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OUR LITTLE SCOTCH COUSIN



BLANCHE McMANUS

Our Little Scotch Cousin

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The Little Cousin Series

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L. C. PAGE & COMPANY
New England Building, Boston, Mass.



DONALD GORDON.



Our Little Scotch Cousin

By
Blanche McManus

Author of "Our Little English Cousin," "Our Little
French Cousin," etc.

Illustrated by
The Author



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MDCCCXVI

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Preface

To the thousands of little American cousins the little Scotch cousins send their greetings.

The Scotch, perhaps, are not so very different from the Americans, after all, and certainly there is so much in common between the English, the Americans, and the Scotch that each may be expected to have a lively concern in the affairs of the other!

Many of the Scottish legends and stories of romance and history have an abounding interest for Americans of all ages, and who shall say that Scott and Burns are not as great favourites in America as in Scotland itself? For this reason, and for the fact that thousands of Scottish-Americans have never severed the ties of sentiment which bind them to Bonnie Scotland, a warm welcome is assured to our little Scotch cousins whenever they may come to visit America.

As with our little English cousins there is the bond of common speech; and Scotch institutions, though varied and strange in many instances, are in others very similar to those of America.

Of the historic and scenic charms of Scotland much has already been written in the romances and poems of Scott and Burns, so that little American cousins may be expected to have at least a nodding acquaintance with them. On the other hand, these charms are so numerous and varied that American cousins cannot but wish that some day they may be able to visit the land of purple heather.

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Our Little Scotch Cousin

[1]

CHAPTER I.

THE FINDING OF "ROB ROY"

"HELLO! Sandy, what do you think I have got here?" called Donald, over the low wall which separated his garden from that of his chum. He was quite excited, so Sandy knew that something out of the ordinary had happened, and quickly leaped over the wall. He found Donald carefully holding his muffler, which was wriggling about in the most extraordinary manner.

"What on earth is it,—a rat?" asked Sandy, looking curiously at the muffler, which seemed trying to tie itself up in a hard knot.

"A rat!" exclaimed Donald, with great scorn.

[2]

"Do you suppose, Sandy MacPherson, that I'd be carrying a rat around like this? But you couldn't guess if you tried all day; look here."

He carefully undid one end of the muffler, and out wriggled a little brown head.

"Did you ever see a finer pup than that?" and Donald, with great pride, showed a little puppy, who was trying to chew up his fingers.

"My! but he's a bonnie one; who gave him to you, Don?"

"I found him," and Donald went on eagerly to tell the story. "You know that lane which leads to the widow Calden's house? Well, I came through there to-day, thinking I might catch Andy and Archie playing marbles. You know we thought they had been trying to dodge us lately. All at once I felt something tugging at my shoe, and there was the pup. I looked around for its mother, but there was no sign of any other dog about. The poor, wee bairn whined, and was so glad when I picked him up, I could not leave him there alone, could I?" Donald explained, in self-defence. "You can see he hasn't had his eyes open very long, and he might have starved to death; so I wrapped him up in my muffler, as he was all of a shiver from the cold. Then I ran to the widow Calden, but she did not know any pup like it in the neighbourhood. The baker's boy drove up just then in his cart, but he did not know any one who had a dog with a young pup, so I brought him home."

[3]

"But you can't keep him," said Sandy; "he must belong to some one."

"Perhaps they wanted to get rid of him," said Donald, hopefully. "I am going to show him to father, and he will know what to do about it. Perhaps he may advertise him in the paper, and then if no one claims him he will belong to me."

[4]

The two lads ran across the garden and burst into the sitting-room where Doctor Gordon and Mrs. Gordon were having afternoon tea.

"Well, laddies," called out the doctor, cheerfully, "you do not often neglect your tea like this. Hey! what is all this about?" he continued, as his son poured out his story.

"Poor, wee doggie," said the doctor, petting the pup, who licked his hand and wobbled all over with delight, "and a fine collie pup he is, too; he comes of a good breed, if I am not mistaken."

"Oh! then I shall have a fine dog when he grows up, father," cried Donald, with joy.

"Gently, my son," said his father. "We must find out his owner if we can. A valuable puppy like that will be missed, and if we advertise him the notice will probably be seen by the right person. We must also give notice at the police station."

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"But if no one claims him I can keep him, can't I?" pleaded Don, who had grown dismal at the thought that he might be deprived of his new pet.

"Surely," said the doctor, "we could not refuse to give him a good home."

Mrs. Gordon had meanwhile poured out a saucer of milk, and, warming it a little, placed it in front of doggie. It was the funniest thing to see him. First he dashed into the middle of the saucer, and stuck his little nose deep in the milk; then such a sneezing and choking followed. Finally, he found that it tasted good, and that it was for his mouth, and not for his paws, and he lapped away in earnest, while everybody knelt on the floor and watched him.

"He may stay in the armchair by the fire until I can find a basket for him to sleep in," said Mrs. Gordon, returning to the tea-table.

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The boys were soon there as well, for the tea at half-past four in the afternoon is the favourite meal of the four which the Scotch usually eat during the day.

There are such good things to eat then! First, there is shortbread, a sort of crisp cake, made with a great deal of sugar and butter, and very little flour, which melts away in your mouth. Then there are hot buttered scones, which, if you know anything at all about Scotland, you must have heard of, for they are one of their best-liked dishes; and until you have eaten a scone, well-buttered, you will have no idea how good they are.

Cakes, too; "layer cake," with chocolate between the layers; and nice little round cakes, fluted around the edge,—all children know that pattern,—hot from the oven, for Mrs. Gordon made her own cake and shortbread. Indeed, Scotch women consider it quite an accomplishment to make their own shortbread, which is far nicer than that which is bought outside.

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Then there is jam and preserved ginger. Perhaps you did not know that Scotch people were very fond of sweet things. They are, indeed, and they make many different kinds, and they are all good.

Of course the talk around the table was all about the little puppy.

"Oh, father!" suddenly said Donald, with his mouth full of shortbread, "I can train him to be a sheep-dog, can't I? And we will take care of the sheep, like the herds and collies that Uncle Alan was telling us about."

"You are ambitious, my son," laughed the doctor. "You must get your uncle to tell you some of the wonderful feats performed by the sheep-dogs and their masters, and the difficult work that they have to do, and then you will not think it so easy to turn yourself and the little doggie into shepherds. And that reminds me that I had a letter from your uncle to-day, and he wants us to make him a visit next month, in time for Marjorie's birthday-party. 'We must have a meeting of the Clans,' he says, 'to celebrate the day.'"

[8]

"Oh, how jolly!" cried Donald, prancing about the room, and waving his napkin. "Uncle Alan's the best thing that ever lived; he lets you do just what you want when you go to see him."

"He has invited Sandy, also; but I must warn him," said the doctor, trying to look severe, and shaking a finger at the boys, "that you laddies are not to do everything that you wish, such as wheedling old Dugald into letting you carry the guns, as happened once before when your uncle and I went shooting."

The doctor's effort to be stern did not last long, for Donald nearly choked him with a big hug, and then subsided panting beside Sandy. Whenever Sandy was very much pleased he grew speechless and shy, but he nudged Don with his elbow and grinned, so every one knew he was as delighted as the more talkative Don. [9]

"But that is not all the news," said Mrs. Gordon. "Your cousins are coming to make us a visit first, and your Uncle Alan says we may look for them next week."

"Hurrah! won't we have fun going about seeing things," and Don started another dance, for he was very fond of his two little cousins, Janet and Marjorie Lindsay, and thought them far nicer than most lassies, for they could keep up with him on a day's climb over the moors, and play games almost as well as Sandy.

The boys were soon whispering together in a corner, and planning how much pleasure they could crowd into this wonderful week. Don told for the hundredth time of the marvels of Skylemore, his Uncle Alan's beautiful home in the Highlands. [10]

Uncle Alan Lindsay was a very wonderful person to Donald. He had gone to America when he was a young lad, and had made a great fortune in copper mines. He wanted to enjoy it in Scotland, his own country, however, for the Scotch are very clannish, and like nothing better than to be in their own land, and among their own people.

So he came back to Scotland, and bought a fine estate with a beautiful house, into which he put handsome furniture and good pictures and books,—everything that could make a home attractive. To Donald it seemed a palace, and he did not think the king himself had anything so grand.

Around the house was a big park, with miles of rolling woodland well stocked with deer. Here one could shoot grouse and pheasants and small game of all kinds. There were several clear streams and a *loch*, as a lake is called in Scotland, where one could fish for salmon and trout, and catch them, too, if one only knew how. [11]

Many were the stories that Don had told Sandy of his adventures in company with old Dugald, the gamekeeper, who had taught him how to fish; and how together they had tramped miles over the wild moors covered with heather.

