

But I must not be led into speaking of the Scottish people before I have paid my tribute to the land that gave them birth. This—the Land o' cakes—is really the subject of the toast to which I have been asked to respond. Well, gentlemen, I am sure you will agree with me in the view that there is no finer land under the sun—though, as I have said already, the sun often neglects to shine on it. Scotland is simply one of the best made countries in the universe, and it must have taken a lot of planning! It is in fact a sort of epitome of the world's geography. Where will you find in such small compass grander mountain ranges, deeper glens, more fertile straths, more lovely rivers and rippling burns, more romantic lochs, or such a charming combination of smiling cornfields and unfruitful, but by no means unattractive, moorland? What of the islands of the west, set like jewels in a diadem of summer seas? When my mind takes me back to the perfection of loveliness I have seen from the top of some Scottish hill, I begin to regret that distance makes it increasingly difficult to emulate the example of good old Professor Blackie, who solemnly registered a vow, in the earlier days of his long life, that he would never allow a year to pass without making the acquaintance of some new part of the land he loved so well.

We canna break the bonds that God decrees to bind
 But aye we'll be the children of the heather and the wind:
 Far away from home, oh, it's still for you and me
 That the broom is blowing bonnie in the North Countrie.

And surely the Scottish national character has taken its colour and tone from the land in which our Scottish fathers were born and bred. There are those who think that praise is harmful and unlucky, and that after eulogy certain formulas should be employed to avert the evil eye. But what is sometimes complained of as excessive self-laudation on the part of the Scotch is really forced upon us by the failure of others to appreciate our real merits! I think it was from Capetown to Edinburgh that on the occasion of such a festival as this there was once flashed along the wires "Here's tae ye: wha's like hiz: damned few". The hostile critic says that Scotch-