

THE
BENEFICIAL INFLUENCE
OF A
WELL REGULATED NATIONALITY:
A SERMON

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

St. Andrew's Society,
OF MONTREAL,

ON ST. ANDREW'S DAY, NOV. 30th, 1857.

IN SAINT GABRIEL STREET SCOTCH CHURCH,

BY THE

REV. ALEXANDER F. KEMP, Chaplain.

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Psalm cxxvi. 3.--"The Lord hath done great things for us, *whereof*
we are glad."

We are met this day, by the blessing of God, to hold our National festival, to unite our hearts together with joy and gladness at the remembrance of the past, and to say, "The Lord hath done great things for us, *whereof* we are glad." This day it is our privilege to live over again in spirit the days of our happy youth, to realise all that is good and great in the history of our time-honored Nation, to stimulate within us feelings of ardent patriotism, and to give expression to our brotherly love, by extending sympathy and substantial kindness to our countrymen in distress.

The objects of the St. Andrew's Society must be regarded by every leal-hearted Scotchman as worthy of the highest praise, and as in harmony with the best and noblest principles of our nature. We endeavor to extend a friendly hand to the immigrant, to welcome him to this large, free and magnificent country. We seek to aid those who, by the dispensations of Providence, have been brought into poverty and distress. In these things we seek besides to illustrate and adorn the common brotherhood which knits us to those of our own land, kindred and tongue. It cannot be said of Scotchmen that they have ever been indifferent to the wants or the sorrows of their countrymen. None of us, I believe, can hear the Doric familiar language of our

native home, speaking the words of distress or telling the tale of suffering, without feeling the liveliest sympathy with the sufferer. He would not be worthy of the fair fame of his native land, who could look on a countryman in rags, or careworn with honest poverty, and not seek to minister with a loving hand to his wants. We feel the honor of our nation involved in any dishonor or misfortune that overtakes her sons. Thank God, it is not a characteristic of Scotchmen to wear rags, or willingly and without a death struggle to beg for alms. When we find a fellow-countryman in distress, we may be certain that this is either from the adversities of Providence, in which case he merits our sympathy and aid; or, it is from the direct effects of vice, in which case he merits our rebuke and Christian endeavors to bring him back to the paths of honor and virtue. These things our Society professes to do; and in its past history it has shewn that its professions are the sincere utterances of patriotic and honest hearts.

Permit me, my brethren, to say some few things about this National feeling from which these our purposes and endeavors spring.

Some may decry Nationalities, and speak of them as tending to narrow the range of human sympathy, or as interfering with the higher feelings of philanthropy. If our Nationality be fraught with such evils, then we say let it perish—let us pluck from our hearts the fond remembrances of our homes, and of the noble deeds of our people. But Nationality, regulated by intelligence and religion, will, we are sure, never have, as it has never had, such censurable issues as these. The Giver of all good has implanted home affections in our hearts, and for wise ends has grouped the human family into distinct and separate Nations. And we do find that where the feeling of Nationality has been destroyed, or from any cause has perished among a people, that they soon sink in the scale of humanity, lose

those manly virtues which are a people's glory, and become an easy prey to the lordly tyranny of oppressors and conquerors. On the contrary, where the Nationality for which we contend has been considerably fostered, we find there a basis upon which the virtues of patriotism and philanthropy may rest.

In elucidating this topic we would say :

I. That our Nationality has been conservative of liberty.

What else was it but the intense—it may have been too intense—Nationality of our people that gave birth to the patriot heroes of old—to the Wallace and the Bruce, and spirits kindred to theirs—and that led them to resist with a courage and a wisdom still famous in military annals, the invaders of their country? To this same feeling we are besides indebted for the historical fact that our country has never been conquered. The history of Scottish Nationality is the history of a brave and intelligent people, resisting oppression and shedding their blood for the cause of Freedom. Our ancestors may be called rude in speech and behaviour by those who cannot appreciate the manifestations of true manliness ; but with all their apparent roughness of exterior (in this they were not worse than the age in which they lived), there shines in them a warmth of generous affection and a patriotism worthy of all praise. True it is that our sires were never worshippers of Kings or Princes. In an age when Court adulation in other countries was little less than the deification of Kings, our people could speak to their Princes with a manly boldness and plainness of speech. To the honor of our fathers be it said that they did not bow the knee of sycophancy to their King James, even when he sat on the throne of England, nor were they remarkably astonished either at his wisdom or his wit. Down to the time of the union of the two kingdoms, the national feeling of Scotland fostered and preserved the civil and religious Freedom of

the Nation inviolate. While it may please some to represent our public men of the latter age as corrupt and vicious beyond precedent, and as altogether destitute of patriotism and intelligence, such is not, we are persuaded, a just estimate of the men of that time. That there were corrupt and depraved public men in those days, we grant,—for when or where have there not been such men? But that such was the character of the Nation or of those who represented its feeling, cannot with fairness be alleged. Such indeed was the healthiness of the public sentiment that a union with England could not be effected, unless the most solemn guarantees were given that the civil and religious liberties of Scotland should remain for ever inviolate. Our Nationality exacted this from a powerful neighbour, as well as the equal terms on which the union was finally consummated. We, therefore, may say with truth that our National feeling was, up to the Union, conservative of liberty; and since that time who will say that it has degenerated in its beneficial tendencies?

