

## OLD GIPSY FAMILIES.

NAMES OF NOTE IN THE HISTORY OF OLD SCOTLAND.

Found Camping on the Ground Made Famous by Great Writers—What Camp Life Is Like—Walks and Talks in Quaint Old Corners and With Old People.

LOCKERBIE, Scotland, Sept. 1.—Tramping over the hills which separate the Land of Burns in Ayrshire from the Land of Burns in Dumfriesshire, on a vague and indolent sort of pilgrimage to the birthplace of Carlyle in Annandale, I came upon a little band of Scottish Gypsies among whom were some old and prized acquaintances. I found them in the nest-like hollow of a winsome brae beside the winding Annan river. They were between Jardine Hall and the ancient clachan, Applegarth, where Edward I., on his way to the siege of Caerlaverock, made oblations at the altars of St. Nicholas and Thomas a Becket, in the once noted but now extinct Applegarth church; and I could just see, as I was tramping southward along the great turnpike road from Carlisle to Glasgow, the hoods of their tents and their "whummeled" or upturned carts in ragged outline against the blue sheen of the gentle river below.

My impulse was to press on to Lochmaben or Lockerbie for the night; but there is I, Lear, that taint of Gypsy blood within me that ever draws me irresistibly to this outcast, vagabond race. I resolutely turned my face to the south. After a little I halted. A tiny copped hillcock had hid the brown tents. Where I stopped the road wound with the river bank. I looked back around the brae. I saw now the camp-fires; the pots hanging from the kettle-sticks; the bairns romping among the donkeys and dogs; some men stretched lazily upon the sward; and swarthy women crooning over their daily gossip together. This banished my resolution. All my own vagabond sentiment for the life of the tent and the road swept in upon my heart like a tide of homecoming cheer. In a moment more I was being hugged, actually hugged! by a score of gypsies, men and women; receiving royal greetings of welcome; and soothing as best I could shrill reproaches for having had the thought to pass them by. And I set this down in simple recital, for it led to my being conducted by a Scottish Gypsy, prince to the ancient home of a Scottish patriot king whose ancestral habitation was here in the very heart of beauteous Annandale.

Between Eskdale on the east and Nithdale on the west lies this sweet and pastoral Annandale. Though not among the most noted, yet it is still one of the most lovely valleys of the Scottish Border. To the leisurely and sentimental pilgrim tarrying among its pleasing scenes, it appeals with goodly fascination. It is but a tiny vale 30 miles long; the river Annan, from which it takes its name, having its source in the Hartfell mountains, and winding with gentle flow through and between characteristic Scottish villages, its banks dotted with humble crofts, larger farmsteads, and all the lang syne features of Scottish country homes. Though the valley is accorded no special fame among the Scottish people themselves, and is scarcely ever visited by tourists, to me it seems that in a few particulars it possesses extraordinary interest.

Within the distance of one day's tramp across five parishes through which winds the gentle Annan, can be seen one of the most ancient and certainly one of the most historic, castle ruins of Scotland, the first home in Scotland of Robert the Bruce, at Lochmaben; the birthplace at Annan of the greatest and most unfortunate of all Scottish preachers, Edward Irving; the wonderful phenomena of the tides of the Solway Firth, which are perhaps better observed from the great Annan viaduct connecting England with Scotland than at any other spot along the Solway shores; and the birthplace and burial place of the one philosopher, critic and essayist who has undoubtedly left a deeper impression upon intellectual minds in great Britain and America than any other individual who ever adorned and perplexed this country—crabbed, crafty, mighty and glorious old Thomas Carlyle.

It was in the middle of the afternoon when I found my Gypsy friends. Many of the band were absent. Those who remained were chiefly old men left to mind the camp and potter at all manner of tinkering upon broken donkey carts, donkey gear that required mending, and pans, pots and kettles which were renewed in true tinsmith style for peasant housewives round about; many young chavvies (Gypsy children) at all sorts of rustic games, fairly dressed and roisteringly happy; and the gaunt old spawnees, too far advanced in years for the labors and artifices of the road, who still always serve to hold the reins of good government in any Gypsy camp well in hand, while bravely preparing the evening meals against the younger wanderers' return.

During the interval I had leisure for examination of the picturesque camp and time for learning much of the ways and annual journeyings of this single community of Scottish Gypsies. There were twelve tents and half a dozen "whummeled" carts. The whummeled of a Scottish or northern English Gypsy cart means the turning of the same upside down. This, with the addition of a blanket or some fir branches, makes a capital roof under which to pass a summer night. Altogether there was accommodation for from two to three score Gypsies. The hollowed burr chosen for the camp always had its patch of sunlight, which Gypsies dearly love. Larch, fir, and a few fine ash trees were at either side; and the purling river, convenient for campside needs for men and beasts, from which a

luscious fish could occasionally be legally taken, as their camping place was duly rented from the laird of the manor, was almost at their feet.

