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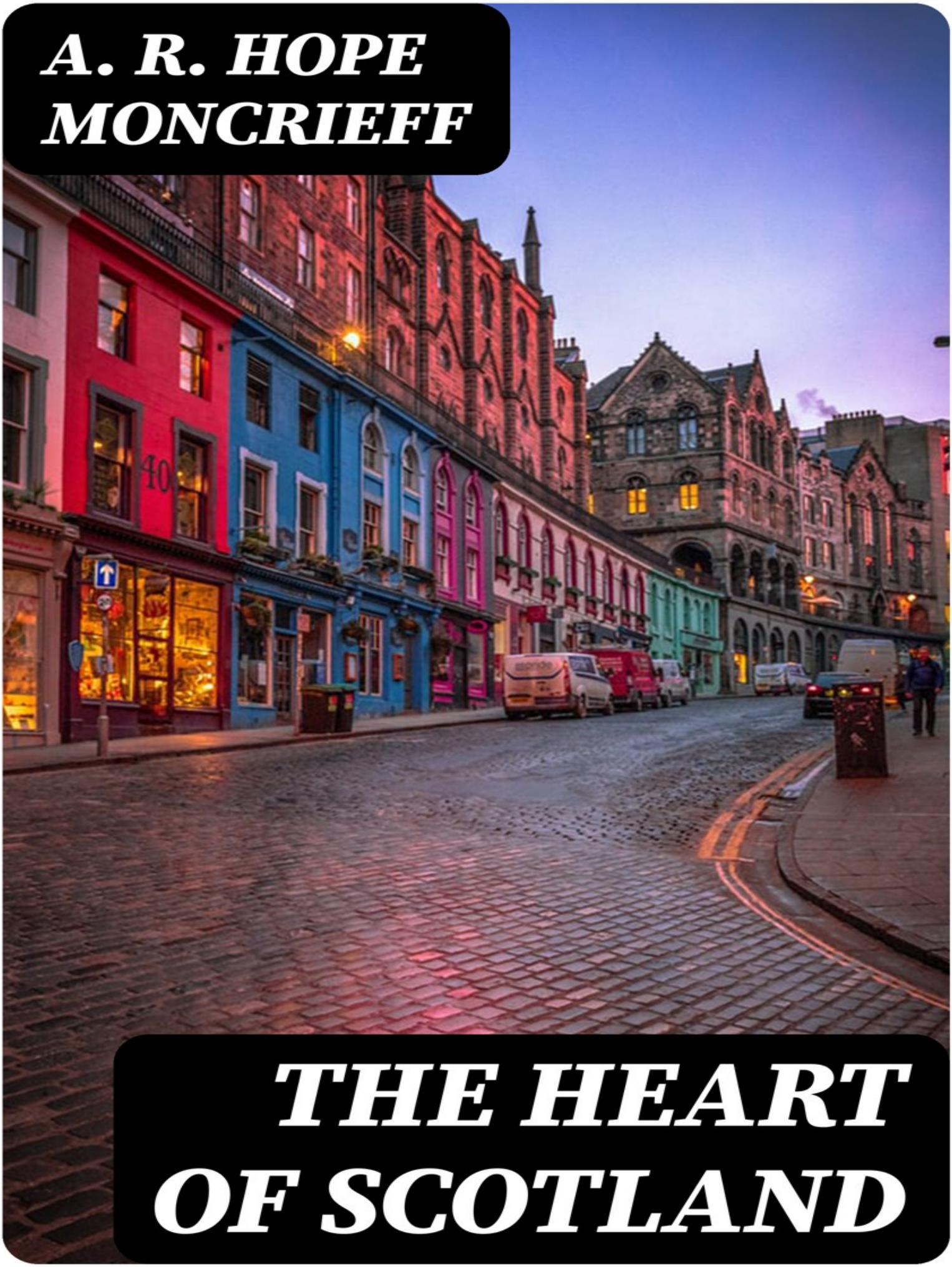