II. We say further, that our Nationality has promoted the general intelligence and progress of our people.

Since the time of the Reformation, Scotland has not simply been a Nation represented by a king and a government, but it has been a people and a commonwealth. The interests of the country after that date pertained not to the aristocracy alone, but also to the democracy; hence our Colleges and Seats of Learning have for ages been open to all. The common School and the Church in every parish were alike for rich and poor. Learning and religion thus became part of the country's life, and wrought themselves into the National feeling. Every child was taught to read, to fear God, and to honor the King. To every one the avenues of distinction were open. The learning and religion of the people became bound up with their National Freedom and

life, so much so that the enemies of learning and religion came to be regarded as the enemies of the Nation. Scotchmen never have believed that ignorance was the mother of devotion, but have ever held that only a true and intelligent man could be a true and spiritual worshipper of the living God. To these feelings, which the nation fondly cherished, Scotland owes its eminence in the domains of religion, science and literature, and its progress in the useful and ornamental arts. From the lowliest of her sons have sprung men pre-eminent in all the departments of human life, to whose talents and genius the world pays a willing homage. The acquisition of knowledge has long been a National passion with us, and has raised our people both at home and abroad to positions of honorable distinction. To our Nationality may therefore be ascribed the praise of promoting our intelligence, and our progress in Christian civilization.

III. Our Nationality has besides made heroes of our people.

It is a truism to say that Scotchmen are brave in battle. Their deeds of heroism adorn their nation's history; they glow too in the pages which record the events of the Peninsular campaigns; they are, besides, illustrious among the memorable exploits of Waterloo. In the Crimean war who has not heard of the charge at Alma, or the "thin red line" at Balaklava? Even now Europe and America ring with the praises of Havelock's band of heroes, and of their daring charge on the entrenchments of the enemy. The mantle of the ancient Scottish warriors rests upon the shoulders of their descendants, and the National feeling makes them jealous of the National prowess. In what battle for our country's rights have we not borne a conspicuous part? In what victory have we not had a share? From what public danger have we shrunk back? As a nation we stand foot to foot with the bravest and the best, and of right we have become sharers in the common glory of United Britain:—

“Triumphant be the Thistle yet unfurled,
 Dear symbol wild ! on Freedom's hills it grows,
 Where Fingal stemm'd the tyrants of the world,
 And Roman eagles found unconquered foes.”—CAMPBELL.

IV. Besides these things to which our Nationality has given birth and enlargement, I need not say to this meeting that it stimulates to benevolence and charity.

So long as its sacred feeling glows within your breast, you cannot but be good Samaritans. You have vindicated this character for yourselves on many occasions in the history of this Province, but on none perhaps more memorable or more lamentable than that of the burning of the steamer “Montreal” at our own doors last summer. When the tidings of that event reached our ears, there was, we are sure, not a Scotchman in the land whose heart did not bleed for the untimely deaths and sufferings of his emigrant countrymen. With solemnity you laid the dead in honor in their silent resting place,—the mourners and the bereaved found the warmest sympathy at your hands. For the houseless you provided a HOME, and to all the necessities of the sufferers you ministered. It is your purpose still to shelter the outcast, to clothe the naked, to feed the hungry, and from the house of the invalid and widow to drive away the pinching cold of Winter. Over the world St. Andrew's Societies have been formed for like purposes as your own, and this day hold high festival, as we do, in honor of their nation, and in sympathy with the common brotherhood.

These things being the fruits of our Nationality, can any one lift against it the voice of censure or rebuke? While it stimulates to these virtues and to these humane efforts on behalf of our own people, who can say that it makes us insensible to the virtues, or hardens us against the sufferings of other nations and other peoples? Who, we would ask, are more ready to appreciate excellence, or to contribute of their means to promote the common welfare and to relieve the

common sufferings, than the Scotchmen of this generation? The very warmth of our sympathy for home and kindred leads us to sympathise all the more readily and truly with the sufferings of others. The heart, when made susceptible by the cultivation of sacred home affections, will ever be found equally susceptible to the claims of philanthropy.

That this Nationality of ours may become extreme and exclusive, is only to say that everything human is liable to abuse, and that a virtue in excess may become a vice. But there is not much to be complained of in this respect. It does, we grant, sometimes, and to some extent, give a certain angularity of character to our people, which renders them occasionally less accommodating to the tastes and feelings of other people than might reasonably be desired. Yet, even this angularity is susceptible of graceful rounding and polish, and there are few people who can more readily accommodate themselves to the social excellencies and characteristics of other nations than our countrymen. Hence it is that they have ever been good colonists. The strength and determination of their character has enabled them, with comparative ease, to triumph over difficulties the most formidable, and to achieve for themselves an honorable position in almost every part of the world.

