the ends of promontories, and what were the proportions of charcoal and saltpetre in the making of gunpowder? These were some of the problems and speculations on which the fertile brain of Johnson was occupied unceasingly.

Nor did he content himself with playing the humble part of a listener and enquirer. Johnson would be talking, and talking constantly and ostentatiously. Whether the subject were tanning or brewing or coining, he delivered himself sententiously and authoritatively upon it, to the astonishment of his hearers. If other topics failed, he was ready to take either side in a discussion as to

whether the London shopkeeper was in any way superior to an American savage. It need hardly be said that the terms in which he expressed himself were characteristically Johnsonian. The brandy he tasted at Inverary was pungent in its smell but not "empyreumatic," while the singing of the Skye boatmen was decidedly "proceleusmatic." As for certain mountains, it would be incorrect to call them immense. They could only properly be described as "considerable protuberances." Johnson was wise enough, being in Scotland, to talk extensively and well on theological subjects, and he made weighty observations during the tour on Immortality, the Trinity, the Atonement, and the Origin of Evil. The theme, however, on which he seems to have discoursed most warmly (for the laughter of Boswell at this point irritated him extremely) was the care and management of seraglios. Johnson could never bear to have aught but vegetable substances worn next the skin, and on one occasion he astonished the company by gravely and deliberately remarking that he had "often thought" that if ever he kept a seraglio, he would make a point of insisting that none of the ladies belonging to it should wear woollen gowns. Either the garments should be linen or they should be cotton.

The three subjects of enquiry to which Johnson devoted the greatest amount of attention were second sight, emigration, and the controversy respecting

Ossian. He was most anxious to find evidence for the power of penetrating futurity, supposed to be possessed by certain Highland seers, but he altogather failed to collect any that could satisfy him. "I never could advance my curiosity to conviction," he wrote, "but came away at last only willing to believe." In emigration Johnson was interested because of what it signified, the decay of the ancient feudalism. As a high-and-dry old Tory, he took very unkindly to the break-up of the older institutions, and was never better pleased than when Boswell flatteringly assured him that he would have made a splendid chief. For Macleod of Raasay he felt the greatest reverence, inasmuch as he ruled over an island which had remained in the family for more than four hundred years, and he beamed with satisfaction when, through the manœuvering of Boswell, an invitation was extended to him to dine with the Duke of Argyll. Yet Johnson could not but observe, and observe with sorrow, that a great change was passing over Scottish social life. The old happy days of feudalism were gone or going. Government by the State was rapidly taking the place of self-government by the clans. Rents were going up; the chiefs themselves were degenerating from patriarchal rulers to rapacious landlords; and old targets of war were being debased to become the covers of farmers' buttermilk barrels. What wonder that an increasing number of Scots-

men were beginning to look for happiness and prosperity on a foreign strand, and that a new dance had recently been invented in the Highlands and called *America,* "to show how emigration catches till a whole neighbourhood is set afloat."

But the most intricate problem of all was that of Ossian. Macpherson's poem of *Fingal* was published in 1762, and claimed to be a faithful English translation of early epic remains in the Gaelic language. Johnson could not bring himself to believe that any such originals ever had existed, and he set forth from London resolved to ferret out those alleged ancient Erse MSS., if they were anywhere to be found. In vain various "proofs" were put before him. Boswell saw three MSS. which he thought had "a duskyness of antiquity" about them. Persons were brought forward who remembered or could recite a few familiar lines. When learned ministers were consulted, they could not be persuaded to admit that they had been deceived on a point that touched so nearly the honour of their country. But still the stubborn fact remained: not one of Macpherson's original MSS. had ever been produced, or honestly deposited in a public library. It could only be concluded that they were nowhere to be seen, and the Gaelic language possessed no written document that was older than a hundred years. So convinced was

Johnson on this point that he jocularly offered to purchase and to live in an outlying little island called Scalpa, in order to set up a printing press there and publish to the world nothing but Erse MSS.

What, then, were Johnson's impressions of the country as a whole? In the first place, he was struck by the absence of large trees. "A tree might be a show in Scotland," he wrote, "as a horse in Venice." One indeed was pointed out to him in St. Andrews, and he laughed uproariously to be told that there was at least one other in the country, some miles away. With this one exception, Johnson affirmed, not till he had travelled two hundred miles did he see a single tree that was older than himself. In these distressing circumstances, his own stout oak cudgel became an article of special value to him. This was the famous staff whose length was over six feet, and whose diameter at the upper end was nearly three inches. Johnson had the mortification to lose this precious companion in his wanderings through Mull, and he grieved over the loss inordinately, for there were nails driven into it at intervals which enabled him to take measurements by the foot and by the yard. Boswell endeavoured to console him with the hope that the stick might yet be recovered, but Johnson was incredulous. "No, no, my friend," said he, "it is not to be

expected that any man in Mull who has got it will part with it. Consider, sir, the value of a *piece of timber* here!"

In the second place, Johnson was unfavourably impressed by the decay of learning in the towns he visited. He maintained that George Buchanan was the only man of genius the country had produced, and challenged anyone to name a single work of value written by a Scottish minister since the country had sunk into Presbyterianism. "Learning in Scotland is like bread in a besieged town. Every man gets a little, but no man gets a full meal." So backward, indeed, appeared the state of culture and the polite arts, that Johnson was constrained to suggest that a new university might easily be established, and staffed by the various members of the London Club! This jest occasioned much merriment to Johnson, and was rolled as a sweet morsel under his tongue throughout the tour.

As for the religious aspect of the life he saw around him, Johnson could never reconcile himself to the worship and polity of Presbyterianism. He invariably gave an extra shilling to the clerk when he was taken to an English church, and he presented Lord Monboddo's black servant with a like amount when he learned that he had been duly baptized and properly confirmed. On the name of John Knox being mentioned, and the place of his burial discussed, Johnson loudly exclaimed, "I hope he

is buried in the highway." A Church did not deserve to be treated as a Church which presumed to dispense with a liturgy in its worship, and sometimes even omitted the Lord's Prayer. So Johnson steadily refused to attend a Scottish service, even though the preacher were to be Dr. Robertson himself. "I will hear him," he said, "if he will get up into a tree and preach, but I will not give a sanction by my presence to a Presbyterian Assembly."

Another thing which impressed Johnson unfavourably in Scotland was its poverty and destitution. What wealth there was in the country, he maintained, had come to it through the Union with England, and even that highly advantageous partnership had not been able to make much difference as yet. "If one man in Scotland gets possession of two thousand pounds," he snorted, "what remains for the rest of the nation?" Two hundred years previously, Scotsmen had been accustomed to boast that as many as a hundred eggs could be bought in the country for a penny. But they had grown wiser since those days, and now such stories were fewer, "lest the foreigner should happen to collect, not that eggs were many, but that pence were few." Johnson once remarked, in his own ponderous and pregnant way, that the cottager of the remoter districts was "seldom incommoded by corpulence," and laughed heartily over an anecdote which Wilkes

would relate of one who had completely plundered no fewer than seven Scottish islands, only to re-embark with a net profit of three-and-sixpence!

But if in a few particulars Scotland appeared at a disadvantage, it made ample amends for all by the scale and magnificence of its hospitality. On this point Johnson seems to have been quite overcome. Civility, he found, was part of the natural character of Highlanders, and he could say that he was "treated in every house as if he had come to confer a benefit." The hospitality of Skye, especially, was like that of the golden age. So pleased was Johnson with the welcome he received at Raasay that, while there, he even fancied himself to be Ulysses, and the place Phæacia, and remarked in an undertone to Boswell, "I know not how we shall get away." Perhaps, when we remember that this was the place where there was dancing every night, and where a lively little woman sat upon his knee, we shall scarcely be surprised that his affections were a little warmed. Most astonishing circumstance of all, the food in Scotland was of the best. Johnson, who was a skilled trencherman and a very fair judge of a good dinner, was regaled with veal in Edinburgh, roasted kid in Inverness, and admirable venison and generous wine in the Castle of Dunvegan. At Aberdeen he consumed several platefuls of Scotch broth, with barley and peas in it, and though he never tasted so strange a dish

before, he was graciously pleased to commend it with the remark, "I don't care how soon I eat it again." Johnson found clean table linen and silver plate in the remotest Highlands, and only once had to fall back on a horn spoon. Best of all, he was everywhere provided with plentiful libations of tea, and had lavished on him the oatcakes, marmalades and etceteras of a Scottish breakfast, "a meal in which the Scots, whether of the lowlands or the mountains, must be confessed to excel us." These good things atoned for many hardships. "If an epicure could remove by a wish, in quest of sensual gratification, wherever he had supped, he would breakfast in Scotland."

The climax of the whole tour was undoubtedly the visit to Iona. When Johnson first set foot on this sacred ground, and beheld the impressive ruins of its former greatness, he was moved to sentiments of reverence which he has splendidly expressed in a well-known passage: "We were now treading that illustrious island, which was once the luminary of the Caledonian regions, whence savage clans and roving barbarians derived the benefits of knowledge and the blessings of religion. To abstract the mind from all local emotion would be impossible if it were endeavoured, and would be foolish if it were possible. Whatever withdraws us from the power of our senses, whatever makes the past, the distant, or the future predominate over the present, advances

us in the dignity of thinking beings. Far from me and from my friends be such frigid philosophy, as may conduct us indifferent and unmoved over any ground which has been dignified by wisdom, bravery, or virtue. That man is little to be envied, whose patriotism would not gain force upon the plain of Marathon, or whose piety would not grow warmer among the ruins of Iona."

It would be impossible to follow Johnson through the mazes of profound reflection upon life to which his Scottish experiences gave rise. One characteristic example of his ponderings must suffice. On hearing it reported that the phantoms of second sight were mostly evil, he fell into a strain of pensive, melancholy brooding on the miseries of the world. "Good seems to have the same proportion in those visionary scenes as it obtains in real life; almost all remarkable events have evil for their basis, and are either miseries incurred or miseries escaped. Our sense is so much stronger of what we suffer than of what we enjoy, that the ideas of pain predominate in almost every mind. What is recollection but a revival of vexations, or history but a record of wars, treasons, and calamities? Death, which is considered as the greatest evil, happens to all. The greatest good, be it what it will, is the lot but of a part."