THE HEART OF SCOTLAND

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Table of Contents

Preface
THE HEART OF SCOTLAND
I PERTHSHIRE
II TAYSIDE
III ATHOLL
IV BREADALBANE
V STRATHEARN
VI THE MACGREGORS
VII ROB ROY AND HIS SONS
VIII MENTEITH

Preface

Table of Contents

"Bonnie Scotland" pleased so many readers that it came to be supplemented by another volume dwelling mainly on the western "Highlands and Islands," which was illustrated in a different style to match their wilder and mistier features. Such an addition gave the author's likeness of Scotland a somewhat lop-sided effect; and to balance this list he has prepared a third volume dealing with the trimmer and richer, yet not less picturesque region oftenest visited by strangers—that is, Perthshire and its borders. This is shown to be the *Heart of Scotland*, not only as containing its most famous scenery, but as best blending Highland and Lowland charms, and as having made a focus of the national life and history. Pict and Scot, Celt and Sassenach, king and vassal, mailed baron and plaided chief, cateran and farmer, Jacobite and Hanoverian, gauger and smuggler, Kirk and Secession, here in turn carried on a series of struggles whose incidents should be well known through the *Waverley Novels*. But these famous romances seem too little known to hasty readers of to-day; and some glimpses of Perthshire's past life may not prove over-familiar, at least to strangers in a county where the author is at home.

THE HEART OF SCOTLAND

Table of Contents

I

PERTHSHIRE

Table of Contents

My text is taken from a writer to whom every discourse on our country goes for authority and illustrations.

> Among all the provinces in Scotland, if an intelligent stranger were asked to describe the most varied and the most beautiful, it is probable he would name the county of Perth. A native, also, of any other district of Caledonia, though his partialities might lead him to prefer his native county in the first instance, would certainly class that of Perth in the second, and thus give its inhabitants a fair right to plead, that—prejudice apart—Perthshire forms the fairest portion of the northern kingdom.

Scott was an alien in Perthshire, his judgment of which, then, should be “neither partial nor impartial,” as the Provost of Portobello desired; while it is so much my native heath that I give it no place but that of first in all the counties of Britain. There can be small doubt of the verdict pronounced by visitors, who take the Scottish Highlands as the cream of our island’s scenery, and in most cases know little of the Highlands beyond this central maze of mountains and valleys, falling to the rich plain of Strathmore, spread out between the rugged Grampians and the green hills of Ochil and Sidlaw.

Here arose the ancient Alban, or realm of Alpin, the core of historic Scotland, a name that has been fondly identified with that of the Alps; but I am not going to entangle myself in the snares of philology. If the Perthshire Bens seem insignificant beside the Alps, for the former, at least, no boastful pretensions are made by their sons, who familiarly speak of them as the “hills” rather than the mountains. *Hill*, indeed, is used in the Highlands in a rougher sense, to denote the wild heathy land as distinct from the cultivated glen. I have heard an old-fashioned sportsman speak of going out on “the hill,” when he was actually descending to a lower level; and so R. L. Stevenson has it—

> Home is the sailor, home from the sea,
> And the hunter home from the hill.

Alban appears to have extended above Perthshire, taking in at least the headwaters of the Spey and other streams flowing north. It certainly included the basin of the Tay and the upper waters of the Forth. And as Lowland and Highland scenery are finely mingled on these rivers, so here met and blended the confluent torrents of blood and language swelling into a steady stream of national life. What may be called a Scottish kingdom first took shape on the banks of Tay, where long was fixed its chief seat. Something like a pattern spun by the shuttle of war comes at last to light on a torn web of blood-dyed, mist-dimmed checks and stripes, hitherto a puzzling blur for the most erudite spectacles. The Muse of early history seems like that chameleon, whose fate was explained by a Highland soldier: “I put it on my bonnet

and it went black; I put it on my coat and it turned red; but when I let it oot on my kilt, the tartan fairly bursted it."

