

that lonely garret all the holiday time, studying Shakespeare! By-the-by, your studying will be of hardly any use to you, because the acting editions are quite different. As to ourselves, you will see by the date of this that we are in Ireland. I have been settled here now for three seasons, and Jack is engaged as second scene-painter, and we are doing well and are very comfortable. Dear me, I have not told you the great news of all. We have spoken and thought of you so constantly, that I forget how far apart you have been in reality from me and mine all these years. Polly is married! Married very well, indeed, to a teacher of music here, and she has one little girl, and is very happy. Janet is at home with us still, and grown such a sweet creature. Not pretty, Mabel—at least they say not. I think she has the loveliest face in the world. We have not let her do anything, because, as perhaps you remember, she was always rather delicate from a baby. But she is such a comfort to her father! He often says that he forgets his blindness, so thoroughly does Janet make her eyes his own. Oh, Mabel, I have covered eight pages, and have not yet said half I wanted to say. I must, however, before I conclude, explain that during the summer vacation here we always go to Kiltclare, in the south of Ireland, for a short season. The manager is an old acquaintance of ours, and we think it would be a very favourable opportunity for you to make a beginning. It's a little out-of-the-way nook—very pretty, very pleasant, and the people are so nice and kind. We leave Dublin for Kiltclare in about two months from this date. But come to us as soon as you can. There will be much to do, and many things to settle. Of course you have no wardrobe or anything of that sort; but—see how lucky it falls out!—there are nearly all Polly's stage dresses just as she left them. You won't mind using them, dear, just at first. Give my kind love to my sister-in-law, and uncle John's too. Kiss your dear little brother for me. My dear child, I long to see you again. I suppose I shall hardly know you. But whatever else is changed, there will be our own Mabel's loving heart; that, I found by your letter, is unaltered. Ever your affectionate Aunt,

"MARY WALTON EARNSHAW

"P.S. The enclosed is to help your journey. You won't scruple to take it from Uncle John. He says you must consider that he stands in the place of a father to you now. If you will let us know when you are coming, Jack shall meet you at Kingstown. I wish he could go across and bring you all the way, but I'm afraid we can't manage that. "M. W."

When Mabel first opened the letter, there had dropped out of it a five-pound note.

### SCOTLAND FROM AGRICOLA'S INVASION TO 1688.

THE following notice of Mr. Burton's work is taken from *Chambers's Journal*:

The four volumes now published of Mr. John Hill Burton's work\* are so many-sided that they furnish food for the taste of numerous readers to whom ordinary "history" offers little attraction. The author is a powerful, though not a picturesque writer; and on whatever portion of his wide-ranging and complicated subject he is employed, he compels the attention and the interest of his readers to his labours. In the well-trodden field of national controversy, he "sets his foot down" with vigorous insistence; he is not, indeed, violent or impetuous, but he relies confidently on the strength of the testimony he has to support his opinions withal, and uses it strongly. That Scotland was peopled from Ireland—that the Scots were Irish, and Scotia a name imported from the civilized West to the wild regions lying within a little distance, easily traversed by the adventurers in their boats, are, he holds, proven; and he finds it as difficult to understand reluctance in the admission as it is impossible to shake the evidence of

the fact. His patriotic zeal, though it does not outrun discretion—though it is not extravagant, is very decidedly outspoken, and he denounces Edward I. with a candour and force which will surprise that bloody-minded, vindictive, and treacherous monarch's admirers not a little, especially if, as is generally the case, they have learned Scotch history from an English point of view. The Union has been for so long a happily accomplished fact, that it is not easy to regard, in a fair and dispassionate spirit, the historic ages throughout which England and Scotland were not only separate, but bitter and determined enemies. The long and animated story of the contests between the two countries, and the alliances between Scotland and France against their common and detested foe, has never been told with such detail and sequence as by Mr. Burton; and the period of Scotland's glory while England declined from her position of power and majesty, under the feeble son of the Black Prince, is chronicled after a fashion which must arouse exultation in every truly Scottish breast. The intensity of the writer's national sympathies, while so governed by justice and prudence as not to take from his trustworthiness as a historian, lend his work a characteristic literary charm which is all-pervading. The history of the war of independence which ensued on the disputed succession caused by the extinction of the line of Alexander III., by the death of the "Maid of Norway," is one of the most exhaustive narratives ever produced by any chronicler, and no less remarkable for the elaboration of its details, and its close reasoning on results, than for the salient distinctness with which certain individuals are brought before the mind's eye, with reality all the more remarkable because, as we have said, Mr. Burton is not a picturesque writer. There is no pictorial grouping in his style, a deficiency peculiarly noticeable when he has to deal with the great tragedy and mystery of Scottish story, the reign of Mary Stewart, but he picks out certain individuals, and forces the reader to see them Bruce, Baliol, and, in particular, Wallace and John Knox, are examples of this faculty.