Donald never tired of hearing his uncle tell of his life and adventures in the far-away Western States of America, which seemed always to him to belong to another world. The story of how he had lived among real Indians, and had been lost in great snow-storms, was like a recounting of adventures of the olden time to the lad.

Donald was amazed, too, at the tales of the great cities that his uncle had seen in America, with big buildings so tall that they seemed like many houses piled one on top of another. Then again there were miles and miles of nothing but great wheat-fields. "Why, you could drop Scotland down in the midst of them and it would be so small that you would not be able to find it again if it were not for the mountains sticking up above the grain," Uncle Alan would say, with a twinkle in his eye. But he would always add: "It's a grand country, bonnie Scotland, if it is a wee one, my lad." [12]

For many days after he had found the puppy, Donald would rush home from school, not even stopping where the enticing rattle told him that a game of "boules" was going on. His heart would be in his mouth when he reached the gate of Kelvin House, as the Gordons' home in Edinburgh was called, for he was afraid that the doggie would be gone. But as day after day passed, and no one came to say that they had lost a little dog, Donald breathed easier, and the little puppy was looked upon as one of the Gordon family. Finally, even the doctor said it was time to give "doggie" a name. [13]

The whole family talked the matter over a long time, but it was Don who finally decided to name him after the hero of his favourite story, "Rob Roy," written by the great Scotch author, Sir Walter Scott, which his father was even then reading aloud to him evenings.

The puppy's name was in time shortened to Rob. He loved the whole family, beginning with the doctor and ending with the stable-boy; but he adored Donald, and whined most dolefully each morning when he left him, and barked and wriggled about like an eel, with pleasure, when Donald came back again.

CHAPTER II.

SCHOOL-DAYS AND HOLIDAYS

"HERE is good news for you, laddie. Whom do you think we shall have with us for the New

Year?" said Doctor Gordon, looking up from a letter he was reading, as Don came into the breakfast-room.

"Oh, father!" cried Donald, trying to reach the letter, as the doctor held it high above his head, "it's from Uncle Clarke, I know. When is he coming? and won't we have a good time?" he said, all in one breath, as he tried to dance a Highland fling about the room.

"Now, if you will sit down to your porridge, perhaps I can read it to you."

"Why didn't he write to me, too?" asked Don, as he took his place at the table, for next to his father and mother Don thought there was no one he cared more for than this uncle. He was a younger brother of Doctor Gordon's, and also a doctor. Just now he was in Paris, taking a special course at the University there, and he wrote to tell them that he had been offered a post in one of the government stations for the study of tropical diseases, but that he would spend some weeks with them before taking up his new duties.

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Don put down his spoon in dismay. "I wish he didn't know anything about nasty old microbes, if he is going way off there," he said, half-crying, "I think he might stay here in Scotland like you, father."

"There, there, you must not mind, dear; this is the chance your uncle has always wished for. It is a distinction, too, for a young man like him to be offered this position; and when he comes to see us, think how much that is new and strange he will be able to tell you," said Mrs. Gordon.

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"All about lions and elephants?" questioned Don, his spirits rising.

"Maybe," said his father, laughingly; "only I don't know that he will hunt big game like that in his profession; but he will tell you all about it when he comes."

"And he will be here for 'Hogmanay;' won't we have the fun?" said Don, making his porridge-bowl dance a jig this time.

"Hurry, dear, or you will be late for school," said his mother, and Don dived again into his porridge, which American cousins call oatmeal.

All well-trained Scotch children eat porridge for their breakfast, though it is going a little out of fashion these days. But Don ate it each morning, served in an old porridge-bowl which his father used when he was a lad. Around the rim of this rare old bowl was the inscription, "There's mair in the kitchen," "mair" being the old Scotch word for more.

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You must know porridge is a good thing to begin the day on in winter in Scotland. Donald was eating his breakfast by gaslight, even though it was eight o'clock, while in mid-winter it does not grow really light until ten in the morning, and is dark again soon after three in the afternoon. In summer, things are turned around, and the light of day lingers well on into the night, and begins again at an astonishingly early hour in the morning. You may read out-of-doors very often, in the northern cities and towns, at eleven o'clock at night. All this is because Scotland is so far north, but some day you will understand more about this strange thing.

There were other things for breakfast besides porridge. Eggs and bacon and fish and nice brown toast, and sometimes toasted cheese on bread, which seems a funny thing to have for breakfast; and always plenty of marmalade, for the best marmalade is made in Scotland.

[18]

It is said that the word marmalade comes from the word "marmalada," which is a jam made in Portugal from the quince, which fruit the Portuguese call the marmello. The Portuguese think it strange that the Scotch make their marmalade from oranges.

"There is Sandy calling to you at the gate," said Mrs. Gordon, and Don, hastily swallowing his last bit of toast and picking up his strap full of school-books, joined him at once.

The two lads ran up the street quickly, for school began at nine o'clock, and they were already behind their usual time. At the corner Don turned and waved his hand to his mother. He never forgot to do this, for he knew that she was always waiting there to bid him good-bye. Though Donald was the only child, he was not a bit spoiled; he was a warm-hearted laddie, and staunch in his affections and friendships.

[19]

The schools and colleges in Scotland are among the best in the world, and there is nothing a Scotsman prizes more, whether he be rich or poor, than a good education. Many a lad who has not enough money will go through all sorts of hardship, and live on a little porridge and milk, in order to save enough to put him through one of the four famous Scotch Universities.

All little American cousins must have heard of the wealthy Scotsman, Mr. Carnegie, who is so fond of making presents of libraries to the cities and towns throughout the English-speaking world. Well, he has greatly helped the Scotch boys to get an education by giving large sums of money to the Universities of Scotland, in order that they may be able to lend substantial aid to those entering their colleges.

"Let's play 'beeze;' there's Willie and Archie now with the ball," said Sandy, as he and Don came out of school for the half-hour's recess at eleven o'clock.

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"Beezee" is a game which would remind American boys of baseball. The boys wrap their mufflers around their hand and throw the ball, which is an India-rubber one, instead of using a bat, and run to bases in much the same way as in baseball.

At two o'clock, when the school work is over for the day, Donald and Sandy lost no time in getting home for dinner, which was awaiting them. And so was "Rob Roy," who soon learned just what hour Donald might be expected, and rushed to meet him the minute Don opened the door.

To-day, when Don had finished his soup, his father helped him to some of the "jiggot." You probably wonder what that is. Well, it is simply a leg of mutton, and comes from the French word "*gigot*." You will find that the Scotch use many words which must have come originally from the French, though most of them have been changed so much that the real French words wouldn't know them for cousins even.

[21]

In the old days there was a strong friendship between Scotland and France. One of the early French kings, Louis XI., had a body-guard of Scottish archers; for the Scotch soldiery have always been famous for their bravery. Mary, Queen of Scots, was partly French herself, and was the wife of a French king, François II., as well as Queen of Scotland. When he died she came back to Scotland to live, and with her, no doubt, came many French people and French customs. So this may account for many of these French words in the Scotch speech of to-day.

Don called his napkin a "serviette," which is just the same as in French; and was very fond of eating "petticoat-tails" at tea-time,—a name which you would never imagine came from the "*petits-gateaux*" of the French, meaning "little cakes."

[22]

Also he would get very "fash," which means angry,—or "*fâché*," our little French cousin would say,—if a boy struck him a "coochard's" blow; that is, a cowardly blow. This word, too, seems likely enough to be French, and to come from "*coup*," meaning a blow, though where the coward comes in, it is difficult to see.

If Donald, while playing a game, found things growing too hot for him, and wanted a breathing-spell, he often would call out, "barley." He did not mean that he wanted barley at all, but to parley, which is the way the Scotch have changed the French word "*parlez*"—speak.

Afternoons Donald and Sandy generally spent together, and very good times they had, too, for they were very "chief," or chummy. They played games with their little neighbours, or took long walks into the country, which could be easily reached from Kelvin House. Often they went fishing. At other times, Sandy's chickens took up some of their spare hours. Sandy had an idea that he could make a lot of money raising chickens; so he talked it all over with his father, who was much amused, but gave him the money to buy his first chickens. Then Sandy himself built a little house for them in the back-garden, and fenced off a piece of ground for his three hens and one cock, and even got his mother to subscribe for a paper which told all about "Poultry for Beginners."