These morbid moralisings, however, were mostly reserved for the journal. In the relaxation of social

intercourse, Johnson was the gayest and cheerfullest of men. No one could turn a compliment more neatly than he, especially where the ladies were concerned, and he had clearly come to Scotland resolved both to please and to be pleased. He pressed half-a-crown on poor creatures whose utmost expectation was a shilling. He diverted himself, and his friends also, by gathering a township of Highland children into rows, and giving each one of them a copper penny. If some old crone had entertained him in her hut, he purchased her goodwill by a pinch of snuff, and if he came upon a company of soldiers from Fort Augustus, he furnished them with the means of indulging in a carouse. "All that we gave them was not much, but it detained them in the barn, either merry or quarrelling the whole night, and in the morning they went back to their work with great indignation at the bad quality of the whisky." Can we wonder that the good doctor was fêted and acclaimed everywhere he went, and that his departure was the signal for admiring friends to vie with one another in shouting, "Toctor Shonson, Toctor Shonson, your health, your health!" With all these expressions of kindly feeling, the benevolent old gentleman was manifestly delighted. "Tell your friends," he wrote on his return home, "how well I speak of Scotch politeness, and Scotch hospitality, and Scotch beauty, and of everything Scotch but

Scotch oatcakes and Scotch prejudices." The great tour was over, and had proved a complete success. Johnson brought back with him to London fewer dislikes, an enlarged circle of ideas, and the materials for a new book. He left behind him in Scotland, besides his lost cudgel, a host of new acquaintances and enthusiastic friends, every one of whom could say of him, in the words of Donald M'Leod, "When you see him first, you are struck with awful reverence; then you admire him; and then you love him cordially."

XIV

SYDNEY SMITH

XIV

SYDNEY SMITH

(1798-1803)

AMONG those whom the agitated state of the Continent during the French Revolution drove to Edinburgh rather than to Weimar or to Paris for a university education was one Michael Beach, of Williamstrip, together with his tutor, the Rev. Sydney Smith. Smith, in 1798, was a young clergyman of twenty-seven, who had gladly embraced the opportunity of migrating to the northern capital from an obscure country curacy near Salisbury. In Edinburgh he found himself in the midst of a galaxy of brilliant and able men, such as Dugald Stewart, Francis Jeffrey, Henry Mackenzie, Thomas Campbell, and Walter Scott. Yet five years were not to elapse before the young curate from England would take a foremost place even among these celebrities. This rapid success was brought about partly by the fame of his preaching at Charlotte Chapel, but still more by the part he played in the founding of the *Edinburgh Review*, and in the pungent and witty articles contributed

thereto. It was evident that, whether he expressed himself by the voice or by the pen, here was a man whose opinions could not be overlooked.

We are not here concerned with the general story of Smith's doings while in Edinburgh, his chemical experiments, or his marriage with Miss Pybus, but solely with his impressions of Scotland and the Scots. These have been fully recorded for us by his daughter, Lady Holland, in a paragraph, the opening sentence of which has long become famous. "It requires a surgical operation to get a joke well into a Scotch understanding. Their only idea of wit, or rather that inferior variety of this electric talent which prevails occasionally in the North, and which, under the name of WUT, is so infinitely distressing to people of good taste, is laughing immoderately at stated intervals. They are so imbued with metaphysics that they even make love metaphysically. I overheard a young lady of my acquaintance, at a dance in Edinburgh, exclaim, in a sudden pause of the music, 'What you say, my Lord, is very true of love in the *aibstract*, but'—here the fiddlers began fiddling furiously, and the rest was lost. No nation has so large a stock of benevolence of heart: if you meet with an accident, half Edinburgh immediately flocks to your door to inquire after your *pure* hand or your *pure* foot, and with a degree of interest that convinces you their whole hearts are in the inquiry. You find they

usually arrange their dishes at dinner by the points of the compass; 'Sandy, put the gigot of mutton to the south, and move the singet sheep's head a wee bit to the nor-west.' If you knock at the door, you hear a shrill female voice from the fifth flat shriek out, 'Wha's chapping at the door?' which is presently opened by a lassie with short petticoats, bare legs, and thick ankles. My Scotch servants bargained they were not to have salmon more than three times a week, and always pulled off their stockings, in spite of my repeated objurgations, the moment my back was turned.

"Their temper stands anything but an attack on their climate. They would have you believe they can ripen fruit; and, to be candid, I must own in remarkably warm summers I have tasted peaches that made most excellent pickles; and it is upon record that at the siege of Perth, on one occasion, the ammunition failing, their nectarines made admirable cannon balls. Even the enlightened mind of Jeffrey cannot shake off the illusion that myrtles flourish at Craig Crook. In vain I have represented to him that they are of the genus *Carduus*, and pointed out their prickly peculiarities. In vain I have reminded him that I have seen hackney-coaches drawn by four horses in the winter, on account of the snow; that I have rescued a man blown flat against my door by the violence of the wind, and black in the face; that even the experienced Scotch

fowls did not venture to cross the streets, but sidled along, tails aloft, without venturing to encounter the gale. Jeffrey sticks to his myrtle illusions, and treats my attacks with as much contempt as if I had been a wild visionary, who had never breathed his caller air, nor lived and suffered under the rigour of his climate, nor spent five years in discussing metaphysics and medicine in that garret of the earth—that knuckle-end of England—that land of Calvin, oat-cakes, and sulphur."

That Smith did not always dip his pen in irony may be judged from the following more serious and judicious extract. "The best way of giving you an idea of the Scotch is to show you in what they principally differ from the English. In the first place (to begin with their physical peculiarities) they are larger in body than the English; and the women, in my opinion (I say it to my shame) are handsomer than the English women. Their dialect is very agreeable. The Scotch certainly do not understand cleanliness; they are poorer than the English; they are a cautious and a discreet people; they are very much in earnest in their religion, though less so than they were. In England I maintain (except amongst ladies in the middle class of life) there is no religion at all. The clergy of England have no more influence over the people at large than the cheesemongers of England. In Scotland the clergy are extremely active in the

discharge of their functions, and are, from the hold they have on the minds of the people, a very important body of men. The common people are extremely conversant with the scriptures; are really not so much pupils as formidable critics to their preachers; many of them are well read in controversial divinity. They are perhaps in some points of view the most remarkable nation in the world; and no country can afford an example of so much order, morality, economy, and knowledge amongst the lower classes of society."

Smith never forgot his stay in Scotland, and often looked back to it with the fondness of regret that it was so soon over. "I left Edinburgh with great heaviness of heart; I knew what I was leaving, and was ignorant to what I was going. My good fortune will be very great, if I should ever again fall into the society of so many liberal, correct, and instructed men, and live with them on such terms of friendship as I have done in Edinburgh. . . . . When shall I see Scotland again? Never shall I forget the happy days I spent there, amidst odious smells, barbarous sounds, bad suppers, excellent hearts, and the most enlightened and cultivated understandings."

XV

DOROTHY WORDSWORTH

XV

DOROTHY WORDSWORTH

(1803)

BURNS was seven years dead, and Scott was a young lawyer of thirty-one, when the two most distinguished poets then living in England set forth from the town of Keswick to cross the Scottish border. Scotland in 1803 was well worth visiting. The glamour of Fingal and of Ossian still clung to the dim mists and mountains of the north, and there were eyes that still glistened at the remembrance of Rob Roy. On the other hand, *The Lady of the Lake* was not yet published, so that the throng of English tourists was still to come. To the southerner, Scotland was a country of mystery and wonder. Its glories of scenery and romance were beginning to be guessed, but hitherto it could not be said that they were fully known. Wordsworth and Coleridge were eager to explore them. They had recently produced a small volume of *Lyrical Ballads,* in which the startlingly new doctrine of a return to nature and simplicity in poetry had been boldly advocated. They had

retired to the mountains and lakes of Cumberland, in order to work out these principles in scenes most fitted to advance them. And now it was their ambition to visit Scotland. Amid its far glens and solitary grandeurs some fresh inspiration for their muse was almost certain to be found.

Animated by this hope, they set out together on the 14th of August, having provided themselves with an "outlandish Hibernian vehicle," led by a sorry horse which so frequently took fright and backed into the ditch that it had itself to be led through many a weary mile. The third occupant of the jaunting-car was Wordsworth's sister, than whom, surely, no woman ever carried a sharper pair of eyes, or a more watchful and tender and sympathetic heart. Dorothy Wordsworth was essentially a poet. She wrote no verse, but she was frequently the first to detect things of beauty and delight, which William had the genius afterwards to describe, and she was certainly not the least soulful of the three remarkable persons who were packed into that Irish gig. In addition, Dorothy possessed what her two fellow-travellers lamentably lacked, a practical eye to the affairs of ordinary life. Samuel Rogers tells us that while Wordsworth and Coleridge were absorbed in talking about poetry during the tour, "the whole care of looking out for cottages where they might get refreshment and pass the night, as well as of seeing that their poor horse

was fed and littered, devolved upon Miss Wordsworth." Dorothy saw to all those things as a matter of course. At the same time she found leisure to jot down her impressions of the country through which they were passing, in a journal which has come to be one of the treasures of our literature.

The route they were to follow led them up Nithsdale and down the valley of the Clyde to Lanark, Glasgow, Dumbarton, and Loch Lomond, thence by Inveraray to Loch Awe, Loch Etive, and Ballachulish, and then home by Glencoe, Tyndrum, Stirling, Edinburgh, and Melrose. It was an adventurous journey for poets to make in those days, and rough fare and rougher entertainment were the best that could be expected. The food might be "verra halesome," as they were told it was, but it was not always appetizing to English palates. At Inveroran the travellers sat down famishing to breakfast, only to find that "the butter was not eatable, the barley cakes were fusty, the oatcake was so hard that they could not chew it, and there were only four eggs in the house, which had been boiled as hard as hard stones." Even worse than some of the meals were the rooms in which they had to eat them. Miss Wordsworth, who had all a woman's fastidiousness about seeing things clean, and who came from the neatest and daintiest cottage in all Westmoreland, would be obliged to sit down to tea in an inn parlour where

"the tables were unwiped, the chairs were disordered, the floor was dirty, and the smell of liquor was most offensive;" or she would have to put up with the accommodation of some hut where the smoke got out through the window and the rain came in through the door, so that "the lasses with bare feet got wet as if they had been walking through street puddles." It is true they were occasionally cheered with better fare. Red and white wines were put before the travellers in Glencoe, and once they had a really good dinner of "fresh salmon, a fowl, gooseberries and cream, and potatoes." But, in the main, travelling in Scotland was no luxury. The Scottish country inns and houses of the time were cheerless and unattractive places. Over all there were the marks of dinginess and neglect, and a dirt which William could only describe as "Hottentotish."

