

## THE DECLINE OF BALLAD-SINGING

consolations, and had but little hope of communicating them to his hearers. None came by land except certain families who lived a few miles to the right and left of Squire Patterson's. Those who came from the south side of the harbour and from the river had to come in boats and canoes containing from one to seven or eight persons. The congregation, however, was not large; for numbers could not get ready their craft, the notice was so short. I observed that the conduct of some of them, coming from the shore to the barn, was as if they had never heard of a Sabbath. I heard loud talking and laughing, and singing and whistling even before they reached the shore. They behaved, however, with decency so long as I continued to speak, and some of them were evidently much affected. I endeavoured to explain to them in the forenoon in English, "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," and in the afternoon, in Gaelic, "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which is lost." The first words which I heard, after pronouncing the blessing, were from a gentleman of the army calling to his companions, "Come, come, let us go to the grog shop"; but instead of going with him, they came toward me to bid me welcome to the settlement, and he came himself at last.

From a regenerate point of view this is a gloomy picture, relieved only at the close by a glimpse of that hospitality which is the instinct of every Scotchman whether he be citizen or outlaw. But as for me I have a wholly unregenerate longing to know what songs these impious Scots were chanting to the swing of the paddle and the oar as they came down the river on that violated Sabbath morning a hundred and thirty years ago. The Scriptural lore which they were to receive is without variableness or shadow of turning, but the "loud talking and laughing and whistling and singing" were soon to give place to a godly