[23]

All Sandy had to show for his summer's work, however, was one little "tewky," which is the Scotch cousin's name for a chicken. Sandy was very proud of his one little chicken, and made quite a pet of it. It would eat out of his hand, and even from his mouth, and would go anywhere with Sandy, perched upon his shoulder.

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A NEWHAVEN FISHWIFE.

But the best holiday for Donald and Sandy was when their fathers would take them to the beautiful golf-links along the seashore at Gullane, not far from Edinburgh.

Golf is the great national game of Scotland, and is played both by old folk and young people alike. Some one tells the story that it was first played by the shepherds, who would take a small round stone and knock it about with their sticks, as they strolled behind their flocks, over the moors and along the seashore. All any one really knows about the game, however, is that it has been played in Scotland for a very long time.

Once, as a very great treat, Donald's father took him to play golf at St. Andrews, where the links are so fine that they are known the world over as being the most famous of all these playgrounds.

[25]

There is a saying that the people of St. Andrews do nothing but play golf, but this cannot be true, as St. Andrews has one of the four great Scotch Universities, and many very great and wise men have come from there; and you don't get to be a wise man by playing any kind of a game all of the time.

Another favourite excursion for Edinburgh children was to go to Newhaven for a fish dinner. Newhaven is a little old fishing-town not far distant, on the Firth of Forth.

A Newhaven fishwife, or fisherwoman, looks funny and dumpy in her short petticoat with her dress pinned up about her waist, a white cap on her head, and over all a big shawl; while on her arm she carries a great basket of fish.

The fisher-folks' cottages are queer little houses built of stone, with a stairway on one side.

[26]

You have already heard what nice things Donald had to eat at his afternoon tea. Oh! and there were currant buns, also, just black with currants. After tea Donald would read, or, better still, his father or mother would read aloud some of his favourite stories from the "Tales of a Grandfather," which tell a great deal about Scotch history. Between eight and nine o'clock there

would be supper, of cold meat, cheese, bread and butter, and sometimes fish, with plenty of milk for Don, after which he was ready for bed.

Little Scotch children are more careful how they spend their Sundays than the children of most other nationalities. The Scotch keep Sunday, or the Sabbath, as it is usually called, in a very strict manner indeed, though they are not as strict in these days as formerly.

When Donald's father was young no trains were run on Sundays, and even now there are no trains in some parts of Scotland on the Sabbath. In those days children did not even take a walk on Sunday, but went three times to "kirk," as church is called. But Donald often took long walks with his father after Sunday school in the afternoon. His father did not, however, approve of their riding in street-cars, which in the great cities have only recently begun to run on Sundays, and many people even now will not make use of them on that day.

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CHAPTER III.

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A WALK IN EDINBURGH

JANET and Marjorie had arrived in Edinburgh, and one of the first of the pleasures was a walk around the city to see the sights, as Don expressed it.

"I know those lads will keep us waiting," said Janet, as she pinned on her tam-o'-shanter.

"I think I know where they are; around the corner playing 'boules,'" answered Marjorie, as she stood before the mirror, carefully tying her neck-ribbon. Marjorie was rather fond of getting herself up as nicely as possible. She must place her tam at just the right jaunty angle on her curly yellow hair; her ribbons must be made into just the proper bows; her tall boots neatly laced; her gloves and muff were always in the right place, and she liked to have a little posy pinned on to her jacket. The boys teased her, and called her the "Ladies' Fashion Page," but you know what boys are, and after all her little vanities were quite harmless.

[29]

Janet was quite her opposite. She dashed on her tam without ever stopping to look in the mirror. Her gloves were more often rolled up in her pocket than on her hands; she never could be made to see why one colour of ribbon was not as good as another, and always wondered why Marjorie made such a fuss over her curls and bows. But in spite of the difference in the two girls they were devoted chums, and never quite happy unless they were together.

Janet now stood looking at her sister impatiently. "Marjorie," she said, "how many times are you going to tie that bow; we must hurry up Don and Sandy."

"Now I am ready, 'Miss Flurry,'" said Marjorie, with a final pat to her bow, and the two little girls ran together into the garden.

[30]

"Here they are," said Marjorie, as she opened a little gate which led into a lane back of the house, where Donald and Sandy were playing "boules."

Boules and the button-game, where buttons are thrown toward a hole scooped out in the ground next a wall or a fence, in much the same manner that American boys and girls play marbles, are favourite games with Scotch children. Various sorts of buttons are used, each sort having a different value. A button from a soldier's coat is worth ten times as much as an ordinary button, and a coloured button more than a plain white one. So you see that loose buttons are very valuable property with a Scotch boy. Generally he goes around with his pockets full of them, and trades them off among his playmates for others that he fancies more; and one of the most acceptable gifts which a boy's mother or sister or aunt can give him is a long string of buttons.

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"I can do that," declared Marjorie, as she watched Sandy make several successful shots.

"Lassies never throw straight," said Sandy, scornfully, flipping another button toward the hole.

"Marjorie can," said Donald, standing up for his favourite cousin; "let her try."

"Where are those children?" the doctor was heard calling, and the young people forgot all about games, and made a rush for the house.

It was the Saturday holiday, and Doctor Gordon had promised to take them for a walk through the old town of Edinburgh. The doctor enjoyed these walks as much as the children, for he was very fond of his city, and took a deep interest in its old buildings and the famous people who had lived in them.

The doctor, moreover, had written, in his spare moments, a valuable book on Edinburgh, and there was nothing that Donald enjoyed more than to spend his holidays tramping with his father through old and new Edinburgh. Edinburgh, you must know, was the capital of Scotland in the old days, and virtually is so to-day, and one of the most beautiful cities in the world.

[32]

Donald knew most of the "sights" of the town as well as the doctor himself, but to the lassies all these marvels were much more of a novelty.

It was a gay little party that got off an electric car (the Scotch call it "electric," as do the Americans, and not a "tram," as do their English cousins just over the border), Doctor Gordon leading the way, with a niece on either side of him, and the boys walking before.

"Let us go to the castle first," said Don, who rather thought that he ought to help his father do the honours.

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"I don't believe Marjorie and Janet have ever seen it really well. You know, father, you always tell me something new about it every time we go there," said Donald, eagerly.

So they crossed Princes Street Gardens, which divide Edinburgh into the "Old Town" and the "New Town." The "Old Town" is on a high hill, and on the highest part of all is Edinburgh Castle. It was not long before our party found themselves before its grand old walls.

"Don, there is your favourite Highland Regiment coming out of the castle now," said the doctor.

"Oh! they are going to drill; can't we stay and watch them awhile?" cried all the children, as with one voice.

I know that American children would think the Scotch regiments the most picturesque soldiers in the world, in their old-time Highland costume. Here is a picture of the piper, playing on the Scotch bagpipes, so you can see for yourself what a wonderful uniform it is.

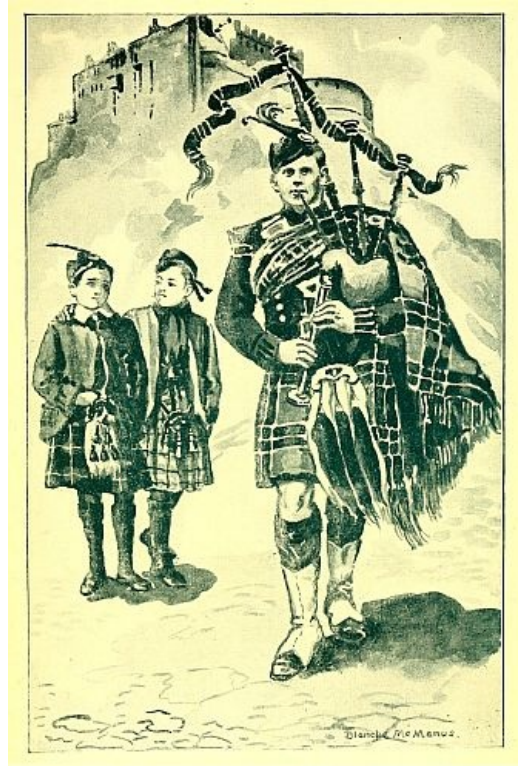
[34]

His kilt and stockings are made of the tartan which shows the Clan to which he belongs. In the olden time, each one of the great families of Scotland banded itself together, with its followers, into a Clan for protection, and thus each Clan was really a little kingdom and army in itself.

The piper's plaid, which is a sort of shawl, is pinned on his shoulder with a great silver brooch. In this brooch is set a "cairn gorm" stone, which is the yellow stone called a topaz; the national stone of Scotland, one might call it, as it is found there in great quantities.