Even more surprising than the filthiness of the inns was the sulkiness of some owners of those places of refreshment. At Luss the Wordsworths had to shout both loud and long before any attention would be paid to them by the hotel-keeper. At Blair Athol they were unceremoniously refused admission on a wet night, although they knew that within there were beds enough and to spare. Clearly, the Scottish people could be "thrawn" at times, especially where English tourists were concerned. The boatmen on Loch Etive, she wrote, "moved

with a surly tardiness, as if glad to make us know they were our masters," and at Luss she found that "the mistress was na verra willing to gie fire."

On the other hand, none could be more cordial and generous than the Scots when they were so minded. "Hoot, yes! ye'll get that," was the cheery, comforting remark which gladdened poor Dorothy's heart in many a wayside hut, a remark which seemed to her to be particularly amusing, inasmuch as it suggested a perpetual consciousness of the difficulty with which things in general were to be procured. Sometimes, when the genuine Highland spirit of hospitality failed to manifest itself, a friendly curiosity sufficed to secure for them a passing welcome. The natives were confounded at so strange a car. They were puzzled still more when they beheld its occupants. And the unheard of object of their journey perplexed them most of all. Wordsworth sought to ingratiate a group of harvesters in the Trossachs by telling them that he had come all the way from England to admire their beautiful country. But the remark was only greeted by shouts of derisive laughter. At Peebles, when the poet was walking calmly and decorously to church, he was waylaid and examined lest he should be some spy in the pay of the French government. At Loch Linnhe he was pestered with questions as to the size and value of his estate in England. As for the lady of the party, the all-

absorbing problem was, "Is she married?" On the enquiry being answered in the negative, "To be sure," said one, kindly, but in a tone of some surprise, "there is great promise for virgins in heaven."

Such, then, were the impressions which some Scotsmen formed of the poets who had come among them. What were the impressions which the poets formed of Scotland? It would take too long to go into these matters in detail, or to indicate with what feelings they visited the homes and haunts of Burns, or looked at the good sword of William Wallace in Dumbarton Castle, or listened to Walter Scott reciting his new poem, *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, after having been personally conducted by him over the ruins of Melrose Abbey. Of the country as a whole, they seem to have had the feeling that it wore a "foreign" aspect. Lanark, save for its pall of truly British smoke, showed to Miss Wordsworth "a sort of French face." Inveraray Castle made her think of Venice, as she imagined it from pictures seen in raree-shows. Edinburgh's rocky outline, obscured by mist and rain, was "like her childhood's conception of Bagdad or Balsora," as she had often read of them in the *Arabian Nights' Entertainments*. "In almost every part of Scotland," she wrote, "we were reminded ten times of France or Germany for once of England." Even when England was

recalled, and compared with Scotland, it was generally in some way to the disadvantage of the latter. The cottages at Luss seemed poor beside those of Somerset, which she knew to be overgrown with roses and with myrtles. Dumbarton made her think of the Thames in Kent which was "much superior in richness and softness to the Clyde," though inferior in grandeur. The country round Loch Dochart had a "meagre, nipped up, and shrivelled" appearance, in comparison with the North of England; and Strathearn, while it recalled Wensleydale, yet lacked altogether a certain softness and unity and way of "melting together," which the latter alone conspicuously possessed.

It is possible that Miss Wordsworth, in making these comparisons, was influenced a little by sentimental predilections, predilections which she was always willing that Scotsmen should entertain, from a different point of view. There is an amusing passage in the *Journal*, in which she notes the opinion of a smoke-dried old crone that the sights to be seen in and around Dryburgh were such as could not be paralleled anywhere in England, or in Scotland either. Another old woman fiercely resented the idea that any other town was comparable to Leadhills. The ferryman at Loch Achray assured his lady visitor that the lake by which he himself lived and worked was "far bonnier than Loch Lomond," and he was convinced "she would

be often talking of that night when she got back to England." With those local attachments and patriotic ardours, Dorothy was too generous-hearted not to sympathize. She noted with entire approval in her *Journal* the remark of a minister of Callander, who concluded a six-paged pamphlet on his district with the remark, "In a word, the Trossachs beggars all description." "A Scotsman," she wrote, "is always pleased with his own abode; be it what it may, it is a 'verra bonny spot.'"

But Dorothy Wordsworth had not only a poet's eye for the beautiful in nature. She possessed that other and far more uncommon faculty, the power to analyse the hidden secret of its charm. Here, for example, is her description of the view to be seen from the little island of Inch-ta-vannach on Loch Lomond:—

"We had not climbed far before we were stopped by a sudden burst of prospect, so singular and beautiful that it was like a flash of images from another world. . . It was an outlandish scene—we might have believed ourselves in North America . . . . a new world in its great permanent outline and composition, and changing at every moment in every part of it by the effect of the sun and wind, and mist and shower and cloud, and the blending lights and deep shades which took the place of each other, traversing the lake in every direction. The whole was indeed a strange mixture of soothing

and restless images, of images inviting to rest, and others hurrying the fancy away into an activity still more pleasing than repose. Yet, intricate and homeless, that is, without lasting abiding-place for the mind, as the prospect was, there was no perplexity; we had still a guide to lead us forward. Wherever we looked, it was a delightful feeling that there was something beyond. Meanwhile, the sense of quiet was never lost sight of; the little peaceful lakes among the islands might make you forget the great water, Loch Lomond, was so near; and yet are more beautiful because you know that it is so; they have their own bays and creeks sheltered within a shelter."

So in a thousand passages of rare poetic insight. At Cartland Crags, by the Clyde, she stops to admire "the beauty of the lazy foam, for ever in motion and never moved away, covering the whole surface of the water with streaks and lines and ever varying circles." At Bothwell Castle, she notes how the flowing of the river blends gently with the warbling of the smaller birds and the chattering of the larger ones that make their nests in the ruins, and then goes on to reflect: "The greatest charm of a brook or a river is in the liberty to pursue it through its windings; you can then take it in whatever mood you like, silent or noisy, sportive or quiet. The beauties of a brook or river must be sought, and the pleasure is in going in search of them.

Those of a lake or of the sea come to you of themselves."

In all these passages we have the quiet, discerning eye of a true poet, marking with unerring certainty the elements of beauty in a landscape. But Dorothy Wordsworth was equally quick to detect whatever blemishes or flaws might lurk within it. She was quite pained, for instance, on seeing the smooth, shaven lawns and modern flower-beds of Douglas Mansion come so close to the ruins of Bothwell Castle. It was an offence to the genius of the place. The waters of Loch Lomond, she noted, had a bad outlet. There was no sheltering cradle of surrounding hills, and "the bulk of the river was frittered away by small alder bushes." The valley above Dumbarton lacked something. A river glittering in the sun, and upright wreaths of smoke from a few cottages, were all that were needed to make it look cheerful. The head of Loch Long, she felt, had a dull, melancholy appearance, because of its scattered seaweed. On the whole, Scotland gave her the impression of a gloomy sternness. "We hardly ever saw a pleasing place in Scotland which had not something of wildness in its aspect." Even in the most fertile and smiling scenes, the travellers "found something which gave them a notion of barrenness, of what was not altogether congenial." On the other hand, these very qualities had an attraction of their own. "Scotland is a

country above all others I have seen, in which a man of imagination may carve out his own pleasures. There are so many *inhabited* solitudes, and the employments of the people are so immediately connected with the places where they find them."

To the towns of Scotland, Edinburgh excepted, the Wordsworths can hardly be said to have taken kindly. Dorothy much preferred a mountain to a paved street. "I can always walk over a moor with a light foot," she wrote. "I am less eager to walk in large towns than anywhere else." Glasgow, therefore, scarcely succeeded in exhilarating her, especially as she saw it in a downpour of rain. The only thing to do there was to pay a visit to the Bleaching Ground, as Glasgow Green was then called. Here she saw two or three hundred women grouped round a large wash-house in the middle of the field, washing their linen in rows of tubs, and then spreading them out to bleach on the open ground. The travellers left the city without even seeing the cathedral, but they "had the pleasure of spreading smiles from one end of Glasgow to the other," for everybody stopped to stare at the outlandish car. The small boys of Glasgow, however, were not content with gazing. They followed the car with whoopings either of ribaldry or of delight, and four of them scampered so long a way after it that Dorothy had not the heart to retain her seat any longer. Willingly descending, she allowed the

little boys to take her place inside, being amply compensated by their exultant grins.

Indeed, one of the most delightful features of the *Journal* is the evidence it affords of Miss Wordsworth's love of children. She introduces them to us on every possible occasion, and they are so Scottish and so very human, that we take to them immediately. The boys who surprised her at Wanlockhead, wearing honeysuckle in their hats, and who ran off, poor things, when Coleridge began to question them about Greek and Latin; the boy who cried out enthusiastically at the Falls of Clyde, "There's a fine slae bush yonder," and who afterwards looked with some suspicion on a sixpenny-piece that was given him, heartily wishing it might have been "twa bawbees"; the boy who rowed the lady across the ferry at Loch Etive, and who beamingly redoubled his energies when he saw that she was watching him; and the boys at Dalmally who so tumbled and rolled and wrestled with one another that it was impossible to tell to which owner that leg or that arm might rightfully belong—all these youngsters are described in a manner that makes them our friends for life. Especially were the Wordsworths impressed with a shepherd boy whom they saw near Tarbert, wearing a grey plaid. The mists were on the hillside, the day was late, and his actions in calling the cattle home were "in the highest degree moving to the imagination."

William remarked that he was a "text which contained the whole history of a Highlander's life, his melancholy, his simplicity, his poverty, his superstition, and above all that visionariness which results from the contemplation of unsullied nature."

Wordsworth, in fact, was prepared to find such boys in Scotland, having been one such himself by the shores of Windermere. He was prepared also to find the sort of men into whom they would grow up, men of

> "A stately speech,
> Such as grave livers do in Scotland use,
> Religious men, who give to God and Man their dues."

And he did find them. Both Dorothy and William were continually impressed by the fine old shepherds whom they met, reading a book by the wayside, or striding over the moor, pensive and alone. They had a patriarchal dignity, a kind of scriptural solemnity and grace, about them, which immediately commended them to the author of *Michael*, *The Leech Gatherer*, and *The Old Cumberland Beggar*.

