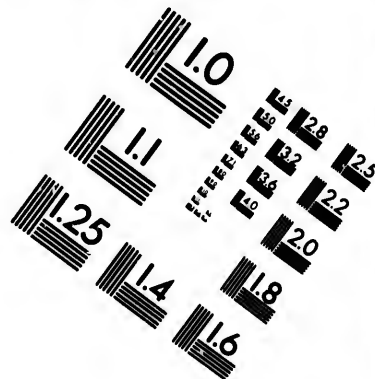
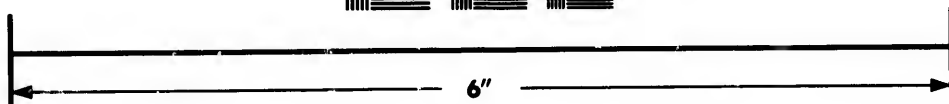




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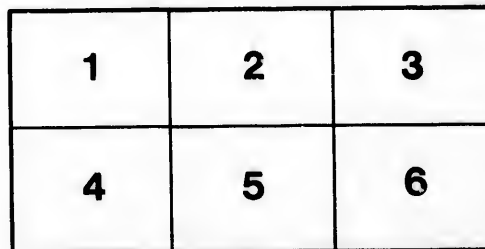
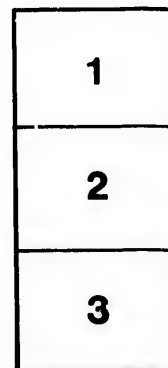
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A SERMON

PREACHED IN

ST. JOHN'S CHURCH, CORNWALL

ON THE

26TH NOVEMBER, 1893,

BEFORE THE

SONS OF SCOTLAND,

BY THE

REV. NEIL MACNISH, B. D., LL. D.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

CORNWALL :
THE STANDARD PRINTING HOUSE.
1894.

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PSALM 137: 5:—"If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning."

Deeply imbedded in the hearts and spirits of mankind is patriotism, or the love of country. To patriotism, much of all that is great and good and brave in all the ages of human life is to be ascribed. God has so made us, that at an early period of our knowledge and of our observation, we imperceptibly gather a fondness, if not an affection, for the scenes that are around us. Whether the country of one's birth be mountainous or otherwise; whether placid lakes or rapid rivers are abundant in it or no; the heart comes to have a loving fondness for it, which can never pass altogether away. Anyone can understand, that to early impressions and associations, a vividness and a beautiful satisfaction pertain of which later years are ignorant. There is an immeasurable amount of beauty and of thrilling significance in the homely expression: "Our Native Land—the land of our youth." Those natures are not the noblest, and those spirits are not the purest and most renowned, in which affection strong, deep, enduring, for the home and early associations of childhood is unknown. That country must be bleak and barren indeed, which has no power over the young spirit that is daily opening and expanding into new susceptibilities. The love of country is, therefore, of very wide extension. Even the inhabitants of the remotest corner of the earth, to which the refining breath of civilization has not yet come in all its healthfulness and power, indicate in a manner which no one can mistake, how intense and almost innate their affection for their wild and uncultivated region is.

"Such is the patriot's boast where'er we roam;
His first, best country ever is at home."

The patriotism that runs through the Psalm with which we are now concerned, is too prominent to escape the notice of any one. The Psalm is one of melting tenderness, of the sincerest patriotism and the

noblest deference to all that is good and sacred. There are in the Psalm a naturalness, a pathos, and a simplicity, which must carry it over all opinion and over all prejudice. That a conception or a sentiment may have general value, it is not necessary that its birthplace be in any particular land. Human nature is largely uniform: its susceptibilities are marvellously identical. To ensure a long existence for a poetical idea or a pathetic thought, the requisites are, that the metal be genuine and that the coinage be accurate. Hence it is that the plaintive wail of the captives by Babel's murmuring streams claims a wide-spread significance. As we examine our Psalm somewhat carefully, it will occur to us, that its tender and mournful strains were written after the days of Judah's captivity had rolled away, and when the people of Judah and Jerusalem were once more in the land and in the homes of their fathers. "What a wonderful picture," writes a certain commentator, "is the Psalm, of lofty melancholy and fiery patriotism. The hand which wrote it must have known how to smite sharply with the sword as well as how to tune the harp. The words are burning words of a heart breathing unquenchable love to his country."

"By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion.

"We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof

"For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion.

"How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?"