That funny-looking bag which hangs in front of him is called a "sporrán," and by his side is a short sword called a "claymore," and in the olden time there was thrust into the stocking a dagger called a "skean-dhu." Would you not think he would be cold, with his knees bared to the cold east wind which blows over the castle high up on its rock? But no such thing ever enters his head, for Scotch children from infancy are used to going about with bare knees, winter and summer alike.

"Isn't the piper splendid, father?" said Donald, as the squad marched by. "I should like to be a piper in the Gordon Highlanders, for that is our regiment; and their uniform, white with the Gordon tartan, is the handsomest of all," and Donald tossed his head with quite an air of pride.



[35]

THE HIGHLAND PIPER.

"It's just because you are a Gordon that you think so," grumbled Sandy. "What's the matter with the MacPhersons?"

"That's right, laddies, stand up for your own Clans," said the doctor. "You would be a very important man in the regiment if you were the piper," he continued. "When the regiment makes a charge on the battlefield it is the piper who marches in front playing the national Scottish airs on his pipes. Nothing inspires the men so much. The Scotch regiments are the bravest of soldiers, and their records are among the best in the world."

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"You remember that story father told us, Marjorie," said Janet, "of the brave piper who was shot in one leg, and who kept on playing and marching until he was shot in the other, so that he could not move either; and then kept on playing just the same seated on the ground, with shot and shell falling all around him, until his regiment drove back the enemy. He was a brave man," continued Janet, and tears came into the little girl's eyes.

"He was indeed a brave man, and there are many like him," said her uncle, "but we must go on if we are to do everything which we have planned for to-day," and he led the way into the old castle, with its massive walls and dark, winding passages.

[37]

Our party viewed the Crown jewels of Scotland, not so many nor so magnificent as those of England, but more interesting, perhaps, for many of the pieces are much older.

The little girls were much interested in the crown of Robert Bruce, who was one of the greatest of Scotch kings.

"We have just finished reading 'The Days of Bruce,'" said Janet, "and that, you know, tells all about the Scottish king, Robert Bruce, and his little band of Scotch patriots, who, after great hardships and sufferings, finally drove the English invaders out of Scotland."

"They did have a hard time," chimed in Marjorie, "but still it must have been fun, living in caves and fixing them up with beautiful mosses and flowers, and having brave knights in splendid armour sing songs to you." Marjorie was of rather a romantic turn of mind.

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"I'd rather read about the battles, and how they captured the standards from the enemy," said Sandy.

"I like the 'Scottish Chiefs' better," Don put in, "all about Wallace, who died so gloriously for his country."

They saw the tiny room, not much larger than a cupboard, where Mary, Queen of Scots, lived, and where her son, James VI. of Scotland, was born. It was James VI. of Scotland who afterward became James I. of England, and thus, for the first time, Scotland and England were united under one crown. Later the two countries were called The United Kingdom of Great Britain, and thus they have remained ever since.

However, in manners and customs, and in many details of their daily life, the peoples of the two nations are still very different. A Scotsman is very proud of being a Scotsman, and he does not like it a bit if you call him an Englishman. [39]

Donald always took great pains to explain to his young English cousins, when they came to visit him, that Scotland had given a king to England, instead of England sending a king to rule over the Scotch.

"King Edward is Edward VII. of England, but he is Edward I. of Scotland, because we never had another king by the name of Edward before him; is it not so, father?" asked Donald, earnestly.

"All the same, I don't know any one who cheered louder than you, Don," said Sandy, "when King Edward came here to review the Scottish Volunteers last autumn."

"Of course, he is our king, and I like him very much," said Don, with dignity; which made them all laugh, and Janet said King Edward would feel complimented. [40]

The doctor showed them where they could look over the parapet, and see how steep and straight was the wall of rock on which the castle stood; and pointed out the very steepest side, where he and his brother Clarke once climbed up the rock from the bottom to the top, when they were boys. "And a stiff climb it was, my lads," continued the doctor; "you need not be putting your heads together, and planning to do the same. It was a foolhardy thing to have done."

The children were always greatly interested in the "Dogs' Cemetery," where are buried all the dogs of the regiment, and each time they came to the castle they always looked to see if there was another little grave, though, as Doctor Gordon said, they could not expect dogs to die off so quickly as all that.

"Where are we going now, uncle?" said Janet, slipping her hand into the doctor's. [41]

"How would you like to see Holyrood Palace, where Queen Mary lived?" he asked, as he led the little band down the Cannon-gate, the old winding street which leads down the hill from the castle, through the heart of the old town, to Holyrood Palace.

"Great things have happened on this narrow street, and many great people of Scotland have lived here," said the doctor, pointing to the tall old buildings, so close together that hardly any daylight gets between them, set back, as they are, in narrow courtyards and alleyways called "closes" and "wynds." On one side is the house where John Knox, the great religious reformer, lived.

"Do you see a heart carved on that stone yonder?" said Doctor Gordon, as he pointed out a stone in the pavement. "That marks the spot where once stood the old 'Tolbooth.'"

"Of which Sir Walter Scott wrote in 'The Heart of Midlothian,'" broke in Donald, anxious to show his knowledge. "Father has read several of Scott's novels to me; they are splendid stories,—all about the old days in Scotland." [42]

"And of other countries as well, Donald," said his father.

"When you children are older, you will enjoy reading for yourselves Sir Walter Scott's 'Waverley Novels.' Scott was a splendid story-teller, and his books are famous and read the world over. And this reminds me," continued the good-natured doctor, "that perhaps you young people would like to see Abbotsford, where the great Scotch author lived; and Melrose Abbey, which he loved so well."

"No need to ask," he laughed, as the children gathered about him, with delighted oh's and ah's!

"Well, I had half-promised Don that I would take him there this autumn. Perhaps we can persuade your father and mother to spare you girls another week, and we will all go together. Eh! what do you think?" and the doctor playfully pulled Marjorie's tam. [43]

The children were so excited over this that they were in front of Holyrood Palace before they knew it.

Of course, the first part they visited were the rooms where once lived the beautiful Mary, Queen of Scots, who was beheaded by the order of her cousin Elizabeth, then Queen of England.

Queen Mary had many faults, no doubt; but surely she did not merit such a cruel death.

"Isn't it strange what wee bits of rooms kings and queens lived in? Why, this bedroom is not nearly so large as our room at home, and the little room out of it, which she used as a sitting-room, is hardly large enough for a doll," said Marjorie. [44]

For a fact, they did seem small for a great queen. There was the very bed she had slept on and other furniture of her time. The children peered down the narrow stairs up which had stolen the

murderers of poor Rizzio, the queen's faithful friend.

"I should not have liked to have lived in Queen Mary's time," said Janet, shaking her head, and the little girls shuddered when the guide pointed out what are said to be the blood-stains of Rizzio.

The girls would not go near the place, but Don and Sandy went boldly up, and declared that they saw the stains; but it is just possible that their imaginations helped them out a little, for it was many hundreds of years ago that all this happened, and, besides, it is too dark in that particular corner behind the door to see anything. Some day when you are older you will read about Queen Mary and her sad fate. [45]

Afterward the little party went into the great hall of the palace, where are hung the portraits of all the Scottish kings. They all look alike, having been painted by some bold artist from imagination; which seems a strange thing to have done, does it not? Don said he could paint as good pictures himself.

Again Doctor Gordon led his little tourists up through the "old town," and this time they saw the great school of medicine of the University of Edinburgh, where Donald's father and uncle had taken their degrees to become Doctors of Medicine.

This great school stands higher in rank, perhaps, than any other similar school in the world, and many distinguished men have graduated from it.

"I am going to study there, too, some day, like father and Uncle Clarke, and be a great doctor," said Don. [46]

"I thought you were going to be a piper a little while ago," laughed Sandy. "And it was a 'herd' you were going to be just the other day," echoed Marjorie.

"I don't care," retorted Don, stoutly, "I am going to do something great, anyway."

"That's the right spirit, my son; whatever you do, do it well," said his father, patting him on the shoulder. The children laughed, but his father was very pleased.

CHAPTER IV. [47]

ANOTHER WALK IN EDINBURGH AND A VISIT TO ABBOTSFORD

"THE lassies are going with me to do a bit of shopping in Princes Street," said Mrs. Gordon, as they all sat around the breakfast-table one morning.

"We want to buy a present for mother's birthday while we are here. It is week after next, you know," said Janet.

"I don't suppose you want to go with us, Don; lads don't like to buy things," she added, with a twinkle in her eye.

"Oh! Well, if you are only going after trinkets, I wouldn't give a 'bawbee' for that kind of fun. Now, if you were really going to *see* things, that might be different," said Donald, eagerly.