But where was Coleridge all this time? What was he doing? Alas, when one third of the journey was over, Coleridge had disappeared. He was in bad spirits at the time, Wordsworth tells us, and "too much in love with his own dejection." He could rouse himself sufficiently in Nithsdale to give an intelligent turnpikeman a copy of his pamphlet

on *The Crisis of the Sugar Colonies*. He had energy enough to remark of the pumping machine at Leadhills that "it was like a giant with one idea." At Crawfordjohn he entered into a scientific conversation with the parish minister on "the properties and uses of lime and other manures." But Coleridge's spirits continued to sink lower and lower as the tour progressed. He was cold. He was unwell. He was wakened out of his sleep by drunken tipplers. So, when Arrochar was reached, he elected to take his modest share of the common funds, and find his way home to England by his own road.

William himself appears in the *Journal* in hardly a more favourable light. We know that he was composing poetry a great deal. Indeed, some of the finest effusions of his genius were suggested by the tour. But when the afflatus left him, and he descended to the concerns of ordinary life, he generally contrived to cut some extraordinary figure. We come upon him trying to hold the shattered pieces of his vehicle together with strings and pocket-handkerchiefs, or attempting to mend a wheel or unyoke a horse, and doing it very badly. At Glenfalloch, William clambered up a huge rock in order to take its measurement by means of a rope constructed out of garters, pocket-handkerchiefs, plaids and coats; and when crossing the ferry at Loch Lomond, he had the gawkiness to drop into

the water a parcel containing coffee, sugar, pepper, and a couple of fowls, the precious constituents of an expected luncheon.

No, the only person to whom our hearts go out as we read the *Journal* is Dorothy herself. How sweet she is, how modest, how good-natured! In all she writes there is the unmistakable feminine touch, and she tells us of many things which no man would ever notice. Details of bedgowns are given us, and of cotton stockings. We read of "blue linsey petticoats" and "gowns of sprigged cotton with long sleeves," and are admitted to a scene at Jedburgh in which an old body of seventy skips up the stairs like a girl of seventeen to open all her drawers and show her English visitor her stock of linen. We are not surprised at this mark of womanly confidence, or at the affection with which Mrs. Macfarlane of Glengyle presented her charming guest with a keepsake of eagle feathers. Dorothy radiated through all those lonely regions a spirit of pure love and unaffected tenderness. She wept for the wretched beggars she saw tramping the hills penniless. She felt sincere pity for the women and children who had to sit minding a single cow all day long, as it nibbled the strips of grass among the growing corn. When she saw a peaceful island nestling in solitude on Loch Lomond, her heart leapt out to the happy thought, What a lovely

place for William to write poetry in! He could row out to it at any time in twenty strokes and be quite alone!

Most lovable of all is her unconquerable cheerfulness and sweet content. At Loch Achray she had to spend the night in a ferryman's hut. It consisted of three apartments, a spence, a cowhouse, and a kitchen. The walls of the little bigging were of plastered stone. The rooms had divisions between them which did not reach to the roof, so that the light and smoke could pass from one end of the house to the other. The bed on which she lay was made of chaff, and the rain outside kept pouring heavily all night. Surely the circumstances were such as might have made even an angel inclined to grumble. But not so Dorothy Wordsworth. "I went to bed some time before the family. The door was shut between us and they had a bright fire, which I could not see; but the light it sent up among the varnished rafters and beams, which crossed each other in almost as intricate and fantastic a manner as I have seen the under boughs of a large beech-tree withered by the depth of shade above, produced the most beautiful effect that can conceived. It was like what I should suppose an underground cave or temple to be, with a dripping or moist roof, and the moon entering in upon it by some means or other, and yet the colours were more like melted gems. . . I though of the Fairyland

of Spenser, and of what I had read in romance at other times, and then, what a feast it would be for a London pantomime maker could it be transplanted to Drury Lane, with all its beautiful colours!"

Fortunate was the shieling that enclosed even for one night so tender and so true a heart. We can imagine how quickly that heart beat when the long and perilous journey was at last over, the dear smoke wreaths of Dove Cottage rose once more before her eyes, and with joy unbounded she "found Mary in good health, and Joanna Hutchinson with her, and little John asleep in the clothes basket by the fire."

XVI

JOHN KEATS

XVI

JOHN KEATS

(1818)

KEATS visited Scotland in the year 1818. He was accompanied during the tour by his ever faithful friend, Charles Armitage Brown, a middle-aged man who dabbled in literature on a small independent income, and who had an ambition to be the biographer of the poet he adored. He was jovial, bald-headed, and somewhat corpulent, and his bearded face, large gold spectacles, and general appearance gave Scotsmen the impression that the two companions were commercial travellers from England, jewellers, it might be, or razor sellers, or linen drapers, or perhaps excisemen. Keats himself, however, was a glorious young Apollo of twenty-three, well built, cleanly shaven, and ardent-looking. He had small hands, a broad forehead, clustering brown hair, a sensitive and mobile mouth, and flashing hazel eyes which, at the recital of a fine action or a noble thought, would be suffused with tears—a man whom no one would ever have

supposed to be the son of an ostler, or the seven months' child of a consumptive mother.

Keats at the time was ready for a holiday. The nightmare of a medical career, which had so long haunted him, was now shaken off, and he had dedicated himself utterly and for ever to the service and love of poetry. And a brief apprenticeship of two years had more than justified his choice, proving him to be a consummate master of the art. Keats had already published *Endymion* and written *Isabella*. He was acquainted with Wordsworth and with Shelley; his bosom friends were Haydon and Leigh Hunt; and he was just beginning to attract to himself the venom of *Blackwood's Magazine*. Clearly his literary star was on the ascendant. Before it should climb higher, Keats was determined to seek fresh inspiration from a change of scene. "I have many reasons," he wrote, "for going wonder ways; to make my winter chair free from spleen, and to enlarge my vision. . . I should not have consented to four months' tramping in the Highlands, but that it would give me more experiences, rub off more prejudices, use me to more hardships, identify finer scenes, load me with grander mountains, and strengthen more my reach in poetry, than would stopping at home among books, even though I should reach Homer." In the month of June, therefore, Keats and his companion set forth on a tour that was to take them

through the English lake district to Dumfries, Ayrshire, Glasgow, Loch Lomond, Loch Awe, Mull, Iona, Staffa, and Inverness. It was to be a walking tour, a tramp of about twenty miles being proposed daily. And it was to be a poetical tour, in every sense of the word. No book was to be carried save Cary's *Dante*.

At first sight it might seem as if no one could have been more fitted than Keats to appreciate the characteristic beauty of Scottish scenery. Few poets have been so gifted as he with the capacity for vivid and intense sensation. He had a soul which tingled and thrilled spontaneously to everything of beauty and delight in the world around him. "Nothing seemed to escape him," wrote his friend Severn, "the song of a bird and the undertone of response from covert or hedge, the rustle of some animal, the changing of the green and brown lights and furtive shadows, the motions of the wind—just how it shook certain tall flowers and plants—the wayfaring of the clouds, even the features and gestures of passing tramps." And Haydon, the artist, gave similar testimony. "The humming of a bee," he wrote, "the sight of a flower, the glitter of the sun, seemed to make his nature tremble; then his eyes flashed, his cheek glowed, and his mouth quivered." In the case of a spirit so vibrant and sensitive to the influences of nature, we turn with some eagerness to his published letters

to discover what impression he formed of the "land of brown heath and shaggy wood," as he journeyed through it. To our surprise we find that, for the most part, the references to Scottish scenery are perfunctory and commonplace. The mountains impressed him even to ecstasy on his first beholding them, but they moved him less and less as he advanced, and he found himself quite ready to turn from any scenery in order to contemplate a crowd of romping schoolboys or the exquisitely shaped mouth of a little girl. "I know not how it is," he wrote, "the clouds, the sky, the houses all seem anti-Grecian and anti-Charlemagnish."

In the choice of these surprising and outlandish epithets, the secret of Keats's antipathy is revealed. The literary influences in which his mind was steeped had so far been either classic or romantic. The first awakening of soul came to him from reading Spenser, whose *Faerie Queene* he went through, we are told, "like a young horse through a spring meadow, romping." Then came the discovery of another and a larger world on his first looking into Chapman's *Homer*. His subsequent close study of Boccaccio and Vergil and Lempriere's *Classical Dictionary* confirmed these early preferences and fostered in him a passion for the mythology of the ancients and the legends of mediæval chivalry and romance. The scenery of Scotland was not quite in harmony with either

of these moods. It was, as he said, "anti-Grecian and anti-Charlemagnish." Even Loch Lomond lacked some element of enchantment to Keats's mind. The northern end, he admitted, was glorious in excess. "Yet I was worldly enough to wish for a fleet of chivalry barges, with trumpets and banners, just to die away before me into that blue place among the mountains." Yes, something more Grecian or Charlemagnish. Keats, in fact, brought to the observation of nature the tastes of a refined æsthete. Beautiful things intoxicated him like rich wine, and he desired that his love of Beauty might be inscribed upon his tombstone. But the beauty he pursued had always a certain rich voluptuousness about it, or else an ideal quality of detachment from this world. Keats lacked that power which Wordsworth signally possessed, and to which he attained only after long years of severe self-discipline and intense spiritual concentration and a wise passiveness, the power to interpret mystically the austerer and wilder aspects of nature's loveliness. Hence some of the most characteristic glories of Scottish scenery necessarily escaped him. Keats had a temperament which required a more languorous and exotic beauty than Scotland could provide. The ripe and mellow fruitfulness of an English autumn suited him much better, and he would probably have appreciated an Eastern or an Italian summer best of all.

With three scenes especially the travellers in Scotland were impressed. The first of these was Ailsa Craig, a rock which rises bleak, solitary, and sheer, for more than a thousand feet above the Firth of Clyde. Keats saw it first through a drizzle of mist and rain, as he descended the hills of Carrick, when the huge mass wore that romantic aspect of visionary grandeur, suggestive of a deluge, which Keats was just the poet to detect and appreciate.

"Hearken, thou craggy ocean-pyramid,
Give answer by thy voice—the sea-fowl's screams!
When were thy shoulders mantled in huge streams?
When from the sun was thy broad forehead hid?
How long is't since the mighty Power bid
Thee heave to airy sleep from fathom dreams—
Sleep in the lap of thunder or sunbeams—
Or when grey clouds are thy cold coverlid!
Thou answer'st not; for thou art dead asleep.
Thy life is but two dead eternities,
The last in air, the former in the deep!
First with the whales, last with the eagle-skies!
Drown'd wast thou till an earthquake made thee sleep,
Another cannot wake thy giant size!"