Our Nationality will, however, be in excess if it leads us to think of other nations as inferior in virtue to our own. He is a foolish Scotchman who boasts himself over other peoples and Nationalities! He does not know the rock from which he has been hewn, or the sources from which he has derived his life! It is a well-known fact that we are, perhaps, the most mixed people on the face of the earth. We cannot claim for ourselves, as a nation, that we are a primitive and unmixed race. From England, it is certain, we have derived Saxon, Anglo-Saxon, and Norman elements to a very considerable extent, and to these we are

doubtless, somewhat indebted for our manly independence and love of liberty. The Celtic elements of the Scottish Highlands and of Ireland have poured into us from the earliest times a rich stream of vigorous life, and given to us our famous "ingenium perfervidum Scotorum." The Scandinavians, or the Danes, and the Teutons or the Germans, have met us on our whole east coast, and added to our stock of virtues the fighting, daring, and roving propensities for which we are famed. From France we have, from time to time, and especially during the Huguenot emigration, derived no inconsiderable addition to our stock of blood, to which perhaps we may ascribe our love of arts and sciences. From the south and west again, we meet our neighbours the Welsh, and from them receive an additional measure of that hardihood and shrewdness for which they are celebrated. The Scotchman, therefore, cannot afford to disparage or despise any Nationality. Of other peoples we are all compact; in their virtues and vices we share a part. We add, it is true, to all these elements of our own, which belong to neither. We have pursued a special culture, superinduced by the circumstances in which Providence has placed us, and the discipline to which we have thus been subjected. Our characteristic caution, humor, intelligence and religion, are very much our own, and of native growth. It will thus be seen that the elements which make up our Nation are of the best kind, and form a composite of high organization, capable of the highest culture. Whilst therefore we have just reason to love our own country and people, we are also bound by the ties of consanguinity to entertain a warm affection for others, and heartily to say,—

"Is there a son of generous England here?
Of fervid Erin?—he with us shall join,
To pray that in eternal union dear,
The Rose, the Shamrock, and the Thistle twine.

Types of a race who shall th' invader scorn,
As rocks resist the billows round their shore;
Types of a race who shall to time unborn
Their country leave unconquer'd as of yore!"—CAMPBELL.

There is just one other topic to which, ere I conclude, I must advert, namely,—*that the religion and piety of Scotland is that to which we are most indebted for our virtues and our greatness.* It may suit the purpose of some to speak of our noble forefathers as a race of fanatics. This is a slander which every Scotchman is bound to repel. Their alleged fanaticism was that sober truth which the Bible teaches. They, it is true, valued their religion so highly that they suffered and died on its behalf: was there fanaticism in that? They understood their faith so intelligently that they could without fear or shame give a good reason for their convictions to every opposer: was their fanaticism in that? In the days of their triumph they did not visit their tormentors with the penalties which they themselves had suffered. The annals of history attest that they never were persecutors for conscience' sake. The loose statements of a Scott in his Jacobite stories, and of Tytler the Jacobite historian, together with the slanders of the eloquent but inaccurate Macaulay, have been rebutted, rectified, and wiped clean out by the more accurate, scholarly, and *unanswered* investigations and statements of the elder and the younger McCries.* It may safely be asserted that in no country in the world has there been less of blind and stupid fanaticism, or fanaticism of any kind, than in Scotland. A people more homogeneous in their belief and practice are not anywhere to be found. The very differences that exist among us are on comparatively minor points, and such as could only arise among a people acutely intelligent in religious principles and deeply impressed with a sense of religious obligations. It has, we hesitate not to say, been righteousness that has exalted our Nation. We have honored Christ, the Lord, and He has honored us. So long as Scotland holds to her

* The elder McCrie's reply to Scott will be found in his review of "Old Mortality," a work as interesting as the tale itself. The younger McCrie's reply to Tytler is found in the Appendix to the last edition of his *Father's Life of John Knox*. His reply to Macaulay is contained in a little book republished from the *Edinburgh Witness*, and which has been erroneously ascribed to Hugh Miller. It is known in this country as "Miller on Macaulay."

faith, so long will she be honorable among the nations ; and will have the high honor of sending forth intelligent and hardy sons to subdue new and unexplored regions of the earth, and to plant among the Nations of the future the seeds of learning, of true religion, and of a manly national character.

In conclusion, let me invite you to open your hearts this day to kindly sympathies with the misfortunes and sufferings of your countrymen. You will, I am sure, show by your liberal contributions, that you will not permit the hungry to want bread—the naked clothing—or the outcast a HOME. You will not, I trust, turn a deaf ear to the entreaties of the widow and the fatherless, but, animated with the noblest National feelings, your gifts this day for the benevolent purposes of this Society, will redound to the honor of your country, and be commensurate with the urgent necessities of the times.

