

An Hour with the Editor

SCOTTISH HISTORY

The condition of Scotland after the battle of Flodden was unsettled in the highest degree. In that fierce fight Scotland lost not only her King, but twelve earls, thirteen lords and the eldest sons of five noble families. James V., who succeeded to the throne, was at that time an infant in arms, and the struggles between the Earls of Angus and the Duke of Albany for the guardianship of the child and the regency of the kingdom not only kept the distracted country in confusion, but deluged it with blood. Angus in the end was triumphant only to find himself ignominiously set aside and driven from the kingdom as soon as the young King became old enough to assert his authority. James proved to be a man of much force of character, although inclined to severity. He endeavored by every means in his power to promote harmony and prosperity among his people, and while unable to keep the peace with England, the fault lay doubtless more with the banished family of Douglas than with him. He made what was in those days a very notable journey for a king, circumnavigating Scotland and familiarizing himself with all the islands, bays and harbors. He also took steps to secure the loyalty of the semi-independent chieftains in the remoter parts of the kingdom, and, as by reason of the death of so many nobles, large estates had become his by process of escheatment, he was undoubtedly the most powerful sovereign that Scotland ever had, using the word powerful to express influence in the state. Describing the condition of Scotland in the reign of James IV., Sir Walter Scott said: "In Scotland the crown was possessed of very little power, and the King could scarce be considered as more than the first baron of the kingdom, subject to be restrained, imprisoned, dethroned and slain at the pleasure of a turbulent aristocracy. It is true that, when the Scottish monarch possessed the love and affection of his peers, he was generally allowed considerable weight in the national councils; but the extent of his power usually rested in the degree of personal esteem in which he was held. James III. was repeatedly imprisoned, and finally deposed and murdered by the same class of nobles (in some instances by the very same individuals) who loved, honored and obeyed his more popular son with such devotion that they followed him to the fatal field of Flodden, on which, with the flower of his kingdom, he lost his life. The quiet and prosperity of the kingdom rested far too much on the personal character of the prince to be capable of much stability."

The people of Scotland were at this time very poor. Of manufactures they had little or none. The only exports of the country were hides and wool. Agriculture was practised, of course, but the confused state of the country was such, so often was it laid waste by fire and sword, sometimes by an invading force from England, and sometimes by rival nobles, that no man felt sure of reaping what he sowed. Moreover, nearly the whole able-bodied population was almost constantly under arms, and such tillage as was possible was left to old men, women and children. The strife, which existed between the nobles, extended downward through all ranks of society. An evicted tenant, for example, considered himself to be fully justified in killing his successor, and although laws were passed to prevent this and similar evils, there seemed to be no power in the state capable of enforcing them. The inhabitants had accustomed themselves to life under great stress, and the luxuries, that had become common in England and France, were almost unknown. Yet notwithstanding these arduous conditions, the Scots were strongly impressed with the value of education. The ancient classics had recently been made known to the world, and the period of the Renaissance had begun. It spread to Scotland, and its effect there was that, instead of learning being confined to a few, it was made available to the many, and a certain amount of it was made obligatory. In 1494 the Scottish Parliament enacted that each baron and substantial freeholder should, under the penalty of twenty pounds, send his eldest son to the grammar school at six, or, in case of valid excuse, at nine years of age. These laws were to become well grounded in Latin, and even then to study law and philosophy for three years, the object being to qualify them for the performance of the duties of judges, magistrates, sheriffs, and the like. This is probably the earliest instance of compulsory education. At this time also the doctrines of the Reformation began to get a foothold in Scotland. We have seen in a previous article that the Scottish clergy were very jealous of their independence. All these things contributed towards producing throughout the kingdom very disturbed conditions, and when we reflect upon them we become the better able to understand the cause of the events which marred the career of Mary Stuart, who succeeded to her father's throne, when he died, on December 14, 1542, at the early age of thirty-one.