A second sight which moved Keats was Fingal's Cave. He grudged the expense of travelling to Staffa by the ordinary fashionable steamboat. It was like "paying sixpence for an apple at the playhouse." The two friends accordingly resolved to tramp for thirty-seven miles across the island of Mull, their breeches tucked up and their stockings in their hands. They spent one night in a turf-

thatched hut, of which the rafters were black with the pervading smoke, and the floor was a bare surface of hills and dales. But the glories of the famous cave made ample amends for all. "Suppose, now, the giants who rebelled against Jove had taken a whole mass of black columns and bound them together like bunches of matches, and then, with immense axes, had made a cavern in the body of these columns. Such is Fingal's Cave, except that the sea has done the work of excavation, and is continually dashing there. . . For solemnity and grandeur it far surpasses the finest cathedral. It is impossible to describe it."

Another scene with which Keats was manifestly impressed was the panorama of clouds and chasms to be witnessed from the summit of Ben Nevis. "These chasms are fifteen hundred feet in depth, and are the most tremendous places I have ever seen; they turn one giddy if you choose to give way to it. We tumbled in large stones and set the echoes at work in fine style. Sometimes these chasms are tolerably clear, sometimes there is a misty cloud which seems to steam up, and sometimes they are entirely smothered with clouds. After a little time the mist cleared away, but still there were large clouds about, attracted by old Ben to a certain distance, so as to form, as it appeared, large dome curtains which kept sailing about, opening and shutting at intervals here and there and

everywhere; so that although we did not see one vast wide extent of prospect all round, we saw something perhaps finer, these cloud veils opening with dissolving motion and showing us the mountainous regions beneath us through a loophole, these cloudy loopholes ever varying and discovering fresh prospects east, west, north, and south. Then it was misty again, and again it was fair, then puff came a cold breeze of wind and bared a craggy chap we had not yet seen, though in close neighbourhood."

While in Ayrshire, Keats paid a visit of respect to the house of Robert Burns. He took a pinch of snuff on the keystone of the Brig o' Doon, in honour of Tam o' Shanter, and he tossed off a glass of toddy, as well as an indifferent sonnet, in the cottage at Alloway. To his surprise, Keats found the scenery of the district as rich and beautiful as that of Devon, but his pleasure in visiting the birthplace was somewhat marred by the annoying and persistent talk of a garrulous old fool who had known Burns personally. "The man at Burns's cottage was a great bore with his anecdotes. I hate the rascal. His life consists of fuzy, fuzzy, fuzziest. He drinks glasses five for the quarter and twelve for the hour. He is a mahogany-faced old jackass who knew Burns. He ought to have been kicked for having spoken to him. I should like to employ the Caliph Vathek to kick him. Oh, the flummery of a birthplace! Cant! cant! cant! It is enough to

give a spirit the guts-ache. Many a true word, they say, is spoken in jest; this may be because his gab hindered my solemnity. The flat dog made me write a flat sonnet."

With the appearance of Glasgow Keats was well pleased. Being built of stone, it "had a much more solid appearance than London to his eyes," and he was surprised to learn that it was twice the size of Edinburgh. The manners of the people, however, were unendurable. "We entered Glasgow last evening under the most oppresive stare a body could feel. When we had crossed the bridge Brown looked back and said its whole population had turned out to wonder at us. We went on till a drunken man came up to me. I put him off with my arm. He returned all up in arms, saying aloud that 'he had seen all foreigners bu-u-ut he never saw the like o' me.'"

Unfortunately, Keats and his companion had other discomforts than those to put up with during the tour. Gadflies stung them to madness while bathing in Loch Long. For days they could get "nothing to eat but eggs, ten a-piece, till it became sickening," and in Galloway they were compelled to dine on "dirty bacon, dirtier eggs, and dirtiest potatoes." Even bread was not obtainable in certain places, and they had perforce to content themselves with "cursed oat cakes." These were distressing circumstances to the travellers, for the vigorous

exercise and the bracing air gave them ravenous appetites. "I get so hungry," wrote the poet, "that a ham goes but a very little way, and fowls are like larks to me. A batch of bread I make no more ado with than a sheet of parliament, and I can eat a bull's head as easily as I used to do Bull's Eyes. . . . Ah, dear, I must soon be contented with an acre or two of oaten cake, a hogshead of milk, and a clothes-basket of eggs, morning, noon, and night, when I get among the Highlanders." But the most harrowing experience of all was that of having to listen to the band at Inveraray Castle. "I must say I enjoyed two or three common tunes, but nothing could stifle the horrors of a solo on the bagpipe. I thought the beast would never have done." This from the sensitive author of the *Ode to a Nightingale* is not surprising.

On the whole, Keats enjoyed his Scottish tour, but it did him little good. That daily stretch of twenty miles, sometimes covered before midday, was too much for him, and the unwonted exertion of toiling across Mull, o'er bog and moor, or of scrambling on all fours down the rocks of Ben Nevis, only fanned the smouldering embers of his hereditary disease. By the time Keats reached Inverness, he was suffering so seriously from sore throat that it was deemed advisable to accomplish the rest of the journey immediately by sea. He set forth accordingly from the port of Cromarty,

and nine days later arrived in London "as brown and as shabby," wrote one of his friends, "as you can imagine; scarcely any shoes left, his jacket all torn at the back, a fur cap, a great plaid, and his knapsack. I cannot tell what he looked like." The poetical fruits of the tour were two fine sonnets on Ailsa Rock and Ben Nevis, two poor sonnets on Robert Burns, a beautiful poem on Staffa, and some excellent stanzas on the subject of Meg Merrilees. We are grateful for such gleanings as these, but we should have been still more thankful if the tour had never been undertaken, and Keats's health had been preserved, and we might have had more such poems as *Endymion* and *La Belle Dame Sans Merci* and the *Ode on a Grecian Urn*.

XVII

QUEEN VICTORIA

XVII

QUEEN VICTORIA

(1848-1882)

SCOTLAND exercised a great fascination over Queen Victoria from the day she first entered it with Prince Albert in 1842 till the close of her long life in 1901. It is not difficult to find reasons for this attraction. To put off court dress and array oneself in a frock of Stewart tartan; to exchange the stiff quadrilles of Buckingham Palace for the sword dance and Reel of Tulloch of Balmoral Castle; to leave behind the gorgeous state carriage with its gilt, its guards, its flunkeys, and all the tinsel grandeur of a royal progress, and wade a little pony through some ford near Killiecrankie, or stoop to gather cairngorms on the slopes of Ben-na-Bhourd, or suffer oneself to be borne aloft, on the arms of two stalwart Highlanders, across the rapid stream of Corrie Buie—these were experiences which any human being brought up in a palace might be expected to enjoy. Queen Victoria was never happier than in the freedom and retirement of her

Highland home. She loved to set all pomp and ceremony aside, and live a country life of simple privacy, to go sketching with dear Louise, or play the piano of an evening with darling Beatrice, or have all her wants attended to by her ever faithful Brown. Above all, she felt healed and calmed, after the rush and fever of a London season, by the solitude and quiet of the everlasting hills. "Oh! those dear hills, it made me very sad to leave them behind. . . . Lord Aberdeen was quite touched when I told him I was so attached to the dear, dear Highlands, and missed the fine hills so much. . . Independently of the beautiful scenery, there was a quiet, a retirement, a wildness, a liberty, and a solitude, that had such a charm for us."

Queen Victoria has recorded her impressions of Scotland and things Scottish in *Leaves from the Journal of Our Life in the Highlands* and in *More Leaves*. The charm of these books is that they are a quite unpretentious diary of the author's experiences, recorded from day to day with no thought of publication. The position of august sovereign seems completely to be forgotten, and nothing is written down but what might come from the pen of a happy and loving wife, a devoted mother, an intelligent and an observing woman. We read of things which never would have been mentioned had the author been writing for the press, as, for example, that Leith is *not* a pretty town, and that the prayer of

Principal Campbell was much too long, though "part of it was really very good." We are informed of the inconvenience of postal facilities in one place, of the arrangement of bedrooms and sitting rooms in another, and are permitted to view Her Majesty enjoying a quiet rubber of whist on a wet evening, or studying maps of the Highlands after dinner, or reading *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* aloud to the Prince Consort. It is evident from these journals that the Queen entered into every phase of Scottish life with the greatest relish. She tasted oatmeal porridge and Finnan haddies, and thought them "very good." She also ventured on a morsel of "the celebrated Scotch haggis," professing, to the Duchess of Athole's great delight, that she "really liked it very much." And she was offered, though she respectfully declined, a dish of Athole brose. All the characteristic Highland manners and customs were observed for her entertainment. She witnessed a deer-stalking, a "sheep-juicing," and a "salmon-leistering"; she was initiated into the mysteries of Hallowe'en and a Highland Kirstnin'; and she attended a torch-light ball at Corriemulzie.

Balmoral was made the starting point for a number of excursions in the regions round about, and some of these are freshly and vividly described in the pages of the *Journal*. Queen Victoria had what she herself called a "very ungeographical

head," and she never could remember the names of Scottish mountains. But she got other people to write those out for her, and loved to be among them. Frequently on these expeditions she preferred to travel *incognito,* and the devices and disguises to which this policy gave rise were the source of considerable amusement. At Loch Inch the travellers decided to call themselves "Lord and Lady Churchill and party." At the Ramsay Arms Inn, Fettercairn, all visitors were kept out of the commercial room, as it was reserved for "a wedding party that had come from Aberdeen." Awkward little circumstances, however, would sometimes occur to spoil the plot. On one occasion Brown, by a slip of the tongue, addressed the principal lady as "your Majesty." On another, the Queen was almost betrayed by the number of her gold rings, and a certain little girl, who waited on them at table, was only prevented from gazing too curiously at royalty by always being turned round to look another way. At Dalwhinnie their identity was discovered by the arrival of a drum and fife band, headed by a piper, and when the fat old landlady knew of it, she immediately set herself to prove worthy of the occasion by appearing in "a black satin dress, with white ribbons and orange flowers."

The inconveniences of such a mode of travelling, however, were sometimes really serious. Arriving at a certain inn without announcement, the Queen

found that there was nothing whatever to eat save "two miserable, starving, Highland chickens, without any potatoes. No pudding and no *fun*, no little maid, nor our two people—who were wet and drying our own and their things—to wait on us! It was not a nice supper and the evening was wet. Mary and Maxted (Lady Churchill's maid) had been dining below with Grant, Brown, and Stewart in the commercial room at the foot of the stairs. They had only the remnants of our two starved chickens." Even more distressing was it when they arrived at Glenfiddich and found that the conveyance carrying the luggage had broken down. Queen Victoria had therefore to sit down to dinner in an impromptu cap made out of a "black lace veil of Emilie's," and she had nothing for it but to retire to rest at last "without the necessary toilette," after waiting up in vain till two in the morning.