It is an old reproach against us that every Scot looks on himself as descended from "great and glorious but forgotten kings." If, indeed, we calculate by geometrical progression how many millions of ancestors each of us can claim in the last thirty generations or so, the chances seem to be against any Briton not having some strain of quasi-royal blood in his veins. Scotland had, at least, many kings to be descended from, several apocryphal dozens of them, as named and numbered by George Buchanan, before he comes down to chronicles that can be verified. But to our critical age, the long row of early royal portraits exhibited at Holyrood, painted by a Dutchman at so much the square foot, seem worth still less as records than as works of art. The most ardent Scottish patriot no longer sets store by such fables as historians like Hector Boece wove into their volumes; nor is it necessary to examine so fond imaginations as that of descent from a Pharaoh's daughter, Scota, or from a Ninus king of Nineveh. Finn and Fergus, Oscar and Ossian, we must leave in cloudland, looking downwards to pick our steps over slippery rock and boggy heather, among which there is no firm footing upon traces of an aboriginal pre-Celtic stratum of humanity.

When the Romans garrisoned rather than occupied southern Scotland, and made reconnoitring expeditions into the north, its fastnesses were stoutly defended by fierce Caledonians, woodland savages, and Picti, painted warriors, who may or may not have been the same people. If the same, they may well have split into hostile tribes, warring

against each other like the kindred Mohawks and Hurons, sometimes amalgamated by conquest, sometimes uniting to make raids on richer Lowland clearings. After the false dawn of Roman annals ceases to throw a glimmer on those hardy barbarians, darkness again falls over mountain and forest, lit only by the twinkling lamp of adventurous missionaries. Then the twilight of middle-age history shows a Pictish kingdom seated in Charlemagne’s age on the Tay and its tributaries, but there presently overthrown by pushful invaders.

These were the Dalriad Scots from Ireland, who began their independent career by getting precarious foothold on the nearest coastland promontory of North Britain. Baffled, as it seems, in an attempt thence to master the country of their origin, then driven, perhaps, from their coast settlements by a stronger swarm of Scandinavian hornets, this stirring race shoved their way across the western Highlands to take a firmer stand in the heart of Scotland, when Kenneth MacAlpine overthrew the Pictish kingdom at Scone, its capital. Buchanan reports two successive battles, the scene of the former a few miles off, at Forteviot, where he makes Kenneth act on the motto of the Celtic Society, *Olim Marte, nunc arte*. His chiefs, we are told, not being very keen for the encounter, while they lay snoring off their drink, the king worked upon them by means of a young cousin of his, disguised as an angel in phosphorescent fish-skins, and equipped with a sort of primitive megaphone, through which he roused the sleepers by a promise of victory, then slipped off his celestial raiment to disappear in the darkness before these heavy-headed warriors were wide

awake. It is not often we are taken so well behind the scenes of a miracle.

At Forteviot, a name whose prefix is held as one of the rare Pictish vocables left to build philological theories, Kenneth appears to have fixed his own seat. The capital of such a kingdom would be no more permanent than Abyssinia's chief camp at Gondar or Abbis Abbeba. At all events it was hereabouts that currents of molten metal came together to mingle, cool and harden into the foundation of the Scottish nation. As yet it was the kingdom of Alban which spread around like a lava flood, to overrun a more or less imperfect amalgamation of Briton and Saxon to the south, of Norseman and Celt to the north and west, while, on all sides, it once and again had nearly been drowned by fresh waves of invasion from the Baltic. When, nearly two hundred years after Kenneth's Perthshire victories, Malcolm II. had added Lothian and Strathclyde to his volcanic realm, the style of Scotia appears in history, by which the settlers now dominant in Caledonia seem to kick off their connection with Ireland, where their name dies out as it is born again in the growing Scotland, and Duns Scotus becomes no longer in danger of being confused with a Scotus Erigena.