We remark that that language was an outburst of earnestness. It is clear, that those exiles were in a very favourable situation for solemn reflection. The ceaseless murmur of the slowly rolling river, the pliant movement of the willows in the breeze, the flowers ornamenting the margin of the stream, may well have occasioned deep solemnity of feeling. The captive might admire the majestic flow of the rivers of Babylon, fertilizing, as they did, its plains, and irrigating its meadows. His eyes might alight on the snow-clad mountains, forming a rampart against the assaults of every invader, and within whose encircling folds the lordly Babylonians slept securely. The fields waving with golden corn might draw from him words of admiration. Still he was in the land of strangers. Those were not the prattling murmurs of his native streams that fell upon his ear. The mountains that towered in the distance were not the mountains that stand always round about Jerusalem; nor was it on the slopes and undulations of the land of Judah that he witnessed the waving of the golden grain. Were he to turn his attention to the firmament above him, he might contemplate the singular beauty of that sky, and the transparent brilliancy of that atmosphere, under which the Chaldean Astrologers gained so permanent a fame. Wherever the exiles turned their eyes, above, below and around them, they were painfully reminded that they were in the land of strangers. In such a mood, when they were asked to sing one of the songs of Zion, what fitter words could be found than these to shadow forth their mournful solemnity of heart and spirit: "How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" How can our lyres sound with mirth, when Zion's gates are desolate and the cry of Jerusalem has gone up? We cannot sing the song wherewith our fathers praised God save in our fathers' land, and near the sacred habitation of our fathers' God. Babylon is fair and her glory great, and majestic the flowing of her

mighty rivers, but sweeter to us is the gurgling of the smallest brook of Judah, and dearer the very dust of Zion. "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning." Our imagination can lead us to understand, that in the day of their calamity by the waters of Babylon, the Hebrew exiles in the intense glow of their patriotism supposed, or allowed themselves to suppose, that Jerusalem was a constant witness of themselves and of their conduct, and that her accents of praise and courage were distinctly heard by them. True for all time it is "that the patriotic poetry of all nations is the very flower of literature; and that it, more than any other strain of bard or minstrel, has roused the cheerless, spurred the flagging and sent out the brave to conquer or to die." That through the kind arrangement of God Himself, patriotism is instinctive in the human heart can easily be shown, if we send our thoughts back to the nations who were the bravest and the most chivalrous in the years that have gone. To Greece, while time endures, a position of eminence will continue to be assigned and with any amount of justice. Sparta has always been renowned for the sternness and unflinching faithfulness of her sons and soldiers. Bravely did her three hundred soldiers obey her rigorous laws at Thermopylæ; for they allowed themselves to be cut down to a man, rather than retreat before the overwhelming forces of the foe, and thereby bring disgrace on the annals and the laws of Sparta. True to the light which she had, and sharing to a wonderful extent the views which the Spartans cherished regarding the demands of patriotism, the Spartan mother in handing to her son the shield of his father, that he might go with it to the war—a shield which was never tarnished with cowardice or dishonour—said to him, "Come back either on the shield or with it." In other words, "surrender your life rather than lose the shield of your father or allow it to be taken from you." Tunefully has Macaulay given expression to the patriotic fervour of the early Romans—

"To every man upon this earth
Death cometh soon or late;
And how can man die better,
Than facing fearful odds
For the ashes of his fathers,
And the temples of his Gods."

A vigorous and heroic race deferred to the patriotic admonition :—

"Follow thou thy father's fame,
And never forget thy country's claim."

Those were the patriotic convictions and emotions, which thrilled the hearts of nations that had not the knowledge of God as we have it; and that manifested with unmistakable earnestness and valour, that patriotism has its home in the human heart, and that it can lead, as it has oftentimes led, to wonderful deeds of daring and to feats of extraordinary endurance. It would be easy to elaborate the blessings which patriotism always brings with it, and to demonstrate how the goodness and the kindness of the All-wise Creator can be discerned over the varied ages and fortunes of the world, through the unselfish, the unconquerable, the pure and noble spirit of patriotism. In the Oration which has for more than two thousand years been regarded as the model of patriotic eloquence, Demosthenes summoned up the heroic deeds of the past that he might animate the Athenians of his own time :—"I vow by your forefathers—those that met the peril at Marathon; those that took the field at Plataea; those in the sea fight at Salamis, and those