During those mountain rambles, the Queen sketched and painted a good deal, and longed for some of the magic of Landseer's pencil. Her *Journal* shows that she possessed a true appreciation of Scottish landscape. "As the sun went down, the scenery became more and more beautiful, the sky crimson, golden-red, and blue, and the hills looking purple and lilac, most exquisite, till at length it set, and the hues grew softer in the sky and the outline of the hills sharper. I never saw anything so fine." The following description of

Fingal's Cave is interesting when compared with that of Keats. "The effect of the cave was splendid, like a great entrance into a vaulted hall. It looked almost awful as we entered, and the barge heaved up and down on the swell of the sea. The sea is immensely deep in the cave. The rocks, under water, were all colours—pink, blue, and green—which had a most beautiful and varied effect. It was the first time the British standard, with a Queen of Great Britain, and her husband and children, had ever entered Fingal's Cave, and the men gave three cheers, which sounded most impressive."

And Queen Victoria was interested in the history and antiquities of Scotland no less than in its scenery. She noted in her *Journal* any place associated with Robert Bruce or Queen Mary or the "sair sanct" David I. She carefully studied the disposition of the rival forces at Bannockburn and Dunbar. She enquired about the Covenanters and Rob Roy, and took the greatest delight in seeing the little baby-basket which was sent to Holyrood Palace to contain King James I., as a present to Queen Mary from Queen Elizabeth. Especially did Queen Victoria show a partiality for "poor" Prince Charlie. She could not bear to think of Culloden Field, when she passed near it, but would put her lips with eagerness to a little silver quaich from which Charles himself had drunk in the olden time, and visited with pleasure the place where he had

first set foot on Scottish ground. "I thought I never saw a lovelier or more romantic spot, or one which told its history so well. What a scene it must have been in 1745! And here was *I*, the descendant of the Stuarts and of the very king whom Prince Charles sought to overthrow, sitting and walking about quite privately and peaceably." At Perth the Queen wrote her name in a curious old book which had received no royal signature since those of James I. and Charles I. At Glencoe she thrilled with horror at the remembrance of the massacre, and "hoped that William III. knew nothing of it." And at Abbotsford she inscribed her name, by request, on the MS. of Sir Walter Scott's *Journal*, "which I felt it to be a presumption in me to do." These words were written without any affectation, for the Queen had the greatest reverence for Sir Walter. She knew his novels intimately, and was a constant reader of *The Lady of the Lake* and *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* during her visits to the Highlands. With Burns, too, she was acquainted, and loved to have his poetry read out to her by Dr. Norman M'Leod at Balmoral Castle. She also knew, as was most fitting, Clough's *Bothie of Tober-na-Vuolich* and the works of the Ettrick Shepherd.

For the Scottish people generally the Queen had a great affection, and both she and the Prince "highly appreciated the good breeding, simplicity, and intelligence of the Highlanders, which made it

so pleasant, and even instructive, to talk to them." But the hovels of the poorer crofters greatly distressed her—"so low, so small, so dark with thatch and overgrown with moss and heather, that if you did not see smoke issuing from them, and some very ragged dirty old people, and very scantily clothed dishevelled children, you could not believe they were meant for human habitations. . . . There were poor little fields, fuller of weeds than of corn, much laid by the wet, and frequently a 'calvie' or a 'coo' of the true shaggy Highland character was actually feeding in them."

We pass over the more personal and private pages of the *Journal*, and the glimpses it affords of little "Vicky" bowing to the people from the carriage window, or later receiving a sprig of white heather on becoming engaged to Prince Frederick of Prussia; of Princess Louise dancing the Highland reel with Brown at Inveraray; of little "Bertie," the future king of England, being heartily cheered at Bute as Duke of Rothesay; or of the Marquis of Lorne, "just two years old, a dear, white, fat, fair little fellow with reddish hair." Nor is this the place in which to dwell on the references to the Prince Consort, his shooting expeditions, his successful speech to the members of the Royal Society at Aberdeen, of which his wife was so proud, or the various kindly and wise sayings so faithfully reported and remembered. To Queen Victoria the

death of her beloved husband in 1861 was "the end of all." "I felt tired, sad, and bewildered. For the first time in my life I was alone in a strange house, without either mother or husband, and the thought overwhelmed and distressed me deeply. I had a dear child with me, but those loving ones above me were both gone—their support taken away. It seemed so dreadful!" Gradually, however, the floods of grief subsided, and the affections, which had been made deeper and more tender by her loss, came to be increasingly expended on many a poor cottager in the neighbourhood around. Few passages in the *Journals* are more interesting than those which describe the visits to Kitty Kear, to Mrs. Farquharson, to Mrs. Symons, to old Widow Grant, and to christenings and marriages and funerals besides, in which kisses and presents were given, and prayers and blessings received, and the bonds of love drawn closer between the cottage and the throne.

No account of Queen Victoria's sojourn in the Highlands would be complete which did not make mention of her attachment to Scottish Presbyterianism. When the Rev. J. Caird, afterwards the famous Principal of Glasgow University, preached at Crathie Church in 1855 on "Religion in Common Life," he "electrified all present by a most admirable and beautiful sermon, which lasted for nearly an hour, but which kept one's attention riveted."

Dr. Norman M'Leod's prayers on similar occasions, with their touching and simple references to the Queen and her little children, "gave her a lump in her throat." The death of Dr. M'Leod was a great blow to Queen Victoria. "There was no one to whom in doubts and anxieties on religion I looked up with more trust and confidence, and no one ever reassured and comforted me more about my children." How much the Queen was attracted by what she called the "grand simplicity" of the Presbyterian form of worship may be judged from the following impression of a Communion service. "It was all so truly earnest, and no description could do justice to the perfect devotion of the whole assemblage. It was most touching and I longed to join in it.[1] To see all these simple good people in their nice plain dresses (including an old woman in her mutch), so many of whom I knew, and some of whom had walked far, old as they were, in the deep snow, was very striking."

With Queen Victoria we bring our series of sketches to a close. No more distinguished traveller has ever visited Scotland. Few have rejoiced to return to it more frequently than she, and none have sung its praises in more enthusiastic terms. "This solitude, the romance and wild loveliness of every-

[1] Queen Victoria partook regularly of the Communion at Crathie church every autumn, after 1873.

thing, the independent, simple people, all make beloved Scotland the proudest, finest country in the world. . . . I prefer it greatly to Switzerland, magnificent and glorious as the scenery of that country is."

XVIII

CHARACTERISTICS

XVIII

CHARACTERISTICS

IF we would understand fully the characteristics of Scotland and Scotsmen to which travellers have so frequently alluded, and of which the preceding pages have given abundant evidence, we must go back some way into the story of the country's past, to see how those characteristics have come to be evolved. The ancient Scots were a people in whom Pictish, Norse, Celtic, and Teutonic elements combined to produce a free, hardy, vigorous, and independent race, stubbornly attached to the rude uncultivated country they had made their home. It was the aim of the Norman and Plantagenet kings to subdue this nation in the interests of a vast empire that should be continental as well as English, and of which Scotland should be a remote and unimportant province. But in so dreaming, the English showed that they "knew not the stomach" of the people with whom they had to deal. Scotsmen were resolutely determined from the first to resist this southern aggression, and throw off this

foreign yoke. It was the national policy for three centuries to court a French alliance, to promote the independence of both France and Scotland, and to curb the ambitions of England abroad by a watchful and provocative enmity at home. The war of independence, the ancient league with France, the incessant border raids, the conspiracies of the Reformation, the struggle with Episcopacy, the opposition to the Union, and the enterprises of Jacobitism were all of them inspired by one animating principle, an inveterate hostility to the usurping power of England. As William, Earl of Douglas, put it to the French warrior De Vienne in 1385: "The Scottish people will endure pillage, and they will endure famine, and every other extremity of war; but they will not endure an English master." [1]

[1] The national sentiment on this subject is thus vigorously expressed by an old writer:—"There is nocht twa nations undir the firmament that ar mair contrar and different fra uthirs nor is Inglis men and Scottis men, quhoubeit that they be vitht in ane ile, and nychtbours, and of ane langage. For Inglis men ar subtil, and Scottis men are facile. Inglis men ar ambitius in prosperite, and Scottis men are humain in prosperite. Inglis men are humil quhen thai ar subjeckit be force and violence, and Scottis men are furious quhen thai ar violently subjeckit. Inglis men ar cruel quhen thai get victorie, and Scottis men are merciful quhen thai get victorie. And to conclude, it is onpossibil that Scottis men and Inglis men can remane in concord undir ane monarch or ane prince, because there naturis and conditions are as indifferent as is the nature of scheip and wolvis."—*The Complaynt of Scotland*, Paris, 1549.

Before the Scottish character could be fully matured, the nation had to pass through many cleansing fires. The fourteenth century was one of misery and violence. The population was decimated by the ravages of the Black Death, and the country laid waste and the national strength exhausted by continual wars with England. In the fifteenth century the conflict became internal, and a tragic succession of murders, conspiracies, regencies, and royal minorities involved the Scottish crown in a fierce struggle with the nobility, and gave the country over to feuds, anarchy, and intrigue. It culminated, however, in the brilliant reign of James IV. Under that monarch, trade and commerce flourished; justice and law prevailed; a university was founded; a navy came into being; and a group of distinguished writers, Henryson, Dunbar, Douglas, Lyndsay, Major, and Boece, showed that the new light of the European Renaissance could penetrate even to the darksome regions of the north. The sixteenth century saw the decay of feudalism, the emergence of a middle class, and the arrival of the Reformation. It was an age in which Scotland may be said to have awaked, morally and intellectually, to the consciousness of its high destiny as the champion of a thoroughgoing Protestantism, and in which the scale was to turn in favour of an English rather than a French alliance. In the seventeenth century Scotsmen were per-

mitted to rejoice at the elevation to the throne of England of their own hereditary line of kings. Yet their passion of loyalty and enthusiasm was to be cooled when they discovered more and more clearly how fundamental was the incompatibility between the policy of the Stuarts and their own most deeply rooted aspirations and ideals. Presbyterianism during this period climbed to its height of power in the Solemn League and Covenant and the prestige of the Westminster Assembly, but it was to receive a severe check and humiliation in the battle of Dunbar. During the latter part of the century, the most pitiful in our annals, Episcopalian and Covenanter were locked in a fury of theological and bloody strife. The Revolution of 1688 came as a welcome relief, and enabled an exhausted and distracted nation to turn with inexpressible thankfulness from religious wranglings to the pursuit of secular affairs. The period of repose, however, was destined to be short-lived. The massacre of Glencoe and the Darien disaster opened afresh the old rankling wound of resentment against England. And if anything was calculated to rub salt into that wound, it was the negotiations, in 1706, for a Union of the Kingdoms, which was to deprive Scotsmen of their Parliament and their Privy Council, and so call upon them to surrender the last vestiges of their independence. In these circumstances, it is hardly surprising that strenuous efforts should be

made during the first half of the eighteenth century to revive the Stuart cause, and to set upon the throne a prince whom many believed to be the hundred and tenth of a line of Scottish kings, who had reigned without a break since days when Christianity itself had not been born. Scottish affairs soon took a different turn, however, when the risings of 1715 and 1745 came to nothing, and the indisputable advantages of the Union began to be apparent. Then, for the first time after centuries of warfare, a period of security and settled peace supervened, and the genius of the people could come to its own at last. Trade, industry, and agriculture expanded on every side; art, literature, and philosophy attained to their golden age; and the spirit of the race blossomed to a late spring in Hume, Blair, Robertson, and Adam Smith, in Ramsay, Burns, Raeburn, and Sir Walter Scott.