There is early Scottish history boiled down to a page or two, on which one might work in other changes that had made less violent progress, while the tops of the Grampians were being weather-worn into silt for the Tay. Those Picts had been in part conquered by the Cross before they fell under the sword. The disciplined faith of Rome overlaid the wild Christianity implanted from Iona. The ecclesiastical

metropolis was removed from the West to Dunkeld, then for a time to Abernethy, another old Pictish centre, and finally to St. Andrews. Intercourse with the world, and especially with the Norman conquerors of England, imported the feudal system with its dovetailing of power and ambition between kings who were in turn sovereign and vassal on different estates of their territories. The English tongue began to absorb that of the Gael, as the Celtic leaven seemed to be lost in the Saxon dough. But when Malcolm Canmore and his Anglicising queen did so much to bring Scotland into touch with its more civilised neighbour, they moved their chief seat no nearer the new border than Dunfermline.

For long after Scotland had developed into a vertebrate organism, its heart beat in the geographical centre. Its kings were crowned at Scone, Charles II. the last of them, when indeed the immemorial sanctity of that Pictish palace had fallen into some disesteem. The adjacent city of Perth, with its Castle, its Cathedral, and its four monasteries, was the Winchester of Scotland, as Scone the Westminster. The early Parliaments met at Perth more often than at other towns that might suit the convenience of kings who had to be much on the move through their agitated dominion. During the English intrusion, Perth was garrisoned by the Edwards' lieutenants, and suffered repeated attacks from Wallace and Bruce, who found concealment and rallying-place in the wild woods within a few miles of the city walls. The honour of being the capital was not definitely taken from Perth till the murder of James I. showed it too near the stormy Highlands,

while the Dunedin citadel seemed no longer in close peril from the English side.

Before the seat of government came to be fixed at Edinburgh, king and parliament are often found at Stirling, with Linlithgow for the Versailles of Scottish Royalty. Perth still held a high place, recognised by a decree of James VI. as second in the kingdom. Down to the end of his reign, its Provosts were as often as not the great lords of the neighbourhood. It had a leading voice in national opinion. Some of the earliest martyrs suffered here; then here broke out the first tumult of the Reformation. Later on, it became a hot focus of Presbyterian and Covenanting zeal; and after the popular worship had been firmly established, it was around Perth that sprang up several of its sectarian offshoots.

Accident of situation rather than its own choice again made Perth a centre of affairs, when Mar's melting army lay here through the winter of 1715, watching King George's force at Stirling; and the forlorn Old Pretender reached Scone in time to chill the spirits of his partisans, already too near freezing-point. Prince Charlie made a more dashing appearance at Perth for a few days; but when he had marched on, the douce burghers let it be seen that their hearts did not go with him. They more warmly received the Duke of Cumberland, as representing the orderly settlement that was good for trade. The wild Highlandman, with his uncanny weapons and his unbusiness-like sentiments, was here looked on as suspiciously as the Red Indian warrior in a border city of America, who in New York or Philadelphia would draw more sympathy or staring curiosity. The Fair

City, while willing to keep friends with the Tory lairds whose names have been familiar to her for centuries, cast her douce vote for prosperity and progress. In the Georgian age she gained some such reputation as Norwich in England, cultivating arts and letters as well as trade, and becoming known, in a modest way, by her printing presses, of which the *Encyclopædia Perthensis* was the most notable production.

Meanwhile, the blending of once hostile races had gone on faster in the centre of Scotland than at its extremities. Where first a national government had come into being, a higher organisation of tribal life was evolved. Here, as elsewhere, civilisation proceeded by steps over which civilised philanthropy shakes its head. The Perthshire Highlands, not to speak of Strathmore, contained fertile straths and valleys that offered themselves as cheap reward for the followers and favourites of Scottish kings. Norman, Saxon, and still farther-fetched adventurers got charters to make good by the sword against the sons of the soil. Its lords, native or *fremd*, lost and won at taking a hand in the general game of Scottish history, as when the abetters of Bruce turned out to have played on the right card, or again, when the murderers of James I. paid dearly for their crime, to the profit of those who hunted them down. But, in the main, plaids did not hold out against coats of mail, so that for centuries the great lords of Perthshire have been of Lowland origin. Like doughty Hal Smith of the

A HIGHLAND MOOR

Wynd, the sons of the plain in old times had claws as sharp as the mountain cats’; it was only when cultivators and craftsmen had ceased to handle arms, unless for holiday sport, that a spate of Highland war could burst through the passes, even then soon to scatter and spend itself in the face of disciplined resistance.

