

THE DECLINE OF BALLAD-SINGING

present discussion, is Edward the father of Little Ned and the son of one of the original settlers. Old Edward was gathered to his fathers long before my recollection, but I have heard much concerning him from his children. He looms heroically in my imagination as the mighty bard who "could sing all day for ye an' never sing the same song twict," and it is a fact to be recorded without further comment that he bore so marked a resemblance to another of the great figures of the past that he was known in the community as "old Napoleon." This great man, according to the account given by his children, spent his youth in the employ of a Scotch family, where he proceeded in victorious fashion to annex and appropriate a long list of English and Scottish popular ballads.

It would be possible to go on heaping up instances of this transference of a body of folk-lore to the members of an alien race, but I have probably said enough to fix the impression which I have given in scattered fashion throughout the preceding chapters, and I may therefore proceed to the third cause of the decline and fall of ballad-singing in my particular district. The first two causes that I have assigned in this chapter—namely, the superseding of the ballads by more modern songs and the abandoning of them by a superior and disdainful race—have been kept pretty constantly before the reader; but the destructive force that I am now to consider, namely, disapproval of ballad-singing from religious motives, I have had occasion to suggest only in one or two instances.

Three summers ago I spent some time in canvassing the Scotch communities in the interior of the northern counties, but without success. Everywhere I found testimony to the fact that ballads had been sung in the past, and it