SPRINGTIME AND "LITTLE RIVERS"

Now that the springtime is coming to us in British Columbia, each one of us begins to feel a restlessness, foretelling that awakening which finds a responsive birth in all things in nature. A few days ago the world about us was in the grasp of winter, not a suggestion of opening bud, not a trace of springtime fragrance. We went to bed one night, the last glimpse out of our windows showing us an endless expanse of snow. But while we slept, the Chinook wind, that wonderful wind about

which some day our poet-children shall magically sing, swept down upon us. Waking in the night, we heard it rattling the windows, whistling through the crevices in the doors, singing madly in the swaying fir trees. And in the morning the miracle had happened. Our open windows revealed a glad, green world. The breeze that brushed against our faces was roughly sweet, with no hint of frost in its breath. And, in the garden-beds, when we went out of doors to look, there were the tiny emerald spears of the crocus, while over against the house—wonder of wonders!—the wall-flowers were beginning to show the dark brown and gold velvet of their dear, homely, fragrant blossoms. O, this is a country of wonderful magic and mystery. And because the spell of the swift-coming spring is upon us all, and Nature seemed never more radiantly motherly than now, we like to read of those, who have felt, who feel as we do. We like to meet with, and to speak with those whose hearts are full of the inexpressibly great and vehement thoughts of this season of seasons. We like to think that in potent fancy we are grasping one another's hands in an endless chain of happy sympathy, and rejoicing—just rejoicing—for joy gives birth to all that is sweet and most beautiful in the world.

And so today, because our minds and hearts are attune to the singing of nature in wind and sea, and in the meadow-lark's trilling, we can appreciate the sentiment which breathes in the following words. The writer is Henry Van Dyke, a New England clergyman, and he speaks particularly of the friendship to us of "little rivers." We all know more or less about little rivers, though with many of us the dearest memories of them may belong to a childhood long past. But memories gather sweetness as they grow, just as friendship waxes dearer with the years:

Little Rivers

A river is the most human and companionable of all inanimate things. It has a life, a character, a voice of its own; and as full of good-fellowship as a sugar-maple is of sap. It can talk in various tones, loud or low; and of many subjects, grave or gay. Under favorable circumstances it will even make a shift to sing; not in a fashion that can be reduced to notes and set down in black and white on a sheet of paper, but in a vague, refreshing manner and to a wondering air that goes—

"Over the hills and far away."

For real company and friendship, there is nothing outside of the animal kingdom that is comparable to a river. I will admit that a very good case can be made out in favor of some other objects of natural affection. For example, a fair apology has been offered by those ambitious persons who have fallen in love with the sea. But after all there is a formless and disquieting passion. It lacks solid comfort and mutual confidence. The sea is too big for loving, and too uncertain. It will not fit into our thoughts. It has no personality because it has so many. It is a salt abstraction. You might as well think of loving a glittering generality like "the American woman." Mountains are more satisfying, because they are more individual. It is possible to feel a very strong attachment for a certain range whose outline has grown familiar to our eyes; or a clear peak that has looked down, day after day, upon our joys and sorrows, moderating our passions with its calm aspect. We come back from our travels, and the sight of such a well-known mountain is like meeting an old friend unchanged. But it is a one-sided affection. The mountain is voiceless and imperturbable; and its very loftiness and serenity sometimes makes us the more lonely.

Trees seem to come closer to our life. They are often rooted in our richest feelings; and our sweetest memories, like birds, build nests in their branches.

Yes, there is a good deal to be said in favor of tree-worship; and when I recline with my friend Tityrus beneath the shade of his favorite oak, I consent to his devotions. But when I invite him with me to share my orisons, or wander alone to indulge the luxury of grateful, unlabored thought, my feet turn not to a tree, but to the bank of a river: for there the musings of solitude find a friendly accompaniment, and human intercourse is purified and sweetened by the flowing, murmuring water. It is by a river that I would choose to make love, and to revive old friendships and to play with the children, and to confess my faults; and to escape from vain selfish desires, and to cleanse my mind from all the false and foolish things that mar the joy and peace of living. Like David's harp, I pant for the waterbrooks, and would follow the advice of Seneca, who says, "Where a spring rises, or a river flows, there should we build altars and offer sacrifices."

Every country, or at least every country that is fit for habitation, has its rivers; and every river has its own quality; and it is the part of wisdom to know and love as many as you can; seeing each in the fairest possible light and receiving from each the best that it has to give. The torrents of Norway leap down from their mountain homes with plentiful cataracts, and run brief but glorious races to the sea. The streams of England move smoothly through green fields and besides ancient, sleepy towns. The Scotch rivers braw through the open moorland, and flash along steep highland glens. The rivers of the Alps are born in icy caves, from which they issue forth with furious, turbid waters; but when their anger has been forgotten in the slumber of some blue lake, they flow down more softly to see the vineyards of France and Italy, the

grey castles of Germany, and the verdant meadows of Holland. The mighty rivers of the West roll their yellow floods through broad valleys or plunge down dark canons. The rivers of the South creep under dim arboreal arches heavy with banners of waving moss.