at Artr isium, and many other brave men who repose in the public monuments—all of whom alike as being worthy of the same honour, the country buried (not only the successful and victorious.) Justly, for the duty of brave men has been done by all ; their fortune has been such as God assigned to each." To no people on the face of the earth can the sentiment be applied with greater truthfulness and appropriateness than to Scotchmen, that it is pleasant and ennobling to dwell on the past of one's country, to live in fancy among the stirring deeds and brave exploits which have made its name honoured and illustrious among the nations of the earth. The Scotchmen of earlier and severer generations than ours, trod a thorny path, often through blood and tears, endured toil and pain, suffered and were strong against the foes of their country's rights and liberties and gave to the Scotchmen of our time the inheritance which we have. Nature was very sparing in her gifts to Scotland. She gave to Scotchmen a poor, sterile soil as a rule, and compelled them by constant and painful toil to extract from her rugged bosom even a humble subsistence. Her children if they were to have comfort and independence in even a moderate measure, must of necessity be sturdy and frugal and hard-working. For centuries, Scotland was harassed with the inroads of Scandinavian hordes in the North and West, and with the obstinate attacks of Saxons and English on the South and East. The industry, the energy, the shrewdness, the caution, the reliability, the noble daring and unbending sense of honour that Scotchmen have carried with them to the ends of the earth, are the direct result of the struggle for existence which the ruggedness of their native soil and the persistent attacks of their Northern and Southern foes imposed upon them as a necessity, which they could not avoid or ignore, if they were to have the veriest semblance of social freedom and political independence. Such is the priceless heritage, dearly bought with her best blood and brain, that Scotland has handed down to her sons of more modern times, and that has equipped them with the energy and the ability which they have displayed through the kindness of God in the service of their nation in various parts of the world. Owing to the knowledge and appliances which began some two hundred years ago to bring the remotest corners of the world into contact with one another ; Great Britain has come, through the ardour and efficiency and wisdom of its people, to occupy the foremost place among the nations, in colonizing the waste places of the earth and in conveying the blessings of active and enlightened and elevating civilization to nations and countries far and near. The fundamental principles of British rule everywhere are freedom, honour, justice and the upholding and defending of the rights and liberties which belong to every man as his birthright through the goodness of God Himself. Wherever it chances that British sway is to extend itself, and that wise and benevolent and painstaking men are needed to look after British interests and the happiness and safety of savage tribes and peoples ; there never are wanting those who are equal to the situation, and who by lives of brave self-denial and by the exercise of the broadest humanity, do incalculable good to the British Empire and to the native races of India and Africa. In the galaxy of those who have served, with great endurance and faithful devotion and blameless success, the Empire to which we belong, a very honorable place belongs to the sons of Scotland. India and Egypt as well as America can raise the loud voice of praise in regard to Scotchmen, who spent years of laborious diligence and rigid integrity

in benefitting the inhabitants of those countries, and in showing them the way, and in helping them and encouraging them to walk along the way, which leads from barbarism to civilization, from a life of wretchedness and discomfort to a life of happiness and pleasure, from the rudest knowledge to the knowledge of God "who hath made of one blood all the nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth." Scotchmen in all quarters of the world are invited at this time of each recurring year with its St. Andrew's day, to turn a kindly and a thankful thought to the land where their forefathers lived and died and are buried. Though very little information that is trustworthy has come down to us respecting the labours of the Apostle Andrew, and the particular part of the world wherein he toiled, an immense importance has been, and is, associated with his name, because for many centuries he has been regarded as the patron saint of Scotland. A certain legend concerning him is to the effect, that in the reign of Constantius, son of the Great Constantine, the holy Abbot Regulus, or Rule, by divine command, set sail from Patrae in Achaia where St. Andrew suffered martyrdom, bearing with him a portion of the relics of that Apostle. After a toilsome voyage through the Mediterranean and along the coasts of the ocean, Regulus and his companions arrived off the Scottish shore and were shipwrecked near the place where the city of St. Andrews now stands. They safely reached the land, carrying the relics with them. So many miracles were wrought, that the people gathered about them from all quarters. Hurgust, the king of the Picts, in whose dominions they were, built a palace for himself at the place and gave certain lands in free and perpetual alms to St. Rule and his brethren. Another legend of a somewhat different kind is to the effect, that in the beginning of the ninth century, Hungus, king of the Picts, returning from a successful inroad into Northumbria, was surrounded by the army of the English king, Athelstane, near Haddington, at the place since called Athelstaneford. The Pictish king vowed that he would dedicate the tenth part of his kingdom to St. Andrew, if he escaped the peril. In the same night, the Apostle appeared to Hungus and promised him victory. During the conflict on the morrow St. Andrew's cross appeared in the air. The Picts were victorious and Athelstane was slain. Henceforth the cross of St. Andrew was assumed as their badge by the Picts and after them by the Scots. A certain historian has wisely remarked, that whatever was the real cause of the veneration in which St. Andrew was held among the Scots, it is certain that the national belief on the point is of great antiquity, and is frequently appealed to under important circumstances. Such is the legendary account that has been preserved respecting the origin of the veneration which Scotchmen have for centuries entertained for Andrew the brother of Simon Peter. The cross on which Andrew suffered death was in the form of the capital letter X.

