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SCOTLAND, TWO HUNDRED YEARS AGO.

It was a bright era in the history of the Church of Scotland, the period intervening between the years 1638 and 1649. It was the climax of the Second Reformation. It is a bright page in Scottish, and in British history too, that records the transactions and attainments of that period. Scotland might then well be called "Hephzibah and Beulah." Her ministers were men of faith and full of the Holy Ghost. Her ordinances were indeed "delectable mountains." Her courts, ecclesiastical and civil, were indeed "thrones of judgment, even the thrones of David's house." Jesus was acknowledged, not only as "King of saints," but also as "King of nations." The National Covenant of Scotland, and the Solemn League and Covenant of the three kingdoms were on the Statute Book as British law until the objects contemplated in them should be accomplished. National affairs were regulated by "the higher law," the Word of Him who sits and rules a Priest upon His Throne. Scotland's church and nation could then sing rapturously the song of the church in the days of old:—"When the Lord turned back the captivity of Zion we were like them that dream; then was our mouth filled with laughter and our tongue with singing. The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad."

The period which we have thus reviewed was brief. Charles II. was not only a tyrant but a traitor. On his accession to the throne, he, apparently in the most solemn manner, swore and subscribed the covenants. With apparent sincerity he expressed his approval of the whole reformation in church and state as then attained to, and vowed to administer the affairs of the realm in harmony with it. Such were the well understood terms on which the nation swore allegiance to him. Charles Stewart, however, was a traitor. His whole procedure as the chosen and loved king of a free people, was the procedure of a traitor. No sooner was he seated upon the throne than he set himself to destroy the goodly fabric which he had solemnly vowed to uphold. No sooner was the crown placed upon his head on his restoration in 1660 than he gathered around him as his Council of State a number of men who were well-known to be the bitterest enemies of Presbyterianism, and the covenants, in the whole realm. Instead of the oath of the covenant, a new oath was framed, called the "Oath of Parliament," and embodying an oath of allegiance, in which the swearer acknowledged the king as the "only supreme governor of the kingdom, over all persons and *in all causes*, and in which he bound himself never to decline his majesty's power and jurisdiction."

Having thus laid a sure foundation in this assertion of absolute power in Church and State, the king and his council proceeded to build up a