Every river that flows is good and has something worthy to be loved. But those that we love most are always those that we have known best—the stream that ran before our father's door, the current on which we ventured our first boat, or cast our first fly, the brook on whose banks we first picked the twin flower of young love. However far we may travel, we come back to Naaman's state of mind: "Are not Aban and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel?"

THE ORIGIN OF RELIGION

On the three preceding Sundays we have endeavored to explain the origin of law, and sought to show that it is to be found in necessity. We have also tried to show that as it is the result of instincts as natural in humanity as the phenomena of fruit and seed, and of gravitation and cohesion are in the vegetable and mineral kingdoms, respectively, law is essentially of divine source, seeing that it results from qualities inherent in Nature, and therefore as much a part of Creation as are the worlds and system of worlds that have been evolved from chaos. We do not find, however, along this line of reasoning any place where we are forced by logic to interpose the hypothesis of God. Let us be clear as to what is meant by this. The expression "hypothesis of God" was first used, we think, by Tyndall, or possibly it was one of the other great scientists of the mid-Victorian Era. It was employed in this sense, that Science could apparently explain every step in the evolution of matter without having to resort to the supposition of a Divine Being extraneous to matter interposed to cause, influence or arrest the processes of Nature. It is somewhat in this sense that the expression is used herein. We do not find any place in the evolution of human society at which it is necessary to say that at this stage mankind was compelled to assume the existence of a Deity. In other words, a perfect ethical system could be built up from the primitive instincts of self-preservation and racial preservation.

An attempt has been made to account for the origin of religion by attributing it to the personification of the forces of Nature. The Sun rose in the morning, and as its beams dispelled the night, it was regarded as the source of human happiness, and was worshipped as a beneficent god. Darkness made life dangerous and was dreaded as a maleficent god. The wind was personified and came to be regarded as a god. The thunder was the voice of a god and the lightning his arrows. And so on through the whole range of natural phenomena. We find great difficulty in accepting this explanation as a logical one, for it leaves unexplained how the idea of gods came to be entertained at all. The hypothesis of deity, whether in the form of one god or a thousand, seems to be absolutely distinct from the occurrences in Nature and the evolution of laws under the impetus of human necessity. Whence, then, came the thought? If you have read much about the origin of religions, or in explanation of what are called "Nature religions" as distinguished from revealed religion, you must have noticed that the explanations all begin by assuming what is to be proved, namely, that man originated the idea of a deity, which seems to be an impossibility. This explanation is not rendered any the more acceptable by referring this origin to a very remote period. We may very easily suggest in this Twentieth Century after Christ that primitive man, uncouth centuries before Christ, felt the wind blow and said it was a god, but consideration will show that this primeval ancestor of ours must have had the conception of deity, no matter how crude or obscure it might have been, before he could have thought of explaining the wind by it. To suggest that an explanation of something may be given by referring it to something else of which we have never heard or imagined is to advance a proposition, which is intrinsically absurd. Let us pursue the reasoning a little more closely. We must of necessity describe things in terms of the known, and if we have no terms applicable to it, description becomes impossible. Take for example what is known as the ether. The nearest definition, which science has attempted to give to it is that it is "that which undulates," but this does not tell us what the ether is. We speak of the law of gravitation, and can tell how it will operate, but we are utterly helpless if we try to define what the power is, whose laws we have been able to observe. These are examples taken from the achievements of Science, when its professors have grown so boastful of their wisdom that they refuse to allow a place in the Universe for its Creator. If we put ourselves in the place of primeval man and try to think of him as evolving from the processes of Nature the idea of a deity, we must concede him to have been endowed with something which none of his descendants has ever possessed. But when once we admit that the idea of deity was inherent in man, everything becomes easy when we seek to explain the existence of a belief in one god or a thousand of them.