Here were representatives of all the Scottish Gypsy families of note—the Dunbars, Faas or Galls, Baileys, Boswells and Blythes; most of them descendants and Clydesdale and Yetholm Gypsies whose progenitors figured, if not in the history, in the ballad and romantic literature of Scotland. They were originally potters, packers and tinkers. Their olden capital city was the now deserted village of Yetholm, by Bowmont-side where the Teviot Hills shut out from Scotland's view the wild Northumberland moors and the hated field of Flodden. In olden times they made much of the rude deltt ware used by the Scottish peasantry. They still journey into Staffordshire, England, over the old Liverpool, Carlisle and Glasgow coach road, dealing in the cheaper and "faultry" porcelains, and occasionally trading with the gentry in "Mintons" and "Wedgewoods." Now they have their winter homes in Dumfries, Annan, Lockerbie and Glasgow; and before the snowdrops fade from the roadsides and braes, and back here in their old haunts. The men trade and dicker at the horse and cattle fairs, some pursuing their olden calling at tinkering and osier work; while the women sell willow ware and trinkets and dukler (tell fortunes) among the guidwives and lasses of the Scottish peasantry.

Wanderer that I am, it was like a delicious home-coming to see the genuine Gypsy belongings that were here. There, were the rude forges that could be slung under the creaking carts. There, innumerable odds and ends of the real tinker's craft. There, the camp-fires, which, low as they may smolder, are never allowed to wholly go out, because they represent a lingering loyal trace of olden Aryan fire-worship. There, crouching by cart, or tent, or fire, or on haunches at the camp entrance, as if sentinelling the glad eventide return of absent masters, were the brave, loyal, gaunt and voiceless Gypsy dogs. Here and there were the kettle-sticks—not the stage tripods which burlesque Gypsy reality, but the strong, sacredly-prized, crooked iron kettle-sticks—with their sizzling pots beneath. While here and there, but always facing each other and the fires between, were the real tents of the Romany, hoods rather than tents; woolen blankets, like our grandmother's stout old sheets, stretched over bows of ash and fastened with polished oaken skewers; all so snug and strong that no ordinary storm can wreck these tiny Gypsy homes.

By and by as the shadows lengthened the camp gradually began to awaken with returning life. The fires which had smoldered the day through, were renewed by the now bustling old Gypsy women, and the pots and kettles sung merrily of good things to come. Gypsy men and women began coming into camp from all directions, and nearly all came single or in groups to the tent I had been allotted to emphasize the welcome I had been given as the "Gorgio Chal" (the non-Gypsy friend of the Gypsy) who was already known for his wanderings with their "brothers and sisters" in the far-off wonderland, America. Nearly all brought trophies of the day's outing. Women who had been among the outlying farms were laden with poultry, butter, eggs and cheese, knots of homespun yarn, and many an article representing hours of toil, which had been exchanged for a bit of gibberish and a "fortune."

While the camp was thus renewing its eventide life and activity, a little commotion near the roadside attracted my attention. Gypsy men and women seemed disputing excitedly. On going to the group I found a rough-looking fellow being pulled towards the camp by some, while others were attempting to force him back to the highway. Earnest were the protestations for hospitable treatment, and shrill were the denunciations and protests. The man's face was familiar to me; but a shaggy beard and an unusually wee-begone and hang-dog appearance for the moment prevented a recognition. He looked at me appealingly, and at the same moment one of the Gypsy women screamed at him: "Ye're na prince o' the Nokkums (provincial Yetholm Romany for Gypsies). Ye're gang t' the diel a' gither!" I knew him then. It was Prince Robert, by royal right king of all the Scottish Gypsies, but so hopeless a tramp and vagabond that he had become a permanent outcast of this outcast Romany race. The women were the most implacable; but I carried white coin and kind words among them, and soon had Prince Robert's admittance to the camp assured. Then I made him wash in the river; got some presentable Gypsy gear upon him; saw that he was shorn and shaven by my own hands; and brought him a penitent and comfortable, if not altogether welcome guest to our Annanside evening meal.

On the morning of the second day I left my Gypsy friends by Annanside with vagabond Prince Robert for a companion. Some discourse among the Romany crew touching upon Scottish Gypsy family lines and their antiquity prompted the remark from an old spaw wife that outcast Prince Robert's blood had the strain of the Bruce's in it, through his mother, Esther Faa Blythe Rutherford, late queen of all the Scottish Gypsies.

