

THE SCOT BY ADOPTION

We drank the toast in something of a silence. Later, when I was about to leave, my limp friend would have accompanied me to the door. But the mistress of his heart would have none of it. "Ye'll awa'," she said, "to yer bed. Yer friend is no that fou but he can find his ain way oot." So that we shook hands and parted on the stair. The man has had twenty years of it. I understand him.

The idiot who takes to wearing kilts and speaking with an accent for the mere sake of it is scarcely worth notice. But there are such people even outside Colney Hatch. What they see in the Scotch to admire to the point of spuriousness I cannot for the life of me make out. The garb of old Gaul is no doubt very fetching from the point of view of the weak-minded, but of its effeminacy there can be no doubt. Really it is a costume for small and pretty boys who are too young to be breeched. In view of its associations and of its innate childishness, not to say immodesty, it is a great pity that any Englishman should go out of his way to wear it.

CHAPTER XV

THE SCOT AND ENGLAND

ALTHOUGH the political relations between Scotland and England would seem to have been of the smoothest since the Act of Union, and in spite of the fact that on the whole the merging of the two peoples under one Government has tended hugely to the benefit of Scotland, it is the Scotch fashion to lament the Union with groans and to insist that 1707 was a black year for Scotchmen. I believe that were it not for the circumstance that Scotland cannot produce capable men even in the way of agitators we should soon have at St. Stephen's a Scotch party which would be just as troublesome and just as noisy and truculent as is the Irish party. I believe, too, that within twelve months' time as big a demand for Home Rule and as much disquiet and rebellion could be got up in Scotland as has ever existed in Ireland. Fortunately,

THE SCOT AND ENGLAND

however, the Scotch possess neither the requisite agitators, nor the requisite pluck to indulge in serious demonstrations against the Imperial Government. So that they have to content themselves with futile grumbling and petty acts of disloyalty. The Scot has always been more or less of a fine hand at a treason. Out of Scotland has come the only treasonable organisation which England can boast of at the present day. I refer, of course, to that absurd group of persons who once a year decorate the statue of Charles I. at Whitehall with cheap wreaths and circulate leaflets which profess to prove that the reigning Monarch in these realms is a usurper, and that our only true monarch is a woman by the name of Mary, who lives somewhere on the Continent. In any country but England these gentry would be laid by the heels; though the mere fact that they are Scotch renders them quite ineffective. We can afford to smile at them. All the same we must remember that if they could make trouble they would. Even in the matter of the King's Coronation the Scotch have managed to give us the usual display of stupid insolence. Writing to his paper in May

THE UNSPEAKABLE SCOT

last, the Scottish correspondent of the *Times* said:

The approaching coronation of the King and Queen seems to have awakened rather less enthusiasm in certain quarters than either the Jubilee or the Diamond Jubilee of her late Majesty. It would be absurd to make much of the difference, but it does exist. In a word, the celebration of the event will be distinctly more official than the rejoicings over the two notable epochs of Queen Victoria's later life. Two circumstances have helped to bring this about—the Royal proclamation of two successive holidays, and what is known in Scotland as the “numeral.” They are both absolutely sentimental considerations, but they have had a slight influence. Trades councils, becoming “permeated” with Socialism, protest against what they are pleased to call the “mummery” in London, and the association of themselves therewith through local rejoicings, and the idea of losing two days' pay in one week is just sufficient to arouse their resentment, which some corporations have tried to appease by ignoring the proclamation, or applying it, on their own initiative, to one of the days only. The “numeral” connotes the quasi-patriotic objection to the assumption of the title of King Edward VII. by his Majesty. Some Scotsmen persist in refusing to see that, in calling himself the Seventh Edward, the King neither intended to, nor did, insinuate that he was the seventh of that name who had reigned over the United Kingdom, and they declaim in grotesque fashion against the payment of any kind of homage to the Crown. Their insignificance is shown by

THE SCOT AND ENGLAND

the snub administered to them recently by the Convention of Burghs, which is nothing if it is not truly and characteristically Scottish : their influence is no less unmistakable in the resolution of several public bodies to omit the "numeral" from the inscription on their coronation medals, and in the untimely fits of economy that have overcome some local authorities not as a rule averse to feasting.