While we are extolling the Scottish race and character, we cheerfully acknowledge that other nations have the same right that we have, for extolling and reproducing in their own lives whatever was best and noblest and most patriotic in the history of their ancestors. Love for the country where his forefathers ran their earthly race and where he himself it may be was born; love for the noble deeds and honourable traditions of his nation; an earnest desire to emulate whatever is worthiest of imitation and perpetuation in the annals of his

people : such affections and such feelings are the common property of every nation under the sun.

"Our fathers' sepulchres are here,
And here our kindred dwell ;
Our children too, How should we love
Another land so well."

Examples there are at times of persons who would fain disclaim every connection with the land of their fathers—persons who seem to be sorrowfully affected that they are members of a certain nationality; forgetful that no one can shake off the idiosyncracies of his race, and that the manful and patriotic course for any one to pursue is, to strive with might and main to be honourable and useful in the sphere which God has assigned to him; for thereby he will reflect honour on his race, and all whose good opinion is of any moment will cheerfully commend himself and his nation, owing to his excellence of head and heart. Their country's voice may be heard condemning any of her sons who are anxious to abjure her altogether. Of such sons, the language must be true, which an honest and sensible mother may have cause to employ regarding children who give days and nights to the frivolous whirl of fashion, and are severe on their mother's grand simplicity :

"She, honest woman, may think shame,
That you're connected with her."

"If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning." A devout imagination can enable Scotchmen, wherever their homes may be, to believe that their native country is urging them at all times to cultivate all that is best and patriotic in her annals ; to trust in God and do the right ; to practise with inflexible severity truthfulness, honesty and reliability ; and to reverence Christian light and freedom and kindness in their every intercourse with their fellow-men. To immigrants from other lands, where the reverence which the Hebrew captives shewed for songs of Zion is cherished, where the worship of God has the hoar of years and of honour on its side—the very pleasant fact is to a large extent to be ascribed, that the Christian religion is finding so wide and favourable and honourable a footing among the youthful nations of earth. Too much praise cannot be bestowed on those who, coming to our own country when the primeval forest reared its lofty head on on every side, when such arduous labour as we are not in a position to appreciate properly had to be bravely undertaken and performed before the semblance of a comfortable home could be secured—remembered the services of God's house and were zealous in their efforts, to reproduce in the land of their adoption the religious observances and devotion of the country where their earliest years were passed. And if our imagination leads us back amid much sorrowfulness to that painful time in the fortunes of Judah, when her inhabitants were, without their consent, and doubtless much to their sorrow, hurried away from the homes of themselves and of their kindred and from the graves of their fathers ; we can with all safety imagine that those many faithful and diligent men and women who were induced to forsake Scotland—their own land ; not, it is true, because a haughty conqueror's mandate had to be obeyed, but because hopes of a better livelihood and a more suitable sphere of usefulness inspired them, those who have done so very much in our country, as well as in other portions of the world, to lay the foundation of a prosperous nationality, and to sow the seeds of

moral and religious life and strength—we can imagine that it cost such persons many a pang to take the last look of their native hills and plains and streams, and to bid farewell forever to parents, to relatives and friends—to turn away from a land dear to them through ten thousand tender associations and to seek a resting-place and hew out for themselves a home in the wilderness of the primeval forests of Canada, where in the course of years and as the sure result of perseverance and pain and stubborn hopefulness, they have come to comparative independence, to comfort and security, reaping the fruits of their early and constant attachment to the worship of the God of their fathers ; having the satisfaction of knowing that around them Churches where the worship of God is conducted, are rearing their heads, and delighting to contemplate how in the course of years and through the blessing of Him, without whom nothing is strong and without whom there can be no real prosperity, what was an unbroken forest has been converted into smiling fields, where human industry is ever busy, and where a population is to be found to whom the praises of God give solemn pleasure and who even at this distance of time can enter sympathetically into the feelings of those devout Hebrew captives by the gurgling waters of Babylon.