While Scotsmen were thus contending with stubborn foes without, difficulties of another kind were facing them within. Nature in Scotland has ever been a stern foster-mother to her sons, and a cold unfriendly climate, a scanty population,[1] and a stiff and churlish soil, have rendered impossible that rich and varied civilization which both France and England have been able to enjoy. It was long before Highlanders could look with favour upon

[1] The population of Scotland was about 500,000 in 1500, less than 1,000,000 in 1700, and 1,608,420 in 1801.

agriculture, or even think of the pursuit as worthy of being followed by a gentleman. Even in the Lowlands, feudal territorial jurisdictions, and a system of short leases and high and rising rents, imposed vexatious burdens on industry and enterprise. The result was that, by the end of the seventeenth century, two-thirds of the country were still given over to barren moorland. Cabbages were unknown in Inverness till introduced by Cromwell's soldiers; potatoes in the eighteenth century were a recently discovered luxury; and even turnips were regarded as a delicacy and served in the form of a *hors d'œuvre*. Certain favoured districts, indeed, such as Angus, Moray, Clydesdale, and the Carse of Gowrie, were noted for their crops, but those were mostly oats, beans, or barley. The only manure available consisted of lime or seaweed; and the hungry farmer would sometimes endeavour to extract six or seven crops from the same impoverished soil, since he could afford neither to enrich it nor to let it lie fallow. Save in the estates of the nobility, there was a remarkable absence of trees in Scotland. To grow them was considered unprofitable, and enclosures to protect them were unknown. In general, the face of the country was so bleak and poverty-stricken that Johnson was constrained to enquire jocularly of Boswell whether it was possible to bring the *sloe* to perfection in Scotland.

Few things are more surprising to us in the tales

of former travellers than their failure to appreciate the glories of Scottish scenery, and the impression they seem to have had of being in quite a foreign country. Defoe found everything so different in the very first town he came to on Scottish ground, that he thought himself a hundred miles beyond Edinburgh. It should be remembered that an incredible ignorance formerly prevailed in England as to the features and peculiarities of its northern neighbour, and a still more incredible indifference. Clarendon tells us in his *History of the Rebellion* that "when the whole English nation was solicitous to know what passed weekly in Germany and Poland and all other parts of Europe, no man ever inquired what was doing in Scotland, nor had that kingdom a place or mention of one place of any gazette." Even in the eighteenth century it was a kind of *terra incognita*, difficult to get at, which people like Miss Tabitha Bramble thought could only be reached by sea. Johnson occupied more time in travelling from London to Edinburgh than we should now take in journeying from Liverpool to New York. On arriving there he found that "to the southern inhabitants of Scotland the state of the mountains and of the islands was equally unknown with that of Borneo and Sumatra;" and when he returned to the metropolis again, he "was addressed as if he had made a voyage to Nova Zembla, and had suffered five persecutions in

Japan." Such as did venture into Highland fastnesses brought back the most fearsome stories of their rude and frowning terrors. Camden thought that Argyleshire was "a most unpleasant place, what with rocks and what with barren blackish mountains." Another traveller in 1740 spoke of the mountains of Loch Ness as "those hideous productions of nature," and maintained that if a southerner were to be brought blind-folded into the midst of such "horrid prospects," and were then to have his bandage taken off, he would be "ready to die with fear, as thinking it impossible he should ever get out and return to his native country." To Pennant Glencoe was "the seat of melancholy," and to Johnson Mull was "a most dolorous country," and the mountains of Skye appeared "malignant." It is hardly credible that so great a difference should have come over men's appreciation of Scottish scenery as the result of a change of sentiment, the advent of good steamers and comfortable hotels, and the wand of that wizard of the north, Sir Walter Scott.

One almost inevitable consequence of Scotland's troubled history on the one hand, and its climate on the other, has been its comparative poverty. Not that the country has been always poor. At one time "Berwick-on-Tweed, the capital, took rank with Ghent, Rotterdam, and the other great cities of the Low Countries, and was almost the rival of London

in mercantile enterprise. Stately edifices, baronial and ecclesiastical, still stood, testifying to a people equal in wealth to the English when they were built."[1] But ruinous and costly wars soon drained Scotland of its resources. A vicious economic system survived from the Middle Ages which set town against town and burgh against burgh. Trade was everywhere hampered by authoritatively fixed prices, a want of bullion, and the debasement of the currency. Then the removal of the court of King James from Edinburgh to London took money out of the country, and seriously crippled the old trade with France. By the year 1630 Scotland's exchequer was almost empty, but the grant of free trade with England by Oliver Cromwell inaugurated a brief season of commercial prosperity. In the reign of Charles II., however, this privilege was withdrawn, and not only was Scotland taxed at the rate of £40,000 annually for the support of the crown, but its trade with Holland was seriously interfered with as well. By the Revolution settlement the country hoped to recover some ground that had been lost, but the ill-fated Darien scheme impoverished it still more to the extent of £400,000, with the result that when the Bank of Scotland came to be founded in 1695, the capital forthcoming was less than a million sterling, whereas the Bank of England had been established in the year previous,

[1] J. H. Burton, *The Scot Abroad*, ed. 1900, p. 83.

by a Scotsman named Paterson, with a capital of over five millions. In such circumstances as these, the Union could not long be resisted by Scotsmen who wished to thrive. While sentiment held out for a continued independence, commercial advantage and a policy of self-interest pointed emphatically to an immediate partnership with the country from which Scotland had been unnaturally and too long separated.

Scotland's commercial backwardness, then, has been owing to no lack of enterprise or industry on the part of its sons, but rather to climatic conditions and insufficient capital. "Nothing is scarce here but money," wrote a French traveller in 1552, and the same might have been said till far on into the eighteenth century. Scotsmen had always worked diligently at such trades as they could follow with advantage. Coal was discovered and worked as early as the twelfth century. Fish, salt, hides, and woollen cloth have always been staple exports, and by 1684 as many as 12,000 persons were engaged in the manufacture of linen, that industry being stimulated two years later by an enactment that all persons were to be buried in linen winding-sheets made from materials that had been grown, spun, and woven within the kingdom. But even when comparative prosperity did visit Scotland, the evidence of it was confined chiefly to the larger towns. In the country districts food was varied and abun-

dant, but not delicate. The gentry might drink French wines, and indulge in flesh meat frequently. Tea and wheaten loaves would occasionally be found in the locked-up cupboards of ladies of good position. But with the common people it was broth and barley bannocks and poor ale. Johnson was not far wrong when he said that "oats is the food of horses in England, but in Scotland supports the people." At any rate it sufficed, and the result justified Lord Elibank's reply, "Where will you find such horses or such people?"

Accompanying this national poverty, a rusticity, and even boorishness of manners was very noticeable. Previous to the Union, Scotland was far behind England in the refinements, and even in the decencies, of civilized life. How offensive to southern visitors was Edinburgh's habit of emptying its domestic filth into the street nightly at ten o'clock, we have already seen. The poet Gray wrote of the Scottish metropolis that it was "the most picturesque (at a distance) and the nastiest (when near) of all capital cities." And if such was the state of things in Edinburgh, the condition of the country districts may easily be imagined. Johnson said what he could for Scotland, for he was everywhere civilly and hospitably entertained in the best houses. But he gathered enough during his travels to establish him in the opinion that "until the Union made Scotsmen acquainted with English

manners, the culture of their lands was unskillful, and their domestic life unformed; their tables were coarse as the feasts of Esquimaux, and their houses filthy as the cottages of Hottentots."

Finding no adequate scope for his energies at home, and denied that natural outlet which England might have been expected to provide, the enterprising Scotsman of a former age looked to wider fields in which his aspirations might be realized. As merchant, as poor scholar, or as wandering adventurer and soldier of fortune, he found his way to every European country, and wherever he went he showed a remarkable capacity for making himself at home. As many as ten thousand Scotsmen served the cause of France in the Hundred Years' War, and fought stubbornly against the English in the battles of Baugé, Crevant, and Verneuil. For help given in this campaign the Earl of Buchan was made High Constable of France, and the Earl of Douglas was rewarded with the dukedom of Touraine. A hundred others, with two hundred archers to boot, formed the Scots Guard of King Louis XI., and twenty-four stalwart Scotsmen were appointed to keep watch over the King's own private apartments, and to surround his person and his throne. Thirteen regiments of Scotsmen fought for Gustavus Adolphus in the Thirty Years' War, and many another corps of his great army was officered by men of the same nation. It was a Scotsman who

filled the position of Field Marshal to the Emperor Frederick of Prussia, and another who did more than anyone else to consolidate the Russian Empire of the Czar, Peter the Great.

When the Union of the Crowns was consummated in 1603, the way seemed opened up for conquests nearer home, and a herd of famished Scotsmen followed King James to London in the hope of picking up some lucrative offices and rewards. Unfortunately, many of these were needy creditors of James, and their clamours for the payment of old debts was "of all forms of importunity the most unpleasing to his Majesty." The better class of Scotsmen, too, proved themselves proud, quarrelsome, and irascible in the extreme, and the King was obliged to command that proclamation should be made at every market cross in Scotland, forbidding all Scotsmen to travel into England without express permission from the Privy Council. Foiled in their hopes of English plunder, Scotsmen had to seek their natural expansion elsewhere. Some overflowed into Nova Scotia in 1624, some to the Isthmus of Darien in 1696. Cromwell deported five thousand of them to the American Colonies in 1650, after the battle of Dunbar; some followed Prince Charlie into exile in 1745; others were placed in high positions under the Indian Government by Lord Dundas. Thus at different times and in different ways, Scotsmen have been driven and allured, in

peace and in war, to seek their fortune elsewhere than in their native land.

