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A Canadian in Britain

Some Scotch and English Characteristics.

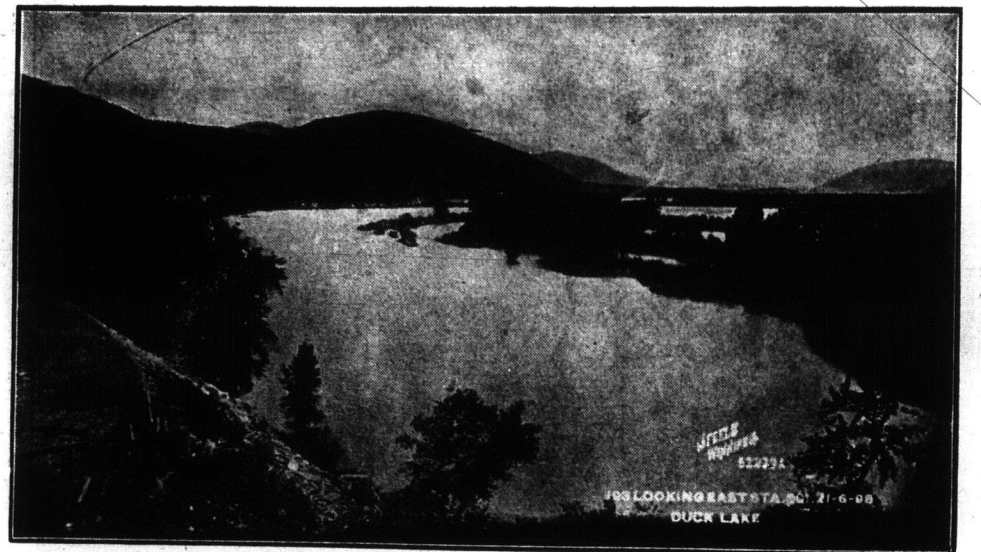
Written for The W.H.M. by R. O. Armstrong.

WHY is it that Canadians are so desirous of visiting Britain?

Year by year they cross the Atlantic in increasing numbers. It is not to see better natural scenery. Canada can hold her place in that respect with all comers. She has nothing even in her charming Lake Country to match Lake Louise in the Rockies. We do not go across the Atlantic to seek fortunes, or to look for greater opportunities for life investment. Canada offers these in abundance. There are other things that lure us.

Britain is the home of our forefathers, the cradle of our civilization, the mint in which our national ideals were cast, the home of the great world colonizers; it is the land where our language, our great literature, and our science of government grew; it is the country that gave us so many great men—for Britain is generous—Shakespeare, Cromwell, Milton, Pitt, Wolfe, Knox, Bunyan, Wesley, Darwin, Browning, Gladstone, Booth, and a galaxy of others. "My native country," said Washington Irving, "was full of youth-

It took Scotland, we must recall, to make Britain "great." The people north of the Solway and the Tweed are proud of that and would like to have it better understood. "Why is it your people so often call us English?" I was asked. There is no particular reason for that unless it is because we are in too much of a hurry or too careless to make the distinction. It is true that we do often say, "the English," when we must know that "the Scotch" were included. Let me remind my readers that the Scotchman does not like to be called an Englishman. (Neither does an Irishman!) The average Scotchman is keenly sensitive about his race. Travellers and tourists you know are generally experts in diplomacy, so it was quite common to hear our visitors at receptions tell about their Scotch ancestry and how much Scotland had done for the world. That pleases the native immensely, as much as a wave of prosperity would the average Canadian. "Yes, yes," he will say with a deep smile of satisfaction, "the Scotch have done well, and John Knox was a great man."



ful promise; Europe was rich in the accumulated treasures of age. I longed to wander over the scenes of renowned achievement, to escape, in short, from the commonplace realities of the present and lose myself in the shadowy grandeur of the past."