But while those strangers rose to power and wealth upon the heather, they fell captive to its spirit, taking on the manners, sentiments, and dress of the dispossessed clans. The Stewarts from England, the Campbells from Ireland, was it? the Drummonds from Hungary or where? among other names of chivalrous antecedents, bloomed out as clans, with new tartans, feuds, and legends, to complicate the native pattern of flesh and blood; and in no long time they became more Highland than the Highlanders themselves. Most remarkable is the adoption of what has come to be called the Scottish national dress, which, according to some modern critics, ought rather to be the mackintosh. There was a time when Stewart or Murray looked on the plaid as

badge of a savage foeman; there would be a time when the imported Highlanders grew as proud of kilt and bagpipes as if these had come down to them straight from Adam. All over the world have gone those badges of a race that gave them to its conquerors in exchange for its proudest blood. The cult of the tartan, revived in our own age by romantic literature and royal patronage, is an old story. One of the early emigrants to the Southern States of America is said to have rigged out all his negroes in kilts and such-like, teaching them also to speak Gaelic and to pipe and reel among cotton fields and cane swamps. But when one of those blackamoor retainers, liveried in a kilt, was sent to meet a practically-minded countryman landing from Scotland, the effect of so transmogrified a figure proved appalling. “Hae ye been long oot?” stammered the newcomer, and took his passage back by the next ship.

Away from Scotland, all true Scots carry over the world an outfit of which the colours, the trimmings, and the gewgaws come from the Highlands, while the hard-wearing qualities of the stuff are rather of Lowland manufacture. Both spinning and dyeing, I maintain, have best been done in Perthshire, a county of varied aspects, which set me the example of passing to a change of metaphor. It is in this central region that a right proportion of the Saxon dough and the Celtic yeast, baked for centuries by fires of love and war, have risen into the most crusty loaf of Scottish character. In the damp western Highlands and the cold north the baking may have been less effectual, producing a more spongy mass, not so full of nutriment, but more relished by some as a change from the stodginess of

modern life. In some parts of the Lowlands, again, the dough turns out more dour and sour, not enough leavened by fermentations that leave it too leathery for all teeth. While all over Scotland there has been going on a more or less thorough interaction and coalescence of once repellent bodies, in Perthshire, I assert, the amalgamation has been most complete. “Hae ye been happy in yer jeels?” is a civil question I have heard one old wife ask of another. Here nature seems to have been happy in a due mixture of sweet and acid, shredded and stirred, boiled and moulded, with the success of Dundee marmalade.

The same fusion as between Highlander and Lowlander, between Norman and Saxon, it has been the work of time to bring about between Northerner and Southerner, the process there hindered by a fixed border-line of hostile memories, of variant creeds, customs, and laws, going to keep up natural antipathies. But such fences are now so much fallen down that there is little to stop different breeds from straggling on to one another’s fields, the movement indeed being mostly one way, since the leaner flock is more tempted from hill-sides eaten bare to the green pastures of the south. What is as yet a mechanical mixture tends to become a chemical one, as these wandering atoms find affinities in a fresh environment; then the substance of national life should be enriched, as every generation goes on incorporating the coarse good-humour and practical temper of the plainsman, with the generous affections and mettlesome hardihood of the mountaineer. The result as yet may be best seen in London, that crucible of blood and manners, where there are Englishmen who would fain affect

to be Scots, and Scots who have forgotten all but their pride in Scotland. I met one such the other day in a train, who had his boy arrayed in a kilt, but neither of them knew what tartan it was. Where a Campbell wears the colours of a Cameron with indifference, he unconsciously continues what was begun by a Graham or a Gordon inventing a tartan for himself, and may end in plaid and tweed taking their turn of fashion with serge and broadcloth, when *Tros Tyriusque* are indistinguishably mixed in one name and nature.