"You have not seen the 'Dog's Monument,' and lots of things yet," he continued, thinking it a little beneath his dignity to go shopping, but in his heart really wishing to go, if only he were begged hard enough. [48]

"No one can tell the story of the faithful dog better than Don, so you lassies ought to get him to show you his grave and that of his master," said the doctor, who saw Don's trouble, and was ready to help him out.

Of course this made the little girls wild to hear all about it, so Don had to promise to go with them and show them the spot.

It did not take long to reach Princes Street, which the Scotch people think the finest street in the world. It is a splendid broad thoroughfare; on one side are the beautiful "Gardens," with flowers, statues, and walks, while rising high above is the old castle on its height. On the other side of the street are the great shops and hotels. The shops are full of pretty Scotch things. There you may see all the different kinds of "Clan" tartans, and there are a great many of them. There also are heaps of "cairngorms" and purple amethysts, which is another precious stone found in Scotland, and is almost as much of a favourite as the "cairngorms." Both of these stones were much used to ornament the ancient Scotch swords and daggers, and were often set into brooches used to fasten the tartans, as you see in the piper's picture. [49]

The jewellers now make them up into all kinds of souvenirs of Scotland; little claymores and daggers for pins, and copies of old-time brooches, and all kinds of quaint things.

"Well, dearies, what do you think your mother would like?" asked Mrs. Gordon, as they passed by the gay shops.

There were so many beautiful things to choose from it was difficult for the little girls to make up their minds. At last Mrs. Gordon said a brooch would make a pretty present, which pleased Marjorie, who was so fond of pretty things to wear. [50]

Janet was in favour of a gold pen. So at last it was agreed that Marjorie should buy the brooch with an amethyst set in it, and Janet should get a pretty pen with a cairngorm set in the handle. Don by this time was as much interested in "shopping" as the girls, and bought a pretty blotter, with the handle made of Scotch pebbles, for his aunt. So everybody was highly pleased, and most of all was Mrs. Lindsay, when she received her presents.

After this, Mrs. Gordon bought them all some "Edinburgh Rock," which is a nice, creamy candy, that isn't a bit like a rock, but which just melts in one's mouth.

Then they all climbed to the top of the Scott Monument, which stands in the Princes Street Gardens, from which place they had a fine view of the beautiful city of Edinburgh. [51]

Don now led the way to the memorial which was put up to the faithful little dog called "Grey Friars Bobby." "This is his story," said Don: "When his master died, and was buried in Grey Friars churchyard, the poor little dog was so broken-hearted that for twelve years he never left his master's grave except at night, when the caretaker of the cemetery took him into his house and fed him. As soon as the door was opened each morning, he would run to his master's grave and stay there until he was taken in again at night. One day the caretaker went for him as usual, and found him lying dead, stretched across the grave. He was buried in the same grave with his master, to whom he had been so faithful."

The monument, in the street without, is in the form of a drinking-fountain, with a statue of the little dog on the top. It was put up so that the story might not be forgotten. [52]

Don pointed out the grave to the little girls, through the railing of the churchyard, and then Mrs. Gordon said they must hurry home, for it was late, and the doctor would think they were lost.

Janet and Marjorie had received permission to remain away from home another week for the visit to Abbotsford, Sir Walter Scott's old home, so one day soon after the young people boarded the train bound for Abbotsford.

"We are now not far from the English boundary-line, or 'Border,' as the Scotch call it," said Doctor Gordon, as they approached Melrose, the station at which they were to alight.

This "Border" land was the scene of countless fights and feuds between the Scotch and English in the old days when the two nations were enemies. The English would dash across the Border, seize the sheep and cattle belonging to the Scotch, burn their homes, and then quickly escape to their own territory. [53]

Then the Scotch would take a turn at the same game, and so it went on for ages. Because of this warfare the Border had to be strongly fortified on each side, and many ruins of these old castles and watch-towers are yet to be seen in these parts.

Much has been written by Scottish authors and poets about the daring deeds of the Border Clans of that time.

Sir Walter Scott could claim relationship with most of the Border Clans, and was very proud of it, and many of the most romantic tales and daring deeds of which he has written dealt with these same Clansmen.

"This is Melrose, now," said the doctor, looking out of the window.

So it was, and the young people lost no time in gathering up their belongings, and in a few minutes they were standing before Melrose Abbey. [54]

Formerly this famous abbey was a large establishment where lived many monks, presided over by an abbot. What one sees at Melrose to-day, however, is only the church of the great institution. The rest of the buildings have disappeared with time, for it is over five hundred years since the last of its stones were laid.

The caretaker unlocked a small door, and they entered what centuries before had been the beautiful abbey church, but was now a ruin, though still so beautiful as to be the marvel of all who see it. It was here that Sir Walter often came, and Doctor Gordon showed the children the stone which was the great man's favourite seat.

After a walk through the old churchyard, they strolled around the little town of Melrose. In the High Street stands a very old memorial cross. Many of the old Scottish towns (and English ones, too, for that matter) have these old stone crosses, usually set in the middle of the main street, or in the public square. [55]

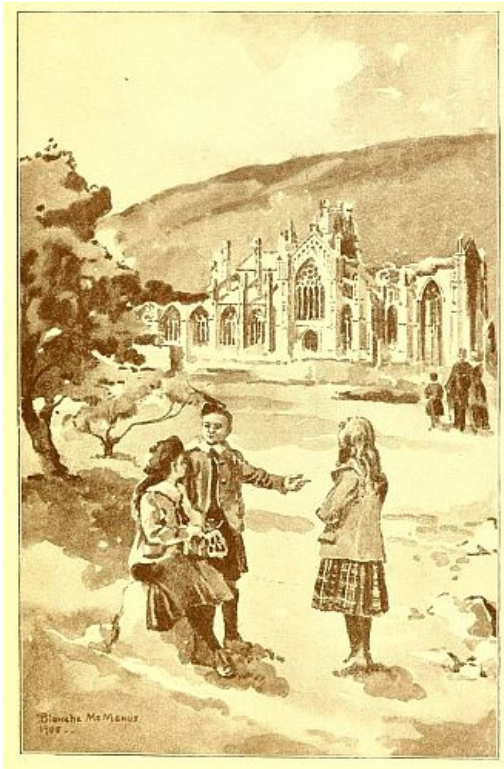
After eating their dinner at one of the old-fashioned inns of the town, Doctor Gordon stowed his small tourists away in a carriage, and off they went for Abbotsford, chattering most gaily; for while the Scotch people are often very shy and quiet among strangers, they are as lively as possible among themselves.

"Over there, not far away, is Kelso," said Doctor Gordon, pointing over the rolling hills. "It has been called the most beautiful town in Scotland, but you know we Scots all think our own town the handsomest. Eh, lassies?" laughed the doctor.

"There is Abbotsford now," said Mrs. Gordon, and the children looked eagerly at the big stone house and the "silvery Tweed" which flows by its gardens and lawns. [56]

The place is still the property of a member of the Scott family.

Our little party were shown many of the rooms where the great author lived and wrote, and they also saw many curious and beautiful things, for



MELROSE ABBEY

Sir Walter loved to collect relics of his country. Don was greatly interested in the sword and other belongings of the *real* Rob Roy, and the picture of Scott's favourite dog, for he was a great lover of dogs.

But time was short, and so our travellers had to hurry away, for they were to take a drive to Dryburgh Abbey, situated a few miles away.

This is another old ruined abbey. It is here that Sir Walter Scott is buried. There are only a few walls of the abbey still standing, and where the old abbey church formerly stood is now a garden set about with walks and trees. In one of the ruined aisles of the church which stands in one corner of this garden can be seen the tomb of Scott and the other members of his family.

[57]

The children went back to Edinburgh tired, but happy, after a day which they will never forget.

CHAPTER V.

[58]

THE GATHERING OF THE CLANS

THERE was a great bustle and running about at the Gordon house one morning. Doctor and Mrs. Gordon, Don, and Sandy were leaving for their visit to Skylemore, Uncle Alan's home in the Highlands.

Don was torn between the delight of going, and the sorrow at having to leave "Rob Roy" behind. He had begged to be allowed to take him, but it was decided that "Rob" was too young to travel, and Sandy's mother promised to take care of him. So that the only thing that marred Don's pleasure was the last look of "doggie," whining sadly in Mrs. MacPherson's arms, as the carriage drove away.

But even "Rob Roy" was forgotten for the moment, when they all stood on the platform of the great Waverley Station. There were crowds of people about, all bound for the country. Hunting parties, with their guns and dogs, were everywhere; for the autumn is the season for shooting grouse over the Scotch moors. Everybody was greatly excited, the dogs as much as anybody. Sandy said that they seemed to know that they were going off for a good time, too.