We seem, therefore, to be forced to one of two conclusions. The idea of deity was either innate in human nature or was conveyed to it from some extraneous source. Perhaps herein we find the radical distinction between man and the brute creation. If we seek to explain this distinction by reference to intelligence, we find a vague borderland between men and brutes wherein they seem to stand upon an equality; but we have absolutely no reason for assuming that the brute creation has the conception of deity. It would be fruitless to attempt by any process of reasoning to determine whether this conception was innate in the human race or came to it by inspiration. If man is the product of evolution from the lower forms of life there must have been a stage in his development when he first received this conception; if he is a distinct and separate creation, the conception must have been innate, and whichever explanation we accept, we are logically forced to the same conclusion, namely, that there is exterior to the material universe something which could impart the conception of deity. That something must of necessity be divine, for anything less than deity could not of itself conceive of deity. Hence we seem to reach the final conclusion, that the belief in deity is of divine origin, and as this belief is the basis of religion, the origin of religion is in God Himself.

THE EARTH

XVII.

The geological structure of Asia is very simple. That great continent consists of a vast, though irregular, mountain mass flanked by alluvial plains. This mass appears to have undergone a series of oscillations upwards and downwards, so that at times the lowlands have been submerged by the sea, and at others elevated at varying distances above it. The nature of northern Siberia like that of the region on the northwestern shore of Hudson Bay, suggests that at no very distant period, geologically speaking, the country was below the sea-level. There are great masses of frozen earth in both countries, which suggest a considerable elevation, although, as we pointed out in the first article of this series, the existence of this frozen soil at great depths is not very easily explained. The alluvial plains referred to, where the altitude is great enough to permit them to be drained, and when the latitude does not preclude cultivation, are exceedingly rich, and where there is sufficient precipitation are very rich. The low lands south of the Himalayan Range are of incomparable fertility; the great plain of China is also exceedingly rich. Manchuria and generally southern Siberia is covered with soil that will yield luxuriantly. Southwestern Asia only needs irrigation to blossom as the rose. A considerable area of it is arid, and, indeed, one of the most notable physical facts in connection with the earth as a whole is the existence of the great arid area, beginning at the Atlantic coast of Africa and extending across that continent through Arabia, Syria, Beluchistan, and even into India.

While Asia has no rivers equal to the Mississippi system and the Amazon it has many that are very large and important. Some of them may be mentioned, and first those which fall into the Arctic Ocean. The principal of these are the Lena, the Yenesei and the Obi. The Lena is the most easterly and the largest of the three. It rises near Lake Baikal and enters the Arctic through a number of mouths. At 800 miles from the sea it is from 6 to 8 miles in width. Its total length is 2,400 miles, and it has many important tributaries.

The Yenesei rises in Lake Baikal and has a course of 2,500 miles to the sea. It is a great river, but for the most part its course is through a frozen desert. Its drainage area is estimated at 1,000,000 square miles.

The Obi is the most westerly of the three and rises in the Altai Mountains, its length being approximately 2,000 miles. It has several important tributaries, and at its mouth is the Gulf of Obia. The vast quantity of fresh water brought down by these three rivers explains the existence of the extensive areas of ice that are found along the northern coast of Asia.

Flowing into the Pacific Ocean are a number of very important rivers, of which several may be mentioned. The Amur is the most northerly of this group. It rises in central China, two minor rivers uniting to form it. From their confluence to the sea the distance is 1,500 miles, and the river is navigable for this whole distance.

The Hoang-ho is a China river, having its source in Tibet, and its course is 2,700 miles long before it enters the sea in the Gulf of Pe-chi-le. It is a very turbulent stream and not useful for purposes of navigation while its sudden floods render it exceedingly destructive of property. The Yang-tse-kiang is more a system of rivers than a single river. It is a very great stream. Its length from its source to the sea is about 3,000 miles, and it has one tributary 1,000 miles long. The tide flows up the river 450 miles, and it is navigable for large vessels 200 miles further. For 200 miles it may be navigated by any vessels afloat. The Yang-tse carries vast quantities of mud in its waters, and was undoubtedly one of the principal agents in building up the great Chinese Plain.

The principal rivers flowing into the Indian Ocean are the Brahmapootra, which rises in Tibet and, after a course of 1,800 miles, becomes blended with the Ganges and unites with it in building up a series of islands at the head of the Bay of Bengal.