It cannot be said that Scotsmen have always made themselves popular in the countries they have made their own. The English disliked them exceedingly when they came in the train of King James, and complained bitterly of their success, their pushfulness, their haughty spirit. As an old song of the period expressed it:—

> "Thy blue bonnet, when thou came hither,
> Would scarcely keep out the wind or weather;
> But now it is turned to a hat and a feather—
> The bonnet is blown the devil knows whither.
> The sword at thy haunch was a huge black blade,
> With a great basket-hilt, of iron made;
> But now a long rapier doth hang by his side,
> And huffingly doth this bonny Scot ride."

Still more violent did this anti-Caledonian rage become when, after the Union of the Kingdoms, Scotsmen overran England like a swarm of locusts, and one of them, Lord Bute, both climbed himself and advanced his fellow-countrymen to some of the highest offices of state. So keen was the resentment felt at this minister's partiality, that Smollett tells us "all the windows of all the inns northwards were scrawled with doggerel rhymes in abuse of the Scotch nation." The causes of this unpopularity are not difficult to discover. For one thing, the Scotsman was that disagreeable kind of person, a

poor relation, and a poor relation, moreover, who was smarting under a sense of former injuries and resolved to make up for previous ill-treatment by getting more than his share of the good things going. Another objectionable feature in all Scotsmen was their clannishness, an inveterate habit of standing by one another through thick and thin, to the contempt and undoing of every one else. Johnson complained that Scotsmen showed a marked disposition "to tell lies in favour of each other," and stated that if ever a Scotsmen produced a play in London, his fellow-countrymen would turn up "in droves" to applaud it. Especially insufferable was a Scotsman's sensitiveness and pride. He took it as a personal affront if his country was jibed at in any way, or even impartially described as it really was, and he had a racial incapacity to see the point of any joke directed against himself. But a Scotsman's pride has not always been querulous and provocative. There is often about it a quiet reserve of assurance and superiority, as of one who knows he has the future in his hands, and only bides his time for worth and solid merit to be recognised. "On the brow of the industrious crofter on the slopes of the Grampians we may see the well-becoming pride and self-respecting gravity that, in the fifteenth century, took the honours and distinctions of France as a natural right. Whence comes his pride? He has no rank—he is poor—

and he is no representative of an illustrious house. No, but he is founding a house. He rises up early, and late takes rest, that his son may go to college and become a gentleman; and when he reads contemporary history in the public press, he knows that the grandfather of the eminent law lord, or of the great party leader, or of the illustrious laboured like himself in the fields close at hand." [1]

The effect of these wanderings and migrations has been to make the Scotsman a citizen of the world, less insular and more cosmopolitan by nature than his English brother. Particularly has this been the case with the French alliance. France gave Scotland some of its most characteristic features in law, custom, language, architecture, manners, parliamentary and ecclesiastical institutions. In these things, as well as in the pronunciation of the Latin language, and in the democratic character of its universities, it has transmitted to Scotland influences and traditions which directly perpetuate the life of the older Roman Empire. And Scotland has given back as much as it has received. If it has in past times been a comparatively poor country, and has added but little to the world's material wealth, it has been a fruitful mother of men of genius and of spirit who have vastly enriched mankind in other ways. In proof

[1] J. H. Burton, *The Scot Abroad*, p. 70.

of this let the words of an Englishman be quoted. "In philosophy, in history, in law, in science, in poetry, in romance, in the arts of life, in trade, in government, in war, in the spread of our dominions, in the consolidation of our Empire, glorious has been the part which Scotsmen have played. Her poet's prayer has been answered, and in 'bright succession' have been raised men to adorn and guard not only herself but the country which belongs to Englishmen and Scotsmen alike." [1]

There are two influences to which the ascendancy of Scotsmen in history may principally be traced, and to which, in conclusion, we may now briefly allude. These are a love of education and a genius for religion. Both rose to their full strength in the conflicts of the Reformation. Previous to that great upheaval, the learning of the country was chiefly confined to the Universities and a few monastery and burgh schools, where mediæval Latinity and scholasticism were mostly studied. It was the aim of John Knox to devote the revenues of the old Church to the establishment of a system of popular education throughout the country, in order that every class might benefit by the blessings of knowledge, and especially the Scriptures, which by the recent invention of printing had been made accessible to all. But the avarice of the Scottish

[1] G. Birkbeck Hill, *Footsteps of Dr. Johnson*, p. 40.

nobles and the troubles of the time prevented the realization of these hopes, and made a distinctively Scottish culture and literature in the seventeenth century impossible. The ideals of the *Book of Discipline*, however, were not suffered to be forgot, and both in 1616 and in 1696 acts were passed which provided that schools should be erected and maintained in every parish. But it was not till a century later that this goal was fully reached. In the meantime, the national zeal for learning was bearing abundant fruit. When Bishop Burnet and five other Episcopal divines set out to teach religion to the people in Covenanting times, "we were indeed amazed," he wrote, "to see a poor commonalty so capable to argue on points of government, and on the bounds to be set to the power of princes in matters of religion: upon all these topics they had texts of Scripture at hand, and were ready with answers to anything that was said to them. This measure of knowledge was spread even among the meanest of them, their cottagers, and their servants."[1] Wesley was impressed by the same characteristic a century later. His hearers already knew everything about religion he proposed to tell them. Johnson, too, was surprised to find that he "never wanted books" whilst staying in the wildest parts of Skye. The people showed a marked affinity

[1] Burnet's *History of His Own Times*, vol. i., pp. 507-8.

to the liberal rather than to the manual arts, and "excelled in ornamental knowledge while they wanted the conveniences of life." Nor was this state of things confined to the lower classes or the common schools. The gentry whom Defoe met showed those unmistakable signs of breeding and education which only foreign travel could bestow, and John Wesley's burgess ticket at Aberdeen was couched in a classical and graceful Latin that would have done credit to any college in Oxford or in Cambridge. This love of sound learning was a thing ingrained. It was an instinct, a tradition, with the whole people, cherished since the days when Duns Scotus, "the Subtle Doctor," dominated the scholasticism of Italy, or George Buchanan, as a Latinist, won European fame, or the "Admirable" Crichton disputed in twelve languages at the College of Navarre. It is hardly possible to exaggerate the influence which this love of education has had upon the Scottish people. It has trained their intelligence and liberalized their minds, and given them a decided advantage in the competition for the prizes and honours of the world.

The other great influence moulding Scottish character, the chief dominating force, indeed, in the entire national development, has been religion. Few have been the periods of Scottish history in which some knotty problem or other in theology or Church government has not engrossed the specula-

tions, and determined the activities, of great masses of the people. In the Reformation struggle, the dispute was with Catholicism, a dispute which was not settled till Morton's capture of Edinburgh Castle in 1573 for ever put an end to the hopes of Mary. But if Popery was bad, Prelacy proved little better; and no sooner had Protestantism won its victory over Catholicism than Presbyterianism was called on to take up the challenge of Episcopalianism. Which was to determine the religion of Scotland, Laud's Liturgy or the people's National Covenant?—this was the question that rent the country in twain for fifty troubled years. Religious passions subsided somewhat in the eighteenth century, and both parties sought relief from controversy in that more secular and accommodating spirit which showed itself within the Church as Moderatism. Yet even then the peace and harmony of Zion were to be disturbed by the "Marrow" controversy, and the various secessions, with Auld Lichts and New Lichts, and Burgher over against Anti-Burgher. At a later day, Scotland was stirred to the depths by the Disruption controversy, then by the Robertson-Smith heresy case, and then by the fateful decision of the House of Lords as to the rights and privileges of the Free Church.

This continual preoccupation with the gravest problems of religion could not do other than leave a

deep mark on the character of the people. Scotland has out-Calvined Calvin in its zeal for reformation. It embraced his principles with a devotion, and carried them out with a consistency, that were not to be attempted in any other nation. The result has been that a certain unsympathetic hardness has been imparted to religion in Scotland from which it is only beginning to shake itself free. The Presbyterian ministers of the seventeenth century were the real masters of the country, and exercised over both the souls and the bodies of the people a harsh and rigid discipline which came nigh to intolerable tyranny. But at least they were learned and self-sacrificing men, for the most part, of blameless and holy lives, whose moral character was on a much higher level than that of the corrupt clergy whom they displaced. If sometimes they were autocratic and intolerant in the exercise of power, these qualities may have been required in the interests of that Protestantism they were raised to save, for their enemies aimed at being as despotic as themselves. There has been much that is narrow and bigoted in Scottish religious history, but Calvinism, perhaps because of its very rigour, has been a rare maker of men and nations, a stern nursing-mother of civil and religious freedom. Scotland owes much, more than it perhaps knows, to Knox and Melville, to Peden and James Renwick,

to the *Book of Discipline* and the *Shorter Catechism*, to the Bass Rock, the Grassmarket, and the stakes in the Solway Firth.

We close with the weighty words of an impartial modern historian.[1] "Proportionately to her population and her natural resources, Scotland has made her full contribution to the material and spiritual building up of the Empire of which she is a constituent part. In trade and commerce and in all modern industries, her people have displayed the vigour and the aptitudes demanded in the international struggle for the markets of the world. Of individual men, whose destiny it is to lead their fellows, it is acknowledged that Scotland has been a prolific nurse. In every department of national activity, Scotsmen have played even more than their proportionate part. At home more than their proportional share has fallen to them of public trust and responsibility; and still more noteworthy has been their participation in the fortunes of the Empire beyond the seas. Nor in the ideal domain of thought and imagination, where is found the ultimate test of national greatness, has Scotland been barren. In the same first half of the nineteenth century, two of her sons spoke to the world as no other writers of the time spoke. Of Sir Walter Scott it has been said that his work has given more

[1] P. Hume Brown, *History of Scotland*, vol. iii., pp. 433, 434.

wholesome pleasure to a greater number of readers than the work of any other writer; and within the same age the most inspiring word uttered to his generation was that of another Scot, Thomas Carlyle. As co-partners in the destinies of Britain's Empire, Scotland may fairly claim to have borne her own burden, and to have made her own contribution to the well-being of the nations."

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