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"Take your places, children," said the doctor, as he bundled them into their compartment in the train.

It was a fine autumn day, and there are not too many such days in Scotland; for it is a rainy little country, and hardly a day passes without some rain falling. Not heavy rains, as in our country, but a soft, misty drizzle which nobody seems to mind in the least. There would be no use in staying indoors, for this is the way it is most of the time. Besides, Scotch people dress for bad weather. They are fond of having their clothes made of the thick tweed and cheviot cloths, which, as their names show, are made in Scotland, for the Tweed is a Scotch river, and the Cheviot Hills are on the border between England and Scotland.

[60]

Donald and Sandy wore jackets made of the celebrated "Harris tweeds," which have a queer smoky smell which comes from their being made in the crofters' cottages on the island of Harris, off the north coast of Scotland. The "crofters" are those who live in tiny houses built of rough stone, and their principal occupation and industry is the weaving of this coarse cloth, from wool, by hand, as they sit before their peat fires. For this reason the genuine Harris tweed always smells smoky.

"Sandy, what on earth have you got in that bundle that you have been carrying so carefully ever since we left home?" asked Donald.

[61]

"Hush!" said Sandy, giving him a violent kick.

"Don't you want to put your package in the luggage-rack?" said Doctor Gordon, looking over the top of his morning paper.

"No, thank you, sir," said Sandy, growing very red, "it's no trouble to carry."

"I do believe there is something moving about in it," cried Donald, getting more curious and

moving nearer. Another kick came from Sandy. But just then the train began to cross the great Firth of Forth bridge, and everything else was forgotten as they all put their heads out to see this wonderful bridge, nearly a mile and a half long.

"Can't you see a castle yonder?" said Doctor Gordon, presently. The boys were on the lookout, and Don soon spied it on its high hill rising above the trees.

"That is Stirling Castle, and next to Edinburgh Castle it is probably the most famous in Scotland," said Doctor Gordon. "Many stirring deeds and brave battles have taken place there in the past." [62]

"Castles were always built on high hills, were they not?" asked Donald.

"Yes, so that they could be more easily protected, and also that a watch could be kept over many miles of country, in order to guard against any surprise by an enemy.

"Over yonder lies the Field of Bannockburn, where was fought one of the greatest battles in the history of Scotland, when Robert Bruce defeated the English, and broke their power in Scotland."

Doctor Gordon pointed out many other historic spots as they were whirled along. Soon the scenery became more wild and beautiful; and they passed lovely rolling hills covered with purple heather, forests, and a background of distant mountains. In a few minutes the train was drawing in to Skylemore Station. [63]

"There's the break now," shouted Don, "and Andy Macclose driving; and there's Uncle Alan and the lassies."

Such a welcome as they all got! Then everybody packed themselves into the big break, or carryall, and the trunks and bags were all piled into a cart, all except Sandy's parcel, which he stoutly refused to part with for a moment.

Then they drove off, everybody trying to talk at the same time. The young people were full of the birthday party which was to be the next day.

A drive of a few miles brought them to Skylemore, where Aunt Jessie was waiting for them at the door, and soon they were enjoying a good tea around a blazing fire in the big hall.

The next morning the birthday celebration began at the breakfast-table, where all of Marjorie's presents were spread out around her plate. Marjorie herself was so excited that she could hardly open the parcels, and Mrs. Lindsay had to help her. [64]

There was a nice writing-desk from her father, and a silver inkstand from her mother; a pretty pen-holder from her aunt, and a pearl pin from her uncle. Donald had brought her a dear little silver bracelet, engraved with the words "Dinna forget."

"Why, this is the package that Sandy brought with him," said Donald, after all the others had been opened and examined; "it was for Marjorie all the time."

So it was, and when Marjorie opened it what do you suppose gravely walked out? Sandy's one, little, fluffy "tewky" that he was so proud of! Such a shout of laughter as went up from everybody! Marjorie was delighted, for she had so often admired Sandy's pet, and its accomplishments. [65]

"To think, Sandy, that you brought it all the way, and never told us what you had," said Don, as soon as he could speak for laughing. "I did hear something 'cheep,' though."

After Marjorie had thanked everybody for her presents the merry crowd of young people finished their breakfasts, put the "tewky" in a basket with something to eat, and all went out for a walk.

First they went down through the little village of Skylemore, where the village people gave the children a hearty greeting and asked after the "Laird," as they called Mr. Lindsay, which is the way the country-folk always speak of the owner of a large estate.

The little girls were great favourites in the village, and Marjorie stopped to tell everybody about her presents.

"Let's go up on the moor and around by Allan Water," said Janet. So they climbed up over the hills, hiding from each other in the deep purple heather, and playing that they were lost. [66]

"There's 'Auld Wullie,' the 'herd,'" suddenly called out Donald. "Herd" with the Scotch means a shepherd. And sure enough there was "Auld Wullie" sitting on a rock wrapped in his plaid,—a small black and white check,—which is the kind generally worn by the shepherds, and has so come to be known as "shepherd's plaid."

Around him were his sheep, which were carefully watched by three fine collie dogs, who marched around the flock, and kept them in order, as an officer does his soldiers. "Auld Wullie" was a great friend of the children, who never tired of hearing his tales of sheep-dogs and shepherds, and their lonely lives on the moors and hillsides. "Auld Wullie" was a descendant of an old Highland shepherd family, who always among themselves spoke the old Gaelic tongue, and it was great fun for the children to get him to address them in the tongue of his forefathers. Gaelic is even yet much spoken in the north of Scotland. [67]

One of "Auld Wullie's" great stories was how Dindie, his old collie, had won the prize at a sheep-dogs' contest. These matches are held in different parts of Scotland, and the dog who can handle his sheep the best wins the prize. It is a great event in the particular neighbourhood where the contest is held, and only the best trained dogs are entered.

"An' it's the lassie's birthday. Ay, but she's a braw lassie now," said the herd, as they tramped over to his cottage not far away.

It was a tiny cottage of rough stones, with a roof also made of flat stones, and a large enclosure at the back for the sheep. There were only two rooms, but "Auld Wullie" asked them into the front one, which the country people call the "ben room," and for a moment went himself into the back one, which they call the "but room." Presently he came back with something in his hand, and as the party left the little house, he turned to Marjorie, and said: "Just a wee giftie for the lassie," and, to her surprise, put into her hands a number of Scotch pebbles.

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These pebbles, which are all sorts of bright colours, are found in the clear mountain streams, and are set in all kinds of trinkets,—brooches, pins, and the like,—and sold as souvenirs of bonnie Scotland. The old man had gathered them in his lonely walks over the hills, and you can imagine how pleased Marjorie was.

As it was getting near dinner-time our young people said good-bye to "Auld Wullie" and the collies, and set out for home as quickly as they could.

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The afternoon was spent in getting ready for the party which was to be held in the evening. It was to be a fancy-dress affair, and there was much flying around with excitement, you may believe, before everything was arranged.

Marjorie was dressed to represent a bluebell in a blue dress trimmed with bluebells and a little blue cap on her head shaped like one of these flowers. Janet was heather. Her dress was pale pink, with garlands of real heather bloom, and a wreath of heather on her head. These two flowers are great favourites in Scotland.

Don was gotten up as "Rob Roy," dressed in the Macgregor tartan, which his uncle had loaned him, with a fierce-looking skean-dhu stuck in his stocking, and a great claymore hanging by his side, which got in his way most of the time.



[70]

"JUST A WEE GIFTIE FOR THE LASSIE."

Sandy tried to look kingly, like Robert Bruce, with a gold-paper crown on his head. Altogether they made a very splendid showing.

The children had barely time to exhibit themselves before the company began to come, a number of their little neighbours from roundabout.

They all played games. Aunt Mary started them off with "Merry Metanzie," which is played with a handkerchief while singing a song, much after the style of "Dropping the Handkerchief."

Another favourite game is "Scotch and English." Two sides are formed, each lining up opposite the other, and an attempt is made to capture any opponent who puts his foot over the imaginary border. This, as you may suppose, is a game which usually ends in a great romp.

[71]

After this they all went in to a fine supper, with a big cake in front of Marjorie's plate, with ten candles stuck in it, all alight, one for each year of her age. After the young folks had eaten much more than was good for them, there was dancing, and somebody said: "Let's have a 'Sword Dance,' and a real 'Highland Fling.'" So nothing would do but that they should get a "gillie" who would dance the "Sword Dance," across two crossed sword-blades, with much agility and apparently much risk to his person.