The Ganges, which is the river "flowing from earth to heaven," rises in a great Himalayan snow field at an elevation of 13,000 feet above the sea. One of its tributaries, which

might be considered by some to be the main stream, has its source in a snow field at an elevation of 18,000 feet above the sea. Its total length is 2,000 miles to its union with the Brahmapootra. It is navigable for large boats for 1,500 miles from the sea, and at 600 miles it has a depth of 30 feet. The upper part of its course is exceedingly rapid with remarkable canyons. This will be evident from the fact that one of its branches descends 12,000 feet and another 17,000 feet in a distance of less than 1,000 miles. The valley of the Ganges is undoubtedly the most fertile area in the world.

The Indus rises in Tibet and enters the Arabian Sea after a course of about 2,000 miles. Its source is 18,000 feet above sea-level. Its current is for the most part very rapid, but the river is navigable for 925 miles from the sea. It enters the sea through a fertile delta flanked on either side by a desert. The discharge of the river is much less than its flow, so great a proportion of its flood is used in irrigation and lost in evaporation.

The Euphrates, which, with the Tigris, has played so great a part in the history of the world, rises in what are called the Anti-Taurus Mountains. Its course to the Gulf of Persia is 1,780 miles. The Tigris, which unites with it some distance from the sea, has a course of about 1,000 miles. Between these two rivers is the famed region known as Mesopotamia. Both the Euphrates and the Tigris are navigable by boats of moderate draft for a considerable part of their length. Both carry a large quantity of silt to the sea, more, it is said, than any other river and this silt, being deposited in the land-locked waters of the Persian Gulf, collects readily and forms new land. It is estimated that the encroachment of the land upon the Gulf is fully a mile in every 30 years. This growth of the land is one of the measures of the lapse of time since the building of the cities in that part of the world, ruins being found a long way inland in the river valley of such a nature as to show that they formed at one time part of a seaport.

Asia has several large inland bodies of water, and most of them have no outlet to the sea, and are consequently salt. Of these, the largest is the Caspian Sea, which has an area of 180,000 square miles. It is generally very shallow. It has no known outlet to the ocean, and as it receives the waters of the Volga and some other streams, the inference is that it loses this solely by the process of evaporation. The Sea of Aral is in central Asia. Its area is a little less than 25,000 square miles. It is salt. The Sea of Aral is not deep. Lake Baikal is one of the few large bodies of fresh water in Asia. Its area is 12,500 square miles. Its surface is 1,300 feet above the sea, and its bottom in the centre is 500 feet below sea-level. Baikal plays an important part in the commerce of central Siberia. Balkash is a large salt lake in Siberia, but it is very shallow. The Dead Sea is a small body of water, its area being less than 300 square miles. The most remarkable feature about it physically is the fact that it is 1,312 feet below sea-level. The Sea of Tiberias is a much smaller body of water, is 984 feet below the sea-level, and between these two bodies of water flows the Jordan, which is 120 miles long. The Sea of Tiberias, or Sea of Galilee, is fresh water.

JONAH'S ERROR.

A waterfront missionary in New Bedford, when that old town was the whaling capital of the world, was trying to make a Biblical start with a Kanaka boatsteerer by telling him the story of Jonah and the whale.

"That man Jones," interrupted the listener, "why didn't they throw him overboard again?" "For what?" asked the missionary.

"For letting the whale get away."—Every-body's.

A WISE SYRIAN

An individual who had once been a painter left off painting and became a doctor of medicine. When it was said to him, "Why hast thou done this?" he replied, "The errors made in painting all eyes see and scrutinize; but the mistakes of the healing art the ground covereth."—"Book of Laughable Stories," from the Syrian.

A PRACTICAL JOKE

Curran's ruling passion was his joke. In his last illness the physician observing in the morning that he seemed to cough with more difficulty, he answered, "That is rather surprising: as I have been practising all night."

PAINTED CHARMS

Of a celebrated actress who, in her declining days bought charms of carmine and pearl-powder, Jerrold said: "Egad! she should have a hoop about her, with a notice upon it, 'Beware of the Paint!'"

PRECISELY STATED.

Teacher—"Tommy, what is the feminine corresponding to the masculine 'stag?'"

Tommy (whose mother is a society leader)—"Afternoon tea, ma'am."—Milwaukee Evening Wisconsin.

She (to partner claiming first dance)—"You are an early bird, Mr. Glossiness."

He (gallantly)—"Yes, and, by Jove! I've caught the worm. What?"—M. A. P.