The extent to which Christian benevolence has affected the life of our modern times goes very far to prove that Christainity is of heavenly origin, and that, of its very essence, it aims at benefitting mankind, as well when regard is had to their temporal well-being, as when their spiritual welfare is under consideration. It teaches us that we are to live honest and industrious lives, and that we are to depend on our own earnings, not only for our own subsistence, but for the support of those who are dependent upon us by the ties of closest relationship. Such is the common principle that guides, or that ought to guide, the lives of all of us. Indeed, whenever we cast an attentive eye around us, is there not evidence enough that they are the few, and the very few, who can afford to be idle for even a few months without bringing inconvenience to themselves and to those who depend upon them for their subsistence. So true it is that the overwhelming majority of mankind have to work for their daily bread ; and that from their continuous application to their several trades and labours and callings the prayer may be heard : "Our Father which art in heaven, give us this day our daily bread." The humblest labourer, as well as the workman of larger intelligence, are both well aware, and cannot be otherwise than well aware, that health is insecure, and that the having always of congenial and remunerative employment is uncertain. From the mind of no one, who has to depend on his own labour for his subsistence, can the apprehension be always absent, that a time may come when owing to ill-health or to some other unavoidable cause, he will be unable to honour the independence that is so dear to him : it will not be possible for him to earn a sufficient sum to meet even the moderate demands which his own support and the maintenance of the members of his family make upon him. Anxiety and uneasiness which they do not communicate to others, must be felt by thousands even in their days of strength and largest earnings, as often as they pause to contemplate times of possible ill-health and inability to toil ; as often as they consider the solemn time of death and the woeful change which death is powerful to work in the circumstances of wives and children. The world can have no accurate knowledge of the frequency wherewith multitudes on whom less prosper-

ous days have fallen, practise stern self-denial and content themselves with the simplest fare and the plainest attire, in order that they may still honour their feelings of independence ; that they may be able to refrain from making any appeal to the charity of their fellow-men and from taking others into their confidence, and that they may have the comfort of knowing, that though their circumstances may be narrow enough, they are still deferring to their wish to live on their own earnings and not to be a burden on the charity or benevolence of their fellow-men. To make provision for the infirmities of old age and for the comfort and support of his wife and children, when he may no longer be present with them, is a sacred duty which every man who has a family is to respect, and which he cannot ignore, without doing violence to the holy bond that links him and them together. Among the other ingenious and praise-worthy schemes which have been devised in modern times for bettering the condition and for increasing the comfort and happiness of all classes of labourers, are to be reckoned those insurance and benevolent companies and societies, that have in view to induce every man to make a small contribution out of his wages, that thereby he may make provision for days of ill-health and for widows and orphans, should it happen that the bread-winners pass over to the great majority in the silent land and leave widows and orphans behind them. These benevolent societies are of unspeakable value through the blessing of God, in relieving the wants and anxieties of their members in days of sickness; and in mitigating the sorrow and loneliness of homes into which the angel of death has entered and removed the head of the family, who cheerfully toiled over many years it may be, from early morn to dewy eve, for those who were dearest to him, and around whom the purest love, and the greatest tenderness of his nature, always clustered. Scotchmen have presented to the world, as perhaps no other people has ever done, the lesson of plain living and high thinking ; for among the sons of Scotland whose names can never die, are to be reckoned many who had to thank God and their own ability and determination, for all that they were able to do and to become, in spite of the narrow circumstances which surrounded their earliest years. To the poorest as well as the richest, his wife and children are equally dear, and for the same grand cause. As a Scotchman whose birthplace is in the Highland heather, it gives me peculiar pleasure to welcome the sons of Scotland who have chosen to worship God with us on the morning of this day. I can assure them, that the members of this congregation have not forgotten, and have no intention of forgetting the ecclesiastical relation which we had for many years with Scotland. It will give us great delight to find, that this benevolent association, the Sons of Scotland, bound together as they are by a common affection for "the land of brown heath and shaggy wood," and resolved in the strength of God to emulate all that is kindest and most humane and benevolent in the Scottish character—will go on to add rapidly to its membership, to gain material strength and prosperity and to assist with liberal and friendly hand Sons of Scotland in this land, when days of ill-health are upon them, and to care kindly and thoughtfully for the widow and the orphan, in the spirit of Jesus Christ Himself, the Divine founder of Christianity. That the Sons of Scotland will be able to accomplish all those benevolent purposes, I, who have a somewhat extensive acquaintance with Scotchmen in their native land and with their descendants in this land, can have no manner of doubt whatever, Amen.

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