This, we believe, is the reason why we visit Britain. The present needs the past, the new the old; Canada needs the shadowy influences which can come only by contact with an older and yet a kindred civilization. For generations the "Motherland" has been sending her surplus and more ambitious people westward. Abroad these sons and daughters have learned to appreciate what Britain has done for them in a way they never could at home. For generations to come the West will send its representatives back to look again upon the way-marks and mementoes which trace the early progress of our civilization. And as Canada needs Britain, so Britain needs Canada. They stimulate each other. Imperialism is intensely retro-active. The writer referred to above, Irving, compares Europe and America to "volumes." The figure is appropriate and suggestive. So far as Britain is concerned her history makes a most fascinating story and there is no promise at present of the appearance of the last volume of the series!

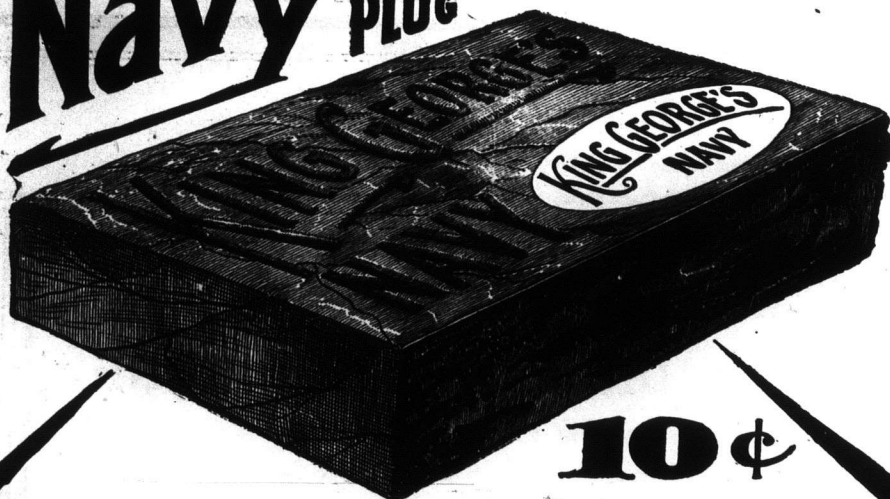
Our tour started in Scotland ("Hands Across the Seas" party). For several days we met the native Scot in his own home and on his own heather. The Lowland part—we were as far north as Stirling—impressed us as being a fertile, well kept country, and the people virile and industrious. The outlook for the future seems promising notwithstanding the heavy drain on their resources through emigration. That, however, tells more heavily upon the north than upon the south. "Scotland forever" seems quite in harmony with the trend of things.

Education and religion are as necessary to a well equipped Scotchman as his oatmeal. Woe unto the man or institution which interferes with the freedom of the people in that respect. Jeanie Geddes was one of the people, and they still point out the spot in St. Giles from which she threw the foot stool at the head of an offending priest. The type remains fixed and well tempered. The Scotch are home lovers. They used to be anyway, if we are to take "The Cottar's Saturday Night," as a type. This, too, has a later verification. In Dunfermline we visited the birthplace of Andrew Carnegie. The old cottage is now public property and free to visitors. There is a register in which to sign your name. Carnegie himself was there on September 27th, 1909, and wrote, "First visit to my birthplace, the humble home of honest poverty—best heritage of all when one has a heroine for a mother." Yea, "from scenes like these old Scotia's grandeur springs!"

Leaving "Bonnie Scotland" we crossed the boundary and halted for a time at Carlisle, from which we visited the delightful "Lake Country." In Scotland we were mostly Scotch, of course; but in England we discovered that a large percentage of our forefathers had come from there. Personally I have a very accommodating ancestry. My ancestors lived in the "Borderlands," to be frank, were, I suppose, famous moostroopers. I am therefore equally at home on either side of the border. Then, I have understood, they passed into Ireland. There I could be an Irishman. Thence to the United States, where I could with a show of truth claim to be a descendant of the Yankees. Thence to British North America as loyalists, making it possible for me to pose as a patriot of the first rank like some of our politicians!

England presents some marked contrasts to her northern neighbor. This is not due, I am sure, to the traveller's

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