Everybody gathered in the big hall, and presently in came old Dugald with his bagpipes, while behind him walked a splendid looking fellow, dressed in his tartan, who went through the difficult steps of his dances in a way that won the applause of every one.

Mr. Lindsay took down from the wall two old swords and laid them crossed at right angles on the floor, when the dancer pranced in and out and between their sharp edges without ever touching them, which is a great feat.

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How everybody applauded! Then old Dugald struck up his pipes again, and everybody sang the old Scotch song, "The Bluebells of Scotland," in honour of Marjorie. After this everybody took partners and danced the reel, what we call the "Virginia Reel," up and down the big hall. In the midst of it all in walked the little "tewky," Sandy's gift to Marjorie. Where he came from nobody seemed to know; but probably he was lonesome, and being so friendly thought he would like to join the company.

This broke up the dancing pretty effectually, everybody was laughing so. Don tripped over his claymore and fell against Sandy, while Sandy's gilt crown went rolling down the hall. But this only added to the fun, and it was a tired but happy lot of young people that Mrs. Lindsay bundled off to bed, at a very late hour for Scotch children.

[73]

SOME SCOTCH CUSTOMS

OUR little Scotch cousins do not make so much of Christmas as the American children. Their great holiday is the New Year. On the eve of "Hogmanay," as it is called, everybody stays up to welcome the New Year, with great jollification.

"Do you think that Uncle Clarke will get here in time?" Don asked for the hundredth time on New Year's eve. The Gordons had been expecting him all the week, but he had not yet come, and Don went about grumbling that "Hogmanay" would be no fun at all without Uncle Clarke.

The MacPhersons and the Gordons were all sitting in the library of Kelvin House, to see the old year out and the new year in. A table was spread with cakes and many other good things to eat, and the children had been wondering all the evening who would make the "first-footing." [75]

A "first-footing" is made by the first person who enters the house after the stroke of midnight; and if he wishes well to the household, he should bring a cake of shortbread with him.

There is always great hilarity at a "first-footing." Everybody kept their eyes on the clock, and Doctor Gordon pulled out his watch every little while to be sure that the clock had not stopped.

Just as the stroke of twelve rang out, all the bells of the city began to ring, and great shouts went up from the throngs of people who crowded the streets, and there was a great kissing and shaking of hands among the happy households who had assembled for the ceremony.

In the midst of all the gaiety at Kelvin House the front door-bell rang. "Oh! there's our 'first-footing,'" shouted the children in one voice, and they all rushed to the door. Who should it be but Uncle Clarke, with a big cake of shortbread in his arms! [76]

"I knew he'd come, I knew he'd come," shouted Don, triumphantly, dragging him into the room. Well, wasn't there a great time! and wasn't everybody pleased!

After this other friends came in to wish the family a "Happy New Year," and then everybody joined hands and sang "Auld Lang Syne," that best known song of Robert Burns, Scotland's greatest poet.

"Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And never brought to mind?
We'll drink a cup of kindness yet,
For the days of Auld Lang Syne."

Another great event for the children of Scotland is to hear a "Royal Proclamation," which is a message from the king, read out at Mercat Cross in Edinburgh. It is carried out with great ceremony, and is another old-time custom which has lived to this day. The heralds come in their gorgeous costumes, all red and blue and gold, with a military escort from the Highland Regiment at the castle, and the band plays as the procession makes its way to the cross. [77]

There is a great fanfare by the trumpeters, after which the king's message is read out to the people assembled. Then there is another fanfare blown on the long trumpets, which have gorgeous banners hanging from them, after which the band plays "God Save the King," and the people all take off their hats.

One morning a shrill whistle brought Sandy to his garden wall.

"What's up?" he called out.

"Whist!" It was Don who swung himself off an overhanging branch of an old pear-tree, and dropped down on Sandy's side of the wall. [78]

"There are a lot of the Irish lads behind the churchyard wall; they didn't see me, so I sneaked around the back way. Our crowd is going to be at the top of the street, so hurry up," said Don, in a most excited manner.

"I'm ready," said Sandy, "but we haven't got a bit of blue."

"Here's a ribbon that will do; I saved it off the last box of sweets," said Don, with the air of a general planning a campaign, as he took a bedraggled bit of blue ribbon out of his pocket and hastily cut it in two with his knife.

Each of the lads tied a piece in his button-hole as they ran out by all the back alleyways in the direction of the church.

What was it all about? Well, it was St. Patrick's Day, the seventeenth of March, and when any of the Scotch and Irish lads met on that day, there was bound to be a battle between them. The Irish boys wore green ribbons, and the Scotch boys blue ones. [79]

This is one of the many old customs which still go on in some parts, though probably not many know just why it has survived; and the boys themselves perhaps never stop to realize that it is an old custom, and do not care what its origin may have been, so long as it furnishes them some fun and no serious hurts come of it. On one occasion Don came home after the fray with a big bump on the side of his head which had frightened his mother, but at which the doctor laughed, and said a few knocks like that wouldn't hurt any lad. As for Donald, he gloried in going around and showing off his injury, his head meanwhile wrapped in a great poultice. For this he was quite a hero in the eyes of his playmates.

To-day the Scotch line of battle was preparing to move from its position when our lads came up panting and breathless. The idea was to surprise the Irish boys entrenched behind the churchyard wall, who were guarding themselves only against an attack which they expected to come from an entirely different direction. [80]

Our little Scotch band crept carefully along, taking advantage of the shelter of every wall and tree. They had drawn up in the rear of the enemy, and were just gathering their forces for an onslaught, when a head popped round the angle of the wall, and out rushed the whole troop of Irish lads, and the battle begun.

First one crowd was driven down the hill and then the other; and so it went on until from sheer fatigue both sides drew off, each claiming a victory; which probably was as good a way of deciding it as any, for it is very hard to say which are the bravest, the Scotch or the Irish. Both nations have proved themselves fair fighters in the past.

The next day Sandy and Don were seen playing games with some of the enemy, so it is seen no hard feelings came from the encounter. [81]

Donald and Sandy always enjoyed the fun of egg-rolling at Easter, which is much the same kind of sport that children amuse themselves with in some parts of America, though nobody seems to know just how the custom originated.

Then the children have "Hallowe'en" parties, when they play many kinds of queer games. Often there is a cake in which there has been baked a small china doll, a brass ring, a thimble, a button, and a threepenny silver piece, each of which means some sort of good or bad fortune for the one who finds it in his or her piece of cake. But, generally speaking, the children are most anxious to receive the coin, for that can be spent, you know.

We must not forget the "haggis," which Donald sometimes ate for dinner. It is a favourite old-time Scotch dish, a sort of a pudding, made of various kinds of meat and meal, and put into a bag and boiled a long time. It is not eaten so much to-day as formerly, but Mrs. Gordon always made a point of having it on certain special occasions, as a great treat. As it is very rich, and quite unsuited as a steady diet for children, perhaps it is just as well that they do not have it too often. [82]

CHAPTER VII. [83]

SUMMER HOLIDAYS

IT was the beginning of the summer holidays, and the Gordons, with Sandy, had come to Skylemore that the young people might spend their holidays together.

Many pleasant trips had been planned, and the first was to be a picnic on Loch Katrine, which was not far from Skylemore.

It was early on a bright summer's morning when Dugald, with his four prancing horses, appeared at the door, and the two Clans of Gordons and Lindsays, to say nothing of Sandy, who was a MacPherson, piled into the big break, along with many baskets full of good things.

With a waving of caps and handkerchiefs off they went, and soon they were driving along the beautiful mountain glens and through the Trossachs, which means literally a wooded gorge or ravine. [84]

"There is the loch now," cried Don, presently.

"No, that is Loch Achray," said his uncle, "and that mountain is Ben Venue, but we shall see Loch Katrine very soon;" and it was not long before Dugald drew up on the very edge of the loch itself, and a camping-place was soon found under the trees and in sight of Ellen's Isle.

Rugs were brought from the break and spread on the ground around a big rock which was to serve as a table. Everybody helped to unpack the big baskets, for all were as hungry as if they had had no breakfasts.

Not much was said for a time but "Please pass that," and "Please pass this," and "Isn't this good?" until finally even the boys decided they had eaten enough.

"Papa, tell us about Ellen's Isle," said Janet, as they all sat around after lunch, and tried to see who could throw a stone the farthest into the water. [85]

So Mr. Lindsay told them the story of the "fair Ellen," whom Sir Walter Scott wrote of in his great poem called "The Lady of the Lake." Ellen was called "the lady of the lake," and lived with her father on the little island yonder. Then Mr. Lindsay told them of "Roderick Dhu," and of the gatherings of the Clan Alpine which took place in the old days in a glen not far away, and how at a signal armed men wrapped in their plaids would spring up out of the seemingly lonely dells and glens as if by magic.