"Then ye might weel gae t' your forbear's, King Robert's, auld castle hame, at Lochmaben, an' tak aries (pledge) t' mend your ways; or ye'll na ha' strae-death (a natural death) at t' eend!" tauntingly replied another.

The whim seized Prince Robert to do it. I had never seen the old castle ruins, and it easily came about that we should go together; and we departed after many solemn adjurations from the Gypsies that I should refuse all pleadings of Prince Robert for liquor, or, in the event of yielding to his certain demands for drink I should see him "weel lickit in Lochmaben gaol," rather than to permit him to return to the Annanside camp.

Less than an hour's walk brought us to the ancient royal burgh town of Lochmaben, beautifully situated on the shores of one of the nine tiny connecting lakes of the same name. Prince Robert told me the name was Gaelic and meant lake of the fair women; and when I asked him how he came to know a Gaelic signification, he said with a shrug of his fine, rufianly shoulders, "Oh, I ken'd it fra' t' ceillidh; which means auld wives' gossiping. Bat 'the white clear lake' is nearer the true Gaelic. The silence of decay is upon ancient Lochmaben burgh. Two long, straggling, silent streets intersect each other at a huge plain, crumbling market cross. It is a

burgh of quaint old granite homes, with thatched roofs, inhabited by quaint old granite-faced Scotch folk. Great square houses, great square doors, and great square windows with great, square blackened faces in them, tell the story of olden splendence, older border prowess, and present indolence and decay. The place was once full of hand-loms and thrift. To-day so deserted and lifeless seems the burgh that your own foot-fall on its ragged and uneven stones impels you onward with an almost startled sense of fear.

About a mile from the ancient town, on a tongue-shaped peninsula which extends into the lake called the castle-loch, we found the ruins of the grandest fortress the Border ever knew. The lake upon the shores of which the ruins stand, as well as all others of the pretty group, have low, sedgy shores. In these are found the vendace fishes, from five to six inches in length nowhere else discoverable in Great Britain, of a brilliant silvery appearance, and in anatomy and flavor much resembling those famous American ciscoes, which in June attract such host of anglers to the shores of Lake Geneva, in Wisconsin. They are the most delicate fish known to the British gourmand. Their heads are extraordinarily marked, in a puce-colored transparent substance, with the perfectly defined figure of a heart, through which, when freshly caught, the brain can easily be seen. Prince Robert disclosed a curious bit of superstition folk-lore, concerning this heart-shaped figure in the head of the vendace. Every one remembers the pious pilgrimage of James Douglas with the heart of the dead king, in an effort to reach Jerusalem, that the precious relic might be buried in the Holy City; and after that the tragic death of Douglas and his friends, Sinclair and Logan, the silver casket containing the king's heart was recovered and given sepulture in Melrose Abbey. There is a lingering belief with the superstitious among the Annandale peasantry that the figure of the heart in the head of the vendace fish of Lochmaben is of miraculous origin, to perpetuate the pious act of King Robert the Bruce and the heroism of his loyal friends.

Along the haughs and moss-banks of the lochs the deadly adder lurks; and the peasantry will tell you that these dreadful reptiles are kept down by their implacable foes, the herons, which are certainly continually seen dodging in and out among, and hovering over, the surrounding reeds and mosses. Whether or not it was the original residence of the Bruces, granted by David I. in 1124, or an enlarged successor built in the thirteenth century, it covered sixteen acres of ground, and is known to have been absolutely impregnable before the invention of gunpowder. It was a stupendous and magnificent pile, and the care and perfection with which it was built attested in the immense walls still traceable and in the fact that though its masonry has been exposed to the elements for 600 years, one wall to-day as often break the stone itself as separate by strokes of sledge-hammer the stones and mortar with which the walls were constructed.

A mighty host of reflections and historic memories crowd upon the onlooker here. For not only has the fiercest of border battles raged around about the castle's once mighty walls, but it was on this very spot the compact between the two claimants for the Scottish crown, which led to Scotland's eventual greatness, was made. It was to this spot Bruce came in his flight for his life from Edward's court. And it was from here, after Red Comyn's perfidy was discovered that he sped to Dumfries to avenge that treachery with Comyn's life, before the very altar of ancient Grayfriars Church. Then came his coronation at Scone; his first defeats; almost the extinction of his family; his own wanderings and skulkings like a beast of the forest; his brilliant recovery of his patrimonial castle here; and then all the glorious victories from Glenesk past Bannockburn to Inverury, and Scotland's long-time splendor, power and peace.