Such is a consummation devoutly to be wished. But there are centrifugal as well as centripetal forces at work. When the fear of a foreign foe no longer hangs over us, we fall into wars of interests, of classes, of sexes; and piping times of peace breed likewise artificial injuries, useless martyrdoms, unpractical patriotisms, by which we would fain set our teeth on edge from the real sufferings of our fathers. Idly retrospective persons find nothing better to do than to rub up old sores into an imitation of plague spots, instead of leaving them to heal and vanish in the way of nature. Some discontented spirits among my countrymen have lately been agitating for the protection of Scottish rights and sentiments: it would appear more to the purpose if Englishmen got up a league to bar out northern aggrandisement. While the sovereign of the United Kingdom is bound to be of Scottish descent, and while custom fills the English archbishoprics with an apostolic succession of sons of the Covenant, there still, indeed, remains such a scandal as the Prime Ministership being occasionally open to mere Englishmen. This apart, however, most of our grievances

may be comfortably digested by chewing the cud of the Union in John Bull’s own spirit of easy good-nature.

> Laurel crowns cleave to deserts,
> And power to him who power exerts:
> Hast not thy share? On wingèd feet,
> Lo! it rushes thee to meet.
> And all that Nature made thine own,
> Floating in air, or pent in stone,
> Shall rend the hills and cleave the sea,
> And like thy shadow follow thee.

The sorest gall of Scotland seems to be that her name has been like to merge in England’s greater one, to which smart a plaster must be applied in the revived title of Britain. No school-book would sell north of the Tweed in this generation that let an English army serve a king of England. Yet we cannot play the censor on the speech of our Continental neighbours, who denounce as England the power that has ruled the waves to their loss; and it is England which so many sons and dependents, in so wide regions of the world, speak of as “home.” In the London Library some vague hint of dirks and claymores has availed to keep Scottish History a separate department; but one notes with concern how works on the Topography of Scotland are scattered under the head of England, while London is set up with a heading to itself. But what is this slight to the carelessness of foreign authors quoting Scott and Burns among the English poets!

It is perhaps inevitable that a firm with a long title should come to be best known by the name of the prominent

partner. One never could be expected to style Messrs. Quirk, Gammon, and Snap in full, unless by way of formal address; had it been no more than Dodson and Fogg, one might make shift at an Austria-Hungary bracketing. Lord Bute is accused of prompting George III. to pride in being born a *Briton*; but the grievance seems more philosophically handled in a story of two Sandy tars at Trafalgar, one of whom found fault with Nelson's famous signal: "'England expects'—aye, but nothing about poor old Scotland!" was his grumble. "Hoots!" answered his comrade, "don't they know that every Scotsman is sure to do his duty?"

I confess to having lukewarm sympathy with the perfervid patriotism that is too ready to find quarrel in straws. Scotland has got quite her share of practical benefit from the "sad and sorrowful Union," and need not grudge to England the nominal advantages of size and wealth, which the latter sometimes appears to occupy as caretaker for her neighbour. So long as Scottish enterprise, thrift, and industry are allowed fair play on both sides of the Border, it seems childish to lament over lost titles and ensigns, toys of history, that only in a museum may escape being broken, and sooner or later will be swept into time's dustbin. When one sees how we have peacefully imbued our fellow subjects with our best blood, I for one am not too sorry that our dark record of feuds and slaughter and bigotry falls into its place in the background of a grander scene, and that instead of cherishing thistly independence as a romantic Norway or an austere Portugal, we merge our national life into the greater kingdom's, which, by good luck or good guidance, has come to stand so high in the world for

freedom, enlightenment, and solidity. In this kingdom we take much the same place as the Manchus in China. All over the world we go forth to prosper like that Chosen People of the old dispensation, with this difference, that we have our Sion in our own hands, to which come pilgrims from all nations. The comparison would fit better if it allowed me to call Perthshire the Scottish land of Judah.

True Scots should have more philosophy than to imitate unenlightened patriotisms that would interrupt a natural process defined by Herbert Spencer as change from an incoherent homogeneity to a coherent heterogeneity accompanied by the dissipation of motion and the integration of matter. So Penelope peoples, in their darkness, undo the work of civilising daylight. Let Bohemia rage and the states of the Balkans imagine vain things. But why should Scotland waste time and electric light on looking back too fondly to the things that are behind, while she cannot help pressing forward to the inevitable destiny before her? With the warning of Ireland at hand, some of us cry out for Home Rule and such-like retrogressions that might go to giving back, at one end of the United Kingdom, the shadow of its cloudy dignity along with the substance of its old discords.

Where is this reactionary *Particularismus* to stop? There are parts of Caledonia which, in its stern and wild times, were independent of each other, some that still are as different from one another in blood and speech, as most of Scotland is from England. Shall Badenoch or Buchan awake its overlaid individuality? May not Galloway and Strathclyde set up for recognition of their ex-independence? Then why

not encourage Strathbogie, the Cumbraes, the Braes of Bonny Doon, or the parish of Gandercleugh, to lament upon the fate that has made them members of one greater body? Nay, now that the clans are broken up, could they not contrive to respin their warp of local loyalty, crossing the woof of national patriotism? Such *reductio ad absurdum* is worth thinking about, when at this moment there are signs of relapse in the long convalescence from that Jacobite fever that “carried” hard heads as well as soft hearts, and set old grudges against the Union flaunting in plaid and philibeg.

I am informed of a movement for putting the kingdom of Fife in its right place before a world too apt to jest at its pretensions. These are many and serious. Of old, *Fibh* had kings of its own, of such immemorial antiquity that their very names, much more their portraits, are not forthcoming. Enclosed between two firths, this region makes almost an island, with the Ochils as border-line cutting it off from the rest of Scotland. Thus the Roman legions thundered by it; and its maiden independence was never violated, if we reject a scandalous suggestion as to Cupar being the Mount Graupius of Tacitus. The kings of Scotland were much at home here, notably Malcolm Canmore, that effectual founder of the modern kingdom. If Bruce were born who knows where, he came to be buried at Dunfermline. History tells how Queen Mary was lodged at Lochleven, and how more than one King James had to be snatched away, by force or fraud, from his chosen residence in Fife. The dialect of Fife, mixed with that of Lothian, made the standard Court language, while Gaelic was ebbing out of the Perthshire straths. The see of the old Scottish Church was at St.

Andrews, where arose the first northern university, the local Saint Regulus being supplanted by that apostle who, according to scoffers, was chosen as Scotland’s patron because of the keen eye he showed on earth for loaves and fishes. In Protestant days, several of the religious leaders—Knox, the Melvilles, the Erskines, John Glas, Edward Irving, Thomas Chalmers—were all either natives of or sojourners in Fife. This

A HIGHLAND STRATH

many-havened coast was the nursery of the Scottish navy and commerce. The most famous national product, next to flesh and blood and whisky, is golf, whose headquarters are in the East Neuk of this choice shire. When we consider the many towns of Fife, its wealth in horn and corn, and coal and fish, its output of textile fabrics, and remember its past history, should we not allow that this and not Perthshire is truly the heart of Scotland? It has even a Wales in Kinross, whose craving for separate status might one day raise a troublesome question. Nor does it want a classic bard to invoke for it the trumpet of fame:

> Nymphae, quae colitis highissima monta Fifaea,
> Seu vos Pittenwema tenent, seu Cralia crofta,
> Sive Anstraea domus, ubi nat haddocus in undis,
> Codlineusque ingens, et fleucca et sketta pererrant
> Per costam, et scopulis lobster monifootus in udis
> Creepat, et in mediis ludit whitenius undis, *etc.*