When the author enters upon the task of tracing the origin and condition of the several populations inhabiting Scotland about the time when Honorius wrote his celebrated letter to the cities of Britain, telling them that in future they must look to themselves for protection—that is, in the year 410—he comes at once into the area of the Pict and Scot controversy, which he handles most fully, most ably, and with the result before mentioned. He maintains that the Picts were simply the independent northern tribes, not included in the Roman province of Britain, and so called because they retained the custom of painting themselves, long abandoned by the South Britains; and that the Scots, or Scoti, were immigrant Irish tribes, far in advance of the Picts in civilisation, and who rapidly gained all the advantages which such superiority would naturally secure. In the time of Columba, the Irish colony of Scots did not spread beyond Iona, and the country northward was still part of the dominion of the king of the Picts. How the colony grew—how its language spread, and absorbed the Norse tongue—how group after group of Norse invaders were absorbed into the Irish-speaking population—how Scottish Dalriada became a powerful state, while Irish Dalriada became divided and disintegrated—how the term Scotia gradually loosened its hold on the old country, and attaching itself to the new, gave it the name by which it is known in history, is all eloquently and convincingly told.

Mr. Burton is sceptical about Druidism, which he considers is far too easily accepted as a solution of the difficulties attending a proper comprehension of the ante-Christian history of Scotland and England. His sketch of the discrepancies between the plentiful statements which are made concerning the Pictish system, and the very little that is really known or proved about it, is one of his most remarkable achievements. He points out the briefness and uncertainty of Cæsar's account of the Druids, the undue importance attached to it, the faintness of

other ancient references, and the highly significant absence of any organised opposition to the early saints and Christian missionaries on the part of any priesthood which can be identified with that of the Druids. 'The contest of conversion,' says the author, 'lasted from the days of Constantine the Great till long after the days of Charlemagne.'

'The larger features of the contest are told by the ecclesiastical historians; the individual triumphs of the missionaries are to be found in the ample volumes of the Lives of the Saints. If, then, there had been a heathen hierarchy holding spiritual rule over the greater part of Europe, to find nothing about it in the annals of the early church, would be as anomalous as to read a History of the Reformation which says nothing of the popedom, the Romish hierarchy, and the Council of Trent. Yet on Druidism, its hierarchy and creed, these annals of the early church are dumb. It has yet to be discovered that they speak of heathendom as represented by any general hierarchy or system. A local idol, the temple in which it is preserved, and a heathen priest, or Magus, taking charge of the temple—such are usually the nature of the impediment with which the early saint has to deal, when he penetrates the territories of the unconverted.'

The national history of Scotland, properly so called, begins at the period when the Britons continued to maintain an independent territory in the west, from the Solway to the Clyde; and northward, the country was divided between the Picts on the north and east, and the Irish Scots on the west. Stirring, wild, and romantic is the story of the strife between them, and the constant war waged by the savage and desperate Norsemen on both. The story reads like pages from some grand old epic, until, between 840-860, the superior civilisation of the Irish-derived race, their literature, and their language, finally prevailed, and the union of the Picts and Scots took place. To the intelligence and clearness with which the author puts forth the conclusions at which he has arrived must be added their novelty. He has enriched history with a chapter as novel as it seems incontrovertible.

The legends of the early kings, some of which are accepted, some rejected, bring us to the relations of the Scots and Saxon kings, to the reigns of Duncan, Malcolm, and MacBeda, or Macbeth, important, not alone in regard to the character of the king, but because with his reign ended the mixed or alternative succession, and the rule of hereditary succession was established. Just nine years after the accession of Malcolm Canmore, came the Norman Conquest of England. No section of Mr. Burton's work shews more remarkable ability than that in which he discusses its nature, its results, its collateral effects on Scotland, and the marvellous system of organisation which served to make the conquest so complete. The marriage of the heir of the Saxon kings to King Malcolm's sister, made Malcolm the natural enemy of the Cæsarqueror, an enemy from which much misery resulted. But when Edgar, his son, and the son of St. Margaret, had fought his way to his father's throne, he married his sister Matilda to Henry, king of England, in the year 1100. Until the Wars of the Roses terminated in the marriage of Henry VII. with Elizabeth of York, no more important alliance than this, which united the heir to the conquest of the Normans with the daughter of the old Saxon kings, ever took place. With prospects of peace, and the death of King Alexander I., Edgar's brother, in 1124, the first volume terminates.

A period, long in duration, and of vast importance, is contained in the second volume, which carries the narrative of Scottish history from the accession of King David, the third son of St. Margaret, in 1124, to the death of Bruce in 1329, after the grand achievement of the famous Treaty of Northampton, and includes among its chapters several treatises, according to the lucid and comprehensive arrangement adopted by the author, which supply a complete statement of the moral, material, and economical condition and progress of the kingdom during the lapse of two centuries. This volume is the

\* *The History of Scotland from Agricola's Invasion to the Revolution of 1688*. By John Hill Burton. William Blackwood and Sons, Edinburgh.