It seems unfortunate that so noble a ruin could not have been given better care and preservation. One half of the structures of Lochmaben have been built from the material in the majestic stone pile. Cow-houses and byre-walls for half a dozen miles in every direction disclose the source from which their material was ravaged in protruding moulding, splendid ashlar work or grinning gargoyles. It is said that a citizen of the burgh warms his shins at the identical pair of jambs which once rested on the paternal threshold of Bruce, and the old key to the outer gate of the splendid pile, in which had been nurtured the proudest line of Scottish patriot kings, on being discovered a half-century since by the leaden-headed hinds of the district, was regarded as such an antiquarian prize, as it weighed several pounds, that it was at once turned over to the Lochmaben blacksmith for conversion into a pair of utilitarian turf-spades!

EDGAR L. WAKEMAN.

## Showing Him the Contrary.

During the reign of Nicholas I. of Russia, the poet Relbief, accused of conspiracy, was sentenced to be hanged, like any ordinary felon. At the moment when the executioner launched him into space the rope broke, and the prisoner rolled on the scaffold.

"They do not know how to make anything in Russia," said Relbief, "not even a rope."

An accident of this kind is usually followed by a free pardon. A messenger was sent to the palace to inquire the good pleasure of the Czar.

"What did he say?" Nicholas inquired.

"Sir, he said they did not even know how to twist a rope in Russia."

"Very well," the Czar went on to say, "let him be shown the contrary."

The rope did not break this time.

Prince Bismarck and his family have been taking the waters at Kissingen, and the Americans who are there have been treated to a phase of family life which seems rather strange to their eyes. When the Bismarck contingent takes its daily drive to the baths, Prince Bismarck, Count Herbert, and a third gentleman go together in the first carriage, and Prince Bismarck's daughter follows in another carriage. Princess Bismarck is dark, with black eyes and hair and an amiable expression. The daughter is coarse and stout, and the countess Herbert is decidedly pretty.

The Mohawk Indians will not allow so much as a blade of grass to grow upon the graves of their companions.

## ALL BY AN ACCIDENT.

The art of Lithography Discovered Through a Gust of Wind.

One of the greatest discoveries ever made was the result of the purest accident. It was the year 1796. The citizens of Munich had just witnessed the first triumphant performance of "Don Juan," and the theatre was deserted by all save one man, Alois Sennefelder, who, after making a round of inspection in the building to see that no sparks had ignited anything combustible, retired to his room to stamp the tickets of admission for the night following.

When he entered his apartments he had three things in his hand—a polished whetstone which he had purchased for sharpening razors—a ticket-stamp, still moistened with printing ink, and a check on the treasurer of the theatre for his weekly salary.

As he placed the latter upon the table, a gust of wind swept it high up in his room, and then deposited it in a basin filled with water. Sennefelder dried the wet paper as well as he could, and then weighted it down with the whetstone, upon which he had before carelessly placed the printing stamp.

When he returned to his room the following morning, he was astonished at seeing the letters printed with remarkable accuracy upon the dampened paper. A thought came to him. Wondered whether, but some such means, he could not simplify his work of continually copying the songs of the chorus. He went out and purchased a large stone, commenced making experiments, and, as we all know, finally discovered the art of printing from stone—lithography.

## The Oldest Newspaper in the World.

In Peking there is a newspaper entitled "Ching-Pao" (news from the capital), which is said to have been in existence since the year 740 before the Christian era. The matter published in its columns is vastly instructive. We find here, among other official announcements, the precise date on which the Emperor has decreed that the winter hat is to make way for the summer hat. Further on we read that six Chinese candidates for the office of teacher were above 90, and thirteen others above 80 years of age; from which we are enabled to form an idea as to the limits of age for examinations in the Celestial Empire. The "Ching-Pao" is especially remarkable for one thing, viz., that not a single misprint is to be found in its pages. Readers and foremen are very well paid, but the slightest error would, we are told, cost the head of the culprit—neither more nor less! Thus it comes to pass that the "Ching-Pao" is not only the oldest but the most correct paper in the world.

## A Titled Chef.

Which of all European sovereigns has done the most to advance the art of dining to the dignity of a fine art? It is the Emperor of Russia. He curiously combines quality with quantity. His appetite is large and his taste delicate.

The office of imperial caterer at St. Petersburg is no sinecure. The caterer, if hard worked, is well paid. Of course the chef is a Frenchman. Strassbourg has the honor of his birthplace, and France is glad to emphasize the fact that when he had to choose a nationality he remained a Frenchman.

The Czar knew the treasure he had secured, gave him the rank of colonel, which allows him to bear a sword as well as a steppan, and, recognizing his patriotic sentiments, considerably glossed over the rule which should compel his chef to be a Russian subject. Colonel Krautz, though Imperial caterer to the Emperor of All the Russias, remains a citizen of France.

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