Those were wild days in Scotland long ago, days of fierce fights and brave deeds, when Clans met and rushed into battle with a wild "slogan," as their battle-cry was known.

"Sandy says that he does not believe that 'Rob Roy' was a real person; but he was, and lived right here, didn't he, Uncle Alan?" said Don, eagerly, in defence of his hero. [86]

"Indeed he did, and you would like to see his old home, wouldn't you, Don?"

"Wouldn't I!" said Don, and his eyes shone.

"Well, we will go there sometime; it is now a sheep-farm, but was once the old home of the Macgregors. In 'Rob Roy's' time bands of lawless men came down from the north to steal cattle and do other kinds of mischief. So the 'lairds' in these parts paid 'Rob Roy' and his little band of followers to protect their property from these invaders and robbers. In after days the band was formed into a regiment called the 'Black Watch,' which to-day is one of the most famous of the Scotch regiments."

Sir Walter Scott has done much to make this part of Scotland well known, and people come from all over the world, and especially from America, anxious to see the beautiful country of rocks and glens and heather-clad mountains of which he wrote in his famous novels and poems. [87]

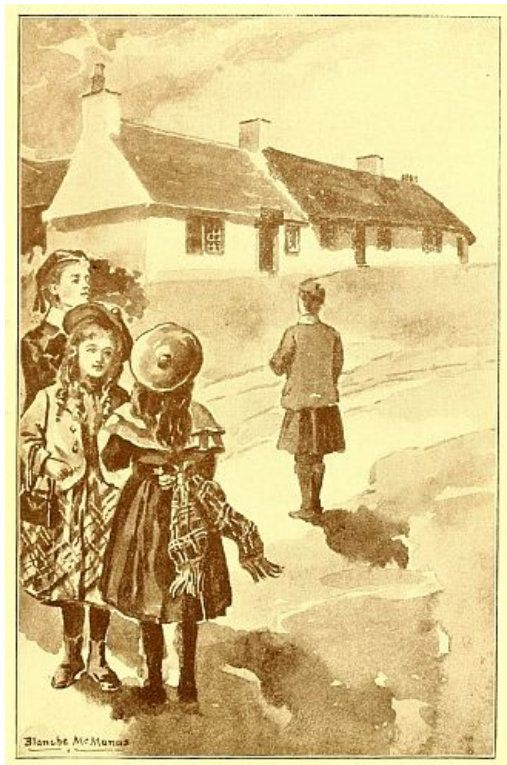
From the telling of stories our Clansmen soon turned to singing songs, for the Scotch are full of sentiment, and are very fond of music. Some of the most beautiful of our popular songs have come from Scotland. There is one which is known the world over, and sung as often by little American cousins as by little Scotch cousins; and that is "Annie Laurie."

So when Aunt Jessie began to sing "Annie Laurie," all joined in with a will, and sang one of the sweetest songs the world has ever known:

"They sang of love and not of fame,
Forgot was Scotland's glory.
Each heart recalled a different name,
But all sang 'Annie Laurie.'"

After this there was a general scramble to get the things picked up. The whole party mounted again to their seats in the break, and Dugald made the four horses just fly for home; though they did not need much urging, as every horse seems to know when his head is turned homeward. [88]

"Is that Robert Burns's house?" said Janet, in a disappointed voice.



"OUR LITTLE SCOTCH FRIENDS WERE STANDING BEFORE THE LITTLE HOUSE AT AYR, WHERE ROBERT BURNS WAS BORN."

"Yes, my dear," said her father, "great men have often been brought up in small houses like this. Bobby Burns was only a ploughboy, but he became a great poet, one of the greatest in the world."

Our little Scotch friends were standing before the little house at Ayr, where Robert Burns was born. They had come down from Glasgow for the day to visit that part of Scotland made famous by the poet. It is hard to say of whom the Scotch people are most fond and proud, Scott or Burns. The young people had looked forward with a great deal of pleasure to this visit, and they all felt pretty much as Janet did. [89]

It was a tiny house, what the country people call a "clay biggin," with a thatched roof. Inside are many relics of Burns, but the children were, perhaps, more interested in "Alloway's Auld Haunted Kirk." This is the small church of which Burns wrote in his poem, called "Tam-o'-shanter," where Tam saw the witches dance, and from whence he started on his wild ride, with the witches after him riding on broomsticks. It is one of the chief attractions for visitors.

"Oh! it is a creepy poem," said Don; and you will all think so, too, when you have read it.

They saw the "Auld Brig of Ayr," which means the old bridge, across the river Ayr, and they walked along the "Banks and Braes o' Bonnie Doon," of which Burns wrote and which he loved so well. They visited the monument to Burns. Marjorie remarked that it was not a very grand monument, not nearly so grand as that to Scott in Edinburgh; and she was quite right. [90]

"Not far from Ayr was the home of Annie Laurie," said Mr. Lindsay, as the train speeded them back to Glasgow.

"Was she a real person, father?" eagerly exclaimed the little girls together.

"Indeed she was, though her eyes were black and not blue," said Mr. Lindsay.

"How do you know?" asked Janet, who liked to be exact.

"Because her portrait is still to be seen at Maxwellton House, near the town of Dumfries, where she lived," replied her father.

"Well, I'd rather her eyes had been blue," said Marjorie, and the children kept talking about

blue and black eyes until they reached the great St. Enoch's railway station at Glasgow.

[91]

There are so many delightful journeys to be made from Glasgow by rail and steamer that it is one of the best starting points in all Scotland for excursions, of which all children and most old folks are so fond. The Lindsays and the Gordons were accordingly to stay in Glasgow for a week, that the young people might enjoy more of these rare treats, and take some of the lovely sails on the river Clyde and among the near-by islands.

Don and Sandy were having some hot discussions as to which was the finest city in Scotland,—Glasgow or Edinburgh. This was about the only thing that the boys ever disagreed on. Sandy's father came originally from Glasgow, so Sandy always stood up for it.

"It's a big city, and lots richer than Edinburgh; and think of all the business that is done here, and of the lots and lots of ships that come and go from all parts of the world. It's the largest city in Scotland, too, and the second city of the kingdom," Sandy would say.

[92]

"But it's not so beautiful as Edinburgh. It hasn't anything like Princes Street, nor so many famous old buildings and historic places, nor our great colleges. Anybody had rather live in Edinburgh—you know you would, Sandy," Don would argue.

And the truth of it all was, both boys were right.

Early one morning found our party gathered on the steamer *Lord of the Isles* for a cruise around the islands off the coast. They passed the great ship-building yards of the Clyde, the largest in the world, as they steamed down the river. The ships built upon the Clyde have always been famous all over the world.

"There is Gourock Bay, where the great racing yachts anchor," said Mr. Lindsay. "It was always thought to be a lucky place to set sail. It was from this bay that many of the yachts sailed for America when they were to make the attempt to capture the 'America's Cup,' that you doubtless all know about; but while these Clyde-built boats were fine yachts, none of them have been lucky enough to bring back the cup."

[93]

Next was seen the Island of Bute and the old Castle of Rothesay. Here they entered a narrow bit of water, called the Kyles of Bute, from which they entered Loch Fyne, famous for its fresh herrings.

Another steamer took them through the Crinan Canal, and thence to Oban, the capital of the Western Highlands.

In this part of Scotland, called by every one the Highlands, are the great deer forests of many thousands of acres, belonging to some of the great families of Scotland, where the wild deer is hunted, or "stalked," as it is called. Here, too, are wild moors, stretching for miles and miles, where few people live except the shepherds who look after the flocks.

[94]

There was another fine summer which was enjoyed greatly by our little Scotch cousins, and that was when some young American cousins came to visit the Lindsays, and they all went on Uncle Alan's yacht for a lovely sail of many days, among the islands which fringe the northern and western coasts of Scotland. It was on this occasion that they all went to the Isle of Skye (some of you have probably heard of the Skye terriers), and they stopped, too, at the Shetland Isles, where the little horses come from. Every girl and boy wants to own a dear little Shetland pony.

Didn't they have a splendid time on this trip! That was the time, too, when Donald and Sandy got left behind on one of the islands where they had all landed for a picnic,—but that's another story!

[95]

So many little cousins are waiting to talk about themselves that we must really get our little Clan safely back home, and leave them for the present to talk over the good times they have had together.

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