It is the old tale over again. The Scotch braggart cry—"unconquered and unconquerable"—is made to rend the welkin whenever the opportunity serves. Edward the Seventh of course cannot be Edward the Seventh of Scotland. It would never do. Therefore the "numeral" must not appear on Scotch medals, and the rejoicings are to be as far as possible of an official character. The ululation over the loss of two days' pay also is eminently Scotch. There is a time for work and a time for play, says the wise man ; but the whey-faced Scot plays always with a certain disconsolateness because he feels that he is losing money all the time. The fact is that Scottish life and Scottish manners are almost entirely dominated by the more evil traits of the Scotch character. "Independence" and "thrift" must be read into everything the Scotchman does. Poverty-stricken, starve-

THE UNSPEAKABLE SCOT

ling pride has been the ruin of the Scottish people. It has made them sour, disagreeable, greedy and disloyal; it has made them hypocrites and crafty rogues; it has narrowed their minds and stunted their national development; it has made them a by-word and a mock in all the countries of the world, and it has brought them to opprobrium even among Turks and Chinamen.

The career of the Scotchman in England has been picturesquely summarised by Dr. Cunninghame Graham. "In the blithe times of clans and mosstroopers [he says], when Jardines rode and Johnstones raised, when Grahams stole, McGregors plundered, and Campbells prayed themselves into fat sinecures, we were your enemies. In stricken fields you southern folks used to discomfit us by reason of your archers and your riders sheathed in steel. We on the borders had the vantage of you, as you had cattle for us to steal, houses to burn, and money and valuables for us to carry off. We having none, you were not in a state to push retaliation in an effective way. Later we sent an impecunious king to govern you, and with him went a train of ragged courtiers, all

THE SCOT AND ENGLAND

with authentic pedigrees but light of purse. From this time date the Sawnies and the Sandies, the calumnies about our cuticle, and those which stated that we were so tender-hearted that we scrupled to deprive of life the smallest insect which we had about our clothes. You found our cheek-bones out, saw our red hair, and noted that we blew our noses without a pocket-handkerchief, to save undue expense. . . . So far so good. But still you pushed discovery to whiskey, haggis, sneeshin, predestination, and all the other mysteries both of our cookery and our faith. The bagpipes burst upon you (with a skirl), and even Shakespeare set down things about them which I refrain from quoting only because I do not wish to frighten gentlewomen. . . . King George came in, in pudding time, and all was changed, and a new race of Scotsmen dawned on the English view. The '15 and the '45 sent out the Highlanders, rough-footed, and with deerskin thongs tied round their heads, . . . they marched and conquered and made England reel, retreated, lost Culloden, and the mist received them back. But their brief passage altered your views again and you perceived

THE UNSPEAKABLE SCOT

that Scotland was not all bailie, prayer-monger, merchant, and sanctimonious cheat. . . . Then Scott arose and threw a glamour over Scotland which was nearly all his own. True we were poor, but then our poverty was so romantic, and we appeared fighting for home and haggis, for foolish native kings, for hills, for heather, freedom, and for all those things which Englishmen enjoy to read about, but which in actual life they take good care only themselves shall share. The pale-faced master and the Highland chief, the ruined gentleman, the swashbuckler, soldier, faithful servant, and the rest, he marked and made his own, but then he looked about to find his counterfoil, the low comedians without whose presence every tragedy must halt. Then came the Kailyarders, and said that Scott was Tory, Jacobite, unpatriotic, unpresbyterian, and they alone could draw the Scottish type. England believed them, and their large sale and cheap editions clinched it, and to-day a Scotchman stands confessed a sentimental fool, a canting cheat, a grave sententious man, dressed in a 'stan o' black,' oppