The Scotch-Irish Race.

AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

Scotch-Irish Society of America.

BY

HON. J. PROCTOR KNOTT.

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ADDRESS DELIVERED BY EX-GOVERNOR PROCTOR KNOTT, OF KENTUCKY.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies, and Gentlemen:—As we are assembled to honor the memories of our Scotch-Irish ancestry, and to devise, if possible, some means of gathering up, and crystallizing into the more enduring form of written history, the legendary memorials of their deeds, it has occurred to me that the proceedings of the present Congress might be appropriately prefaced by a brief inquiry into their origin, the characteristics which distinguished them from other people, and what they did to entitle them to the respectful recollection of coming generations. That office I will, therefore, attempt to discharge; and, in undertaking it, I will endeavor to do precisely as I think they would have me do, if they could come to me to-day from their consecrated graves and dictate the present utterances of my tongue—speak of them as they were; tell the truth, as I understand it, of their frailties, as of their virtues;

"Nothing extenuate,
Nor set down aught in malice."

When Agricola marshaled his legions on the north bank of the Firth of Solway, eighteen hundred years ago, he looked out upon a country lying beyond the parallel of latitude which forms the southernmost boundary of Alaska, and embracing about thirty thousand, five hundred square miles of territory, as cheerless, perhaps, in all its aspects, as any that ever provoked the ambition or tempted the cupidity of a Roman conqueror.

Directly in his front, and as far as the site of the present city of Dumfries, stretched a tangled labyrinth of swampy woods, interlaced by a matted network of creeping undergrowth. To the westward, as far as St. Patrick's Channel, lay a rugged and almost inaccessible district of roughly wooded, rocky hill lands, trenched by turbulent streams, and abounding in lovely lakes. Northward, beyond the present limits of Dumfries, to the narrow isthmus of low lands lying between the Firths of Clyde and Forth, and eastward to St. Abb's Head, extended a similarly broken region, covered with a growth of scrubby timber, interrupted here and there by barren ridges and

dreary moorlands. What are now the fertile and flourishing counties of Ayr and Renfrew, was then a sterile and uninviting waste, while the unbroken umbrage of a primeval forest shut out the sunlight from the rich plains of Berwick.

North of the isthmus of Clyde and Forth, lay the vast sea-girt wilderness of Celyddon, the Caledonia of the Romans, extending away to the wave-washed rocks of Cape Wrath and John o' Groats—a bleak, inhospitable region, with its craggy shores fretted by firths and lochs, and its surface corrugated by an interminable maze of misty mountain ranges, with their barren crests and towering cliffs, interspersed with rushing torrents and roaring lynns, lonely tarns and solitary glens, desolate corries and densely wooded straths, while its eastern boundary, from the mouth of the Tay to Moray Firth, was a succession of extensive marshes and sterile hills, made more forbidding by the icy blasts which swept over them from the northern ocean.

Yet some of the remote ancestry of many of the courteous and cultured audience before me, as well as some of my own, had made their cheerless homes in this rude and repulsive region for centuries before the foot of the Roman invader first pressed its indigenous heather; while others of them might have been found, perhaps, in the wandering clans which went over from the northern part of Ireland in the earlier centuries of our era, as allies of their Caledonian kindred in their predatory inroads upon their southern neighbors, and finally settled along the western coast, from Cantyre to Sutherland.

They were not as elegant in manners, nor as elevated in morals, however, as might possibly be inferred from the intelligence and refinement of many of their descendants of the present period. On the contrary, they were as savage as their surroundings were wild and inhospitable, and were regarded by their neighbors not only with a well grounded terror, but with far more disgust and abhorrence than we do our thieves and tramps. The very names, indeed, by which their nationality has been designated in history were never assumed by themselves, but were mere terms of reproach applied to them by the victims of their rapacity, who, out of revenge for the manifold injuries they had suffered from their predacious hands, denounced the fierce and truculent tribes who occupied the eastern, as well as the greater portion of the interior and southern sections of the territory, as *pictich* or *picts*, while they called the roving bands who went over from the north of Ireland *scuite*, signifying, respectively, in the vernacular of the early Briton, robbers and vagabonds, the two terms being subsequently latinized by the Romans into *Picti* and *Scotti*.

Nor was the country occupied by them known by its present

name for many generations after their first appearance in authentic history; not, in fact, for over two hundred years after the nominal union of the Scots and Picts under Kenneth McAlpine in 843, when the centuries of sanguinary strife between those two branches of the Celtic race in North Britain finally terminated in their complete coalition, and the united kingdom was called Scotland, after the dominant power. And even then, its inhabitants, notwithstanding the introduction of Christianity among them as far back as the middle of the sixth century, were still as barbarous in many respects as their fierce forefathers, who, more than thirty generations before, in a heroic struggle for their wild independence, met hand to hand the trained legionaries of imperial Rome upon the bloody slopes of the Grampian Hills.

Their lack of progress was not so much their fault, however, as their misfortune. Their history during that long period, as it was for centuries after and had been for generations before, was that of a constant, unremitting, and perilous contest for sheer existence. Compelled to supplement their meager domestic resources with the precarious spoils of the chase, they were obliged, in order to eke out their scanty means of subsistence, not only to encounter the dangers of a capricious and tempestuous climate, but to pursue their quarry frequently through hostile territory, across mountain torrents, through guarded passes, and along the treacherous brinks of precipitous cliffs hundreds of feet in height. Besides, they were in a perpetual state of war, when pillage and arson went hand in hand with slaughter, and the sword of the victor knew neither age nor sex. Harried by sanguinary feuds with neighboring clans, which hereditary hate or a mutual desire for plunder or revenge frequently kept alive from generation to generation, and almost constantly engaged in defending themselves from the cruel incursions of the powerful and rapacious nations around them, they had no time for intellectual culture or moral improvement.

Under such circumstances, their advancement in the scale of social being was necessarily retarded to the lowest possible degree. It is a marvel, indeed, that even the lowest grade of civilization could have existed among them at all, for without some settled assurance of the permanency and peaceful enjoyment of the acquisitions of individual industry, popular progress is an impossibility. With no feeling of certainty, on leaving his home in the morning for the perilous avocations of the day, that he would not return in the evening to rescue the charred remains of his butchered family from the smoldering ashes of his ruined dwelling, the savage Celt had neither the incentive nor the opportunity to accumulate more than was necessary for a

squalid subsistence from day to day, or, at most, a beggarly account of portable chattels, which might be readily removed on the approach of danger. Wealth was, consequently, a thing unknown among them, and commerce, the great evangelist of civilization, a stranger in their midst. For centuries, they knew of but two methods by which property might be transferred—robbery and barter—approving as well as practicing the principle that—

> "He may take who has the power,
> And he may hold who can."

While of any thing like a standard of value or medium of exchange, they were so utterly ignorant that there was not so much as a word in their language signifying *money*, until they had learned the names, as well as the uses, of current coins from the Anglo-Saxon. And it is a singular fact that, even down to the present generation, many of their descendants seem to have acquired no true conception of the value of a dollar, as we rarely meet with one of them who does not appear to think it is worth about five times as much as it really is.

To such apparently inauspicious surroundings, however, may be plainly traced the development of those peculiar characteristics which have distinguished the Scottish race from all other people, and which, though modified in many respects by the intermingling of other blood, as well as by a more enlightened intelligence and a broader civilization, are still discernible, to a greater or less degree, in their descendants of the present day.

The constant exposure of the hardy Gael to privation and peril of every description, naturally tended to develop his physical courage to the highest pitch of savage heroism, as well as the habit of self-reliance, under the most trying exigencies, whether in the chase, amid the dangers of his native solitudes, or steel to steel with his dearest foe upon the battle-field. These as naturally inspired him with a confident pride in his own manhood, and an indomitable spirit of personal independence, which impelled him to the instant resistance of any encroachment upon his individual rights, and rendered him peculiarly impatient of all governmental restraint imposed upon him without his own consent. *Nemo me impune lacessit*, became the controlling sentiment of his being, and the guiding principle of his conduct, as it has since become, with singular propriety, the motto on his national coat-of-arms. While he may have been taught that royalty was hereditary in the blood, he nevertheless had a vague sort of notion, even in the hazy twilight of barbarism, that the ultimate repository of political power was in the people, as is clearly evident in the ancient Celtic custom of

meeting in popular assembly upon the death of the ruler and electing his successor from among his sons, or some collateral branch of his family, as the public interest might seem to require.

As the legitimate outgrowth of these strongly developed traits, we find that there has always been less respect for self-assumed authority, and, consequently, more frequent rebellion against the hereditary claims of kingly power among the Scotch, than any other people on the face of the globe, as well as the still more striking fact that throughout their hundreds and hundreds of years of sanguinary warfare, they were never completely conquered. A clan might be exterminated, but it fought until the stiffening hand of its last expiring warrior was not able to strike for freedom or revenge. Overrun they might be, as they often were by the superior force of an invading foe, but upon the slightest removal of the immediate pressure, they were in arms again, reasserting their wild traditional liberties.

But the same causes which made them brave and self-reliant, also made them cautious, cunning, suspicious, and selfish, while the cruelties they so often suffered themselves, not only rendered them indifferent to the sufferings of others, with whom they had no connection by blood or affinity, but stimulated a disposition to revenge which frequently manifested itself in acts of the most cold-blooded and brutal atrocity. Nevertheless they were human, and felt the same yearning for society and sympathy, which universally pervades the human breast, however savage or depraved.

For the gratification of that sentiment, whether influenced by their own inclination or not, they were compelled by the circumstances surrounding them to resort mainly to their own hearthstones. There the mother and children, under an ever-present sense of their dependence upon his protection and counsel, gathered around the husband and father, as their hero and their oracle, with mingled emotions of love, gratitude, veneration, and pride; while he, in return, regarded the protegés of his prowess with those feelings of tenderness natural to the sacred relation he sustained toward them, deepened and intensified by a realization of their absolute dependence upon his strength and their confidence in his courage.

The strong feeling of domestic affection thus naturally engendered, strengthened by time and the constant necessity of mutual assistance, ripened, at length, into a degree of filial and fraternal attachment rarely witnessed outside of the ancient Gaelic household. Cherished by each member of the family through life, and sedulously inculcated around the fireside of each offshoot from the parent stem, to be again transmitted under similar surroundings to a still remoter generation,

these ties of consanguinity eventually became the common bond of the clan, whose chieftain exercised his prerogatives by common consent, as the lineal representative of the original stock, or was chosen, if occasion required, from the worthiest of their blood.

In the light of such circumstances, it is easy to see how that peculiar sentiment of clannishness, which bound the ancient Celt to his kindred of the remotest degree, and which has brought us together today, became hereditary in our blood. Nor is it more difficult for us to explain that apparent paradox in the character of our earlier ancestry, namely, the passionate fealty of the clansman who esteemed it a privilege to die for his chief, while his lax allegiance to royalty suggested nothing improper in the murder of his king. His chieftain was of his own tribe and kindred, bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh; the embodiment of the dignity of his family, and the defender of its honor; the cheerful companion of his hardships, and the grateful partaker of his humble hospitality; the friend whose dirk was at his service in his private feud, and the leader whose flashing claymore was his beacon in the red storm of battle—ever first at the rendezvous and the foremost in the foray.

The king, on the other hand, was frequently a stranger to his blood, the descendant, perhaps, of some hereditary foe to his house, claiming authority over him without his consent, and by a title contrary to the traditions of his race or repugnant to his own sense of right. He consequently entertained a much higher regard for the sovereign of any other nation, who would let him alone, than for the ruling monarch of his own, whose reign was generally turbulent and disastrous, frequently terminating in the tragic death of the prince himself at the hands of his rebellious subjects. It has been indignantly asserted, indeed, by an English writer, though with evident exaggeration, that the Scotch had barbarously murdered forty of their kings, while half as many more had made away with themselves to escape the pains of torture or perished miserably in strait imprisonment. But however that may have been, it is quite safe to assert that, whenever they espoused the cause of one of their princes, a large majority of his followers were generally influenced by other motives than loyalty to his person or partiality to his government.

When, by whom, or in what manner, feudalism, with its various ranks of nobility, was introduced among the Scottish people, is a matter about which there has been considerable controversy among historians, but the weight of authority seems to support the opinion that it was inaugurated in the latter part of the eleventh century by Malcolm Canmore, when, with the aid of Edward the Confessor, he recovered

the scepter of his father—immortalized as "the gracious Duncan" in the sublimest pages of dramatic literature—and extended from time to time by his successors, as opportunity presented, until it became finally established throughout the entire kingdom. But whatever may be the facts in that regard, it is quite certain that, while the introduction of the feudal system produced many and marked changes in the political constitution of Scotland, the power exercised by the nobility in the administration of public affairs was never due so much to their legal rank as to the influence of the strong feeling of clannishness among the masses of the people with whom they were immediately connected by the ties of blood or marriage, and which, from repeated inculcation and long heredity, had become inherent in their very natures.

But while their politics—if we except their unvarying fidelity to the leader of the clan—seems to have set as loosely upon them as their tartan plaids, their religion appears to have been ingrained with every fiber and tissue of their being; and their singular veneration for ecclesiastical authority, when compared with their lack of reverence for political power, especially when disassociated from the ever dominant influence of the family tie, has frequently been regarded as a striking inconsistency in their character. A little reflection, however, should satisfy us that an inconsistency in national characteristics is, in the very nature of things, an impossibility; and it is by no means difficult to see how this peculiarity sprung naturally from the same surroundings which developed the traits I have already mentioned.

Compelled by the necessities of their condition to be much alone amid the solitudes of their native hills, where the dark and lonely dells around them, and the craggy cliffs towering away into the far blue lift above them, with their fantastic shadows mirrored in the deep, still tarn below them, constantly conspired to incite in them the profoundest feelings of superstitious awe; their rude imaginations became impressed by the viewless presence of a vast, invisible, intangible, mysterious being, whose character they invested with the same savage attributes as their own. They saw his terrible chariot in the black mass of whirling clouds, and heard his angry voice in the roaring storm. They caught the gleam of his vengeful weapon in the lightning's bolt that shivered the gnarled oak, and saw the outpouring of his omnipotent rage in the rushing torrent that dashed the granite buttress of the mountain from its base; and when the wintry night wind shrieked its wailing dirge around their lonely hovels, they told their children, in the subdued tones of ignorant awe, of his wrath which they could not appease, and his power which they could not with-

stand. It is not at all wonderful, therefore, that when St. Columba came to them with the priceless truths of Christianity, they should hail him with joy as the messenger of peace from their fierce, mysterious deity, nor that they should seize with savage avidity upon the promises of the Gospel, while understanding little or nothing of its doctrines.

Nor is it any more remarkable that the Culdees, who embraced the earliest ecclesiastics among the converts of St. Columba, speedily spread throughout the whole of Caledonia, where they maintained an unquestioned supremacy in all matters of religious faith and practice, and, perhaps, preserved many of the traditionary customs and articles of belief common to an earlier period of the Roman Church until centuries later, when they were reformed or suppressed in a more advanced state of civil and ecclesiastical government. For it should be observed that these rude ministers of religion were not a body of foreign clergy thrust upon the people against their will and contrary to their prejudices, but were of their own kith and kin, often as actively engaged in the secular affairs of the clan as in the offices of their more sacred calling, the functions of chieftain and abbot of a monastery being not infrequently united in the same person.

Described as a kind of presbyters, who lived in small communities, elected and ordained their own rectors or bishops, and traveled over the adjacent country preaching and administering the sacraments of their religion, some claim to have discovered in their crude system of ecclesiastic polity the protoplasm from which the Presbyterian Church of Scotland was ultimately evolved. But be that as it may, being educated at home, understanding no language but their own, and having but a limited intercourse with other nations, they retained not only the traits and prejudices peculiar to their own race, but much of the plainness and simplicity of the primitive ages in their forms of worship, mingled, no doubt, with much of their former superstitions. They consequently obtained an unbounded influence over the minds of their savage parishioners, who were not only bound to them by the ties of blood and familiar association, but who confidently expected, through their ministration, to secure the never-ending pleasures of a blissful paradise, from which their less deserving enemies would, fortunately, be forever excluded.

It should be carefully borne in mind, however, that the race to which the later ancestry of many of us belonged was a composite one—a race in which the blood of the rude Caledonian was mingled with that of the sturdy Saxon and the turbulent Norman. Early in the seventh century, the Northumbrians, under King Edwin, pushed their

conquests on Scottish soil to the estuary of the Forth, where they erected the fortress which gave its name to the present metropolis of North Britain; but in consequence of their disastrous defeat at Dun-Nechtan, sixty-eight years later, the dominion of the invaders shrank again within the waters of the Tweed, never to be re-asserted beyond its northern bank. Nevertheless, the lost territory continued to be occupied by its Anglo-Saxon population, which was subsequently augmented from time to time by slight accessions from Northumberland and its adjacent counties in the north of England, whose inhabitants, from somewhat similar circumstances, had acquired many of the moral traits and social customs of their more northern neighbors. In addition to this, the tide of immigration which followed the marriage of Malcolm Canmore with the Saxon Princess Margaret, and continued with increasing activity through the succeeding reigns of their sons, Edgar, Alexander, and David, not only changed the civil and ecclesiastical institutions of Scotland, but carried with it, among thousands of lesser note, the founders of many of those illustrious houses which have figured so conspicuously in its subsequent annals.

It must not be supposed, however, that the hereditary peculiarities of the original Celt disappeared with his traditionary customs, upon the introduction of Anglo-Norman jurisprudence, with its accompanying civilization, from the South. On the contrary, until the twelfth century, the only language spoken north of the two friths was the ancient Gaelic, while throughout the Lothians and the districts further south, it was heard as frequently as the Anglo-Saxon; and as a large majority of the immigrants were mere military adventurers employed in the service of the Scottish kings, they no doubt intermarried with the daughters of the land, as the soldiers of Cromwell afterward did in Ireland. Thus the blood of the Sassenach, in process of time, became largely transfused with that of their Celtic predecessors, transmitting the leading characteristics of each of the confluent races, mutually modified by each other, as an inheritance to the common posterity of both.

Consequently, he who chooses to thread the intricate mazes of their history back to the period when that transfusion became general, will invariably find in the mixed race of Middle and Southern Scotland, side by side with the rugged common sense, plainness of speech, frugality, and thrift of the Anglo-Saxon, and the aggressive self-assertion of the imperious Norman, the predominant traits of their Caledonian ancestry centuries before; the same impetuous courage, often amounting to an utter recklessness of personal peril; the same self-appreciation, impelling them to resent the slightest aggression upon their private concerns; the same relentless disposition, frequently

exhibiting itself in acts of remorseless cruelty or implacable revenge; the same impatience of all restraint inconsistent with their own sense of right, drawing them into repeated and bloody rebellion; the same romantic reverence for the family tie, influencing, to a greater or less degree, all their relations to church or state; the same stubborn adhesion to a religion, whether under prelatic or Presbyterian auspices, recognizing the immediate interposition of an omnipotent providence in all their temporal concerns, and frequently inspired more by a dread of his vengeance than an appreciation of his mercies, and the same unquestioning confidence in the guidance of their spiritual leaders, especially when bound to them by the ties of kindred.

The thoughtful student will observe, moreover, that in the great revolt against the parent church, in the sixteenth century, the overthrow of its supremacy among such a people could lead to but one result, so far as their ecclesiastical relations were concerned, and that was the ultimate establishment of precisely such a system of church polity as took place upon the triumph of the Reformation in Scotland. How much the lust of power and the jealousies of ambition may have had to do in bringing about that result, it is needless now to inquire. Without pausing, therefore, to consider the intricate and controverted details of that long and angry contest between the crown, assisted by the magnates of the established church on the one side, and the nobility, aided by the spirit of clanship which pervaded their multitudes of retainers, and the active influence of numbers of the native clergy, who felt the same potent spell of family names and associations, on the other, which culminated in the downfall of the papal hierarchy in Scotland, it is sufficient to say that, when the moment for the final catastrophe arrived, the man for the hour had also come; one who, with a single blow of his stalwart arm, hurled the venerable but tottering fabric from its base, and proceeded at once to rear upon its ruins a superstructure better suited to the genius of his race.

That man, I scarcely need say, was Knox—the living, breathing incarnation of the highest virtues of his people, though not wholly exempt from many of their no less striking vices. Familiar with all their peculiar characteristics, passionately devoted to their interests and their honor, the impersonation of a lofty and intrepid zeal, tempered by a deliberate and self-reliant judgment, with a commanding intellect, profoundly versed in all the learning of the age and thoroughly in sympathy with its quickening progress, inspired by an ardent love of religious freedom, and burning with a bitter scorn for all forms of self-assumed authority, he seemed almost to have been specially de-

signed for the great work of ecclesiastical reconstruction of which he was, by common consent, the acknowledged architect.

Detesting prelacy and papacy alike, he conceived a scheme somewhat after the design of Calvin, with whose views he was deeply imbued, which, though not fully executed in his lifetime, resulted in the development of a system of church government based upon the fundamental principles of representative democracy—a system in which no minister or other ecclesiastical functionary could be foisted upon a congregation without its own consent, nor its humblest member be deprived of any right within the cognizance of the church, without the privilege of appealing to the highest tribunal known to its jurisdiction, a tribunal composed, like the lowest court in the system, of representatives chosen by the free suffrages of the people constituting the congregations respectively. In short, a popular government in ecclesiastical affairs, in which the will of the majority, regularly expressed through its legally constituted agencies, was the supreme controlling power.

I will not pretend to say that the people, under this form of church government, were more pious or orderly in their daily walk, or that their ministers were any more correct in their religious teaching, or more faithful in their sacred calling, than they had been under the system which they had just demolished; but it can be safely asserted that its effects upon the destinies of the English speaking people, if not ultimately upon those of the general mass of mankind, are beyond the possibility of adequate conception.

We may admit, if you please, that its laity for generations were left to grovel in the lowest depths of ignorance, superstition and vice, while its clergy were narrow-minded, grasping, tyrannical, insolent, intolerant and cruel. We may concede all that its most malignant enemy has said in denunciation of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland for more than a century after its establishment, and even agree that the colors in which the repulsive picture has been drawn should have been ten-fold darker. Yet its influence in promoting the spirit of democracy, which lingered in the Scottish heart from the rudest ages of its savage independence, will entitle it to the highest meed of gratitude and admiration as long as human liberty has a votary among men. We not only find in it the germ of our own free institutions and the original type of our own magnificent form of civil government, but the sacred flame from which the beacon fires of freedom have been kindled every-where. It spurned with bitter contempt the impious pretensions of princes, and taught the true dignity of man. Its very existence was a perpetual rebuke to every claim of hereditary

power, and a constant illustration of the great truth that men are capable of governing themselves. The choice of its official agencies by the free suffrage of the congregation was a practical assertion of the vital principle underlying all republican institutions, that "governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed," while its presbyteries and assemblies demonstrated the fact that the will of popular majorities can be conveniently and safely exercised through their own chosen representatives.

But if mankind is thus deeply indebted to the mere passive example of the Scottish church, how much more is due to the intrepid zeal and tireless vigilance of its clergymen in the darkest period of its history. To show this, I have but to use the words of a distinguished English writer, who delighted to excoriate their faults with the burning lash of indignant denunciation: "Much they did to excite our strongest aversion; but one thing they achieved which should make us honor their memory and repute them the benefactors of their species. At a most hazardous moment they kept alive the spirit of national liberty. What the nobles and the crown had put in peril, that did the clergy save. By their care the dying spark was kindled into a blaze. When the light grew dim and flickered on the altar, their hands trimmed the lamp and fed the sacred flame. This is their real glory, and on this they may well repose. They were the guardians of Scotch freedom, and they stood to their posts. Where danger was they were foremost. By their sermons, by their conduct, both public and private, by the proceedings of their assemblies, by their bold and frequent attacks upon persons, without regard to their rank, nay, even by the very insolence with which they treated their superiors, they stirred up the minds of men, woke them from their lethargy, formed them to habits of discussion, and excited that inquisitive and democratic spirit which is the only effectual guaranty the people can possess against the tyranny of those who are set over them. This was the work of the Scotch clergy, and all hail to them who did it. It was they who taught their countrymen to scrutinize with a fearless eye the policy of their rulers. It was they who pointed the finger of scorn at kings and nobles, and laid bare the hollowness of their pretensions. They ridiculed their claims and jeered at their mysteries. They tore the veil and exposed the tricks of the scene which lay behind. The great ones of the earth they covered with contempt, and those who were above them they cast down. Herein they did a deed which should compensate for all their offenses, even were their offenses ten times as great. By discountenancing that pernicious and degrading respect which men are apt to pay to those whom accident, and not merit, has raised above them,

they facilitated the growth of a proud and sturdy independence, which was sure to do good service at a time of need."

The seeds thus sown from the pulpits and assemblies of the Scotch church in the latter part of the sixteenth century not only produced an ample harvest from the rugged but congenial soil upon which they fell, but were cherished in the bosoms of the Scottish people, who carried them to other lands, where they brought forth abundant fruits, to the dismay and ultimate overthrow of those who threatened their liberties.

Soon after his accession to the English crown, King James I., true to the instincts of the most perfidious family that ever disgraced the throne of a civilized people, having secured the flight and outlawry of the earls of Tyrone and Tyrconnel upon a cunningly devised pretext of some treasonable conspiracy between them, seized upon their vast estates, comprising nearly eight hundred thousand acres in the fertile province of Ulster, in the north of Ireland, upon which he commenced the plantation of a Scotch and English colony in the year 1609.

The fertility of the soil, the favorable terms upon which it was proposed to be let to immigrants, and the advantages offered to them by a variety of other circumstances, soon lured a number of his countrymen to this promising plantation, whither they were followed from time to time by others of their kindred until they became eventually the predominant element throughout the province. Thus were the descendants of the ancient Scots brought back to the identical scenes from which their savage ancestry had emigrated nearly two thousand years before; and thus originated the name Scotch-Irish.

But notwithstanding the suffix to their national patronymic, the irreconcilable difference in religion between them and the native inhabitants, together with other prejudices naturally resulting from their peculiar relations to each other, presented such an obstacle in the way of a coalition of the two races that the colonists and their descendants for generations, if, indeed, they have not to the present time, remained thoroughly Scotch in all their leading characteristics. They carried with them to their new homes not only the personal traits peculiar to their race, but its political and religious prejudices as well as its ecclesiastical polity. They built their churches, organized their presbyteries, established their schools, and pursued their respective callings with a thrifty industry which soon transformed the province of Ulster from the wildest and most disorderly to the best cultivated and most prosperous portion of Ireland.

It must not be supposed, however, that they were permitted to enjoy any very protracted period of repose during the century and a

half immediately following their advent into Ulster. Whether the enforced flight of Tyrone and Tyrconnel, and the subsequent confiscation of their estates were justifiable or not, such circumstances were naturally calculated to incite the deepest indignation of their neighbors, retainers, kindred, and friends, even granting them to have been less passionate and turbulent than we have reason to believe they were at that period of Irish civilization. We, ourselves, with all our moral culture and Christian refinement, could but feel an insuperable repugnance to a colony of strangers, differing from us in politics and religion, thrust by the government into our midst against our wills, and placed in possession of the property of our leading citizens, forced to flee from their homes to save their lives, upon a charge which we believe to be not only unjust, but unfounded. It is not surprising, therefore, that the animosity of the native inhabitants toward their new neighbors should manifest itself in repeated and bloody deeds of violence.

But little more than five years had elapsed, indeed, before a conspiracy was detected, which is said to have had for its object the seizure of the British fortresses and the extirpation of the foreign settlers in the province. And in less than three decades later, the jealousies and enmities growing out of the plantation of the colony showed themselves in one of the most sanguinary tragedies that ever stained the annals of a civilized land, in which the Scots in Ulster were treated with the most diabolical cruelty, which, in turn, was retaliated by a fearful and ferocious revenge.

They fared but little worse, if any, at the hands of their hostile neighbors, however, than at those of the government, under whose patronage they had settled in their new homes. Presbyterian and Papist alike were disfranchised by its infamous test oaths, which neither could conscientiously take, and both were punished with the same relentless rigor for non-conformity. Their houses of worship were repeatedly closed, their congregations dispersed, their members persecuted, and the people, irrespective of age or sex, tendered an oath repugnant alike to their judgments and their consciences. Yet the young and more intrepid leaders of the Scottish church assembled their flocks at noon-day in the open fields, and in secluded chambers in the small hours of the night, in vast crowds, and in little groups, every-where denouncing the tyranny under which they languished, and exciting their hearers to a more enthusiastic pitch of sectarian zeal. It is true, there were periods in which, by special indulgence or through official indifference, they were permitted to worship in their own chosen way; yet it is easy to see how even an occasional interfer-

ence with that cherished privilege increased their attachment to their church, while it fed their hereditary hatred to the English crown, and made them hail with supreme satisfaction the downfall of the detestable dynasty of the Stuarts.

Among the scenes which closed the ignoble career of the last of that disreputable house, there was one which not only exhibited the leading traits of the Scotch-Irish character in the strongest possible light, but which will challenge the admiration of mankind as long as our language shall be spoken, or the memory of heroic deeds cherished among the children of men. On the second day after his arrival in the city of Dublin, with a body of foreign mercenaries at his heels, the cowardly fugitive from the British throne signalized his return to the territory of his lost dominion by issuing a proclamation to his former subjects of the Catholic faith, gratefully acknowledging their vigilance and fidelity, and enjoining such of them as had not already taken up arms in his service, to hold them in readiness until it should be found necessary to use them to his advantage, and by conferring the ducal rank upon Tyrconnel, who had disarmed the Protestants throughout a large portion of Ireland, and assembled an army of thirty thousand foot and eight thousand horse for the assistance of his fallen master.

These, with other circumstances, gave rise to wild and exciting rumors, which rapidly spread throughout the province of Ulster, to the effect that it was the intention of the desperate Stuart to extirpate the Protestant religion, and re-establish the authority of the Roman church by fire and sword. The effect, especially among the Scottish population, may be easily imagined. Their ministers were every-where heard exhorting the people, in words of rude but burning eloquence, to arise in defense of their faith and their firesides; while their women adjured them, by all the sacred associations of the family tie, to defend themselves and their homes with the last drop of their blood.

The grim courage and determined self-reliance of their race were thoroughly aroused, their religious enthusiasm excited, and their undying animosity to papal power inflamed to the highest pitch of frenzy. Betrayed by their governor, abandoned by the commanders of the small force which had been sent by the government for their protection, with no military experience themselves, and but a limited supply of the munitions of war, they improvised an army of seven thousand men, with one of their preachers, assisted by a couple of faithful and courageous officers of the king's service, at its head, and hastily entrenched themselves behind the fortifications of Londonderry, where, for one hundred and five days, they withstood a siege in which they

exhibited a sublimity of courage and fortitude without a parallel in human history since the fall of Jerusalem before the conquering arms of Titus Vespasian.

After more than three months of continuous battle, aggravated by the horrors of disease and famine, during which their heroic women, often with weapons in their hands, stood side by side with their brave defenders in every scene of danger and distress, the memorable contest around the walls of Londonderry was brought to a close with eight thousand of its besiegers slain and more than half its devoted garrison in their graves. But George Walker, the faithful pastor of Donaghmore, whose pious eloquence inspired the spiritual fervor of his brethren from the pulpit, and whose genius and courage directed their perilous duties on the ramparts and in the sortie, survived the siege, and, bidding adieu to the shattered fragment of his command, now worn by disease and wasted by famine, followed the fortunes of William of Orange to the bloody banks of the Boyne, where he fell, side by side with the Duke of Schomberg and Caillemote, the heroic Huguenot.

But the Scottish Presbyterians, whose deeds in the heroic defense of Londonderry resemble more the fabled exploits of Homeric fiction than the transactions of modern warfare, fared but little better at the hands of the new government than the Irish Catholics who besieged it. So far from having any of the restrictions upon their freedom of religion removed, they were left almost as completely under the ban of those fatuous and despotic enactments in derogation of religious liberty, which so long disgraced the jurisprudence of Great Britain, as their neighbors of the Roman faith, who had been so recently in rebellion against the crown. They still remained under the denunciation of the penal laws against non-conformity, without even a legal toleration, until 1720, while they were excluded from all offices of honor, profit, or trust under the government, by the rigorous requirements of the oath of supremacy, and the still more obnoxious provisions of the Test Act, until 1780.

In addition to these irritating circumstances, they were subjected to a variety of vexatious burdens, which influenced large numbers of them to quit the province of Ulster, and seek more peaceful and propitious homes in the colonies of America, whither they brought with them an undying hatred to the British crown, and a burning desire for some suitable opportunity for its gratification. That opportunity was soon presented, and if any of them failed to avail himself of it with promptness and pleasure, it was not from any lack of in-

clination, but because he was prevented by circumstances beyond his control.

They came often in groups of families, neighbors, perhaps, in the homes they had left in Ulster, and located themselves, generally, in the colonies of Pennsylvania, Virginia, and the Carolinas, where, as their fathers had done in Ireland, they organized their congregations, set up their neighborhood schools, and by a sedulous attention to their own affairs, set an example of industry, economy and morality, the influence of which is still visible in the intelligence, thrift, refinement and orderly deportment which distinguish the communities in which they settled.

The part played by this remarkable race in preparing the popular mind of their adopted country for independence, as well as in the bloody contest which terminated in that glorious result, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to overestimate. Whether the Mecklenburg declaration was really the work of Ephraim Brevard and his associates, or only the clever after thought of some obscure person whose name history has failed to record, it embodied the cherished sentiments of every genuine Scotch-Irishman in America. The tide of immigration which brought them to our shores set in near the beginning of the century, reached its flood near the period when Washington and many of his illustrious compatriots were born, and continued without retiring ebb until the final break between the colonies and the mother country. Wherever they went, they repeated, with feelings of bitter hate, the story of their wrongs, and taught by precept and by example, in season and out of season, the sublime doctrine of civil and religious freedom which had been burned into their very souls by generations of cruelty and oppressions. Wherever they went they transfused the community around them with their own deathless spirit of democracy; and when the tocsin sounded for the mighty struggle, they sprang to the front and offered their blood as a joyous oblation to the God of battles upon the altars of their faith. They craved none of the Dead Sea fruit of a selfish ambition; they sought none of the barren laurels of an empty fame. They were plain, earnest, determined men, who wanted results—results which would secure to their children and their children's children, the priceless patrimony of freedom—and for that they rushed to the fiery front of battle, reckless as to who might lead them so he led to victory or to death.

Would you know their names? In every walk of private usefulness and public honor; in every avenue of active enterprise and popular progress; in every department of literature, and in every branch of science; in every theater of honorable ambition; in the pulpit and

at the bar; on the field and in the cabinet, on the bench and in the halls of legislation; in the chambers of our highest courts, and in the presidential chair, they and their sons have written them in imperishable characters upon the brightest pages of our country's history. Go read them there.

The children of the race are now scattered throughout all this broad continent, mingling like drops of water in the mighty ocean, with a vast and wondrous people gathered from many lands; but wherever they may be, they and their descendants will cherish with affectionate veneration the honor of their ancient sires, and keep the sacred fires of family love brightly burning on their domestic altars as long as a drop of the old Scotch-Irish blood shall trickle through their veins; and should the grasping hand of consolidated wealth, the wild fury of communism, or the insolence of foreign power ever menace the fair fabric of constitutional liberty erected by their fathers, they will rush to its defense, with the same intrepid devotion with which their rude ancestors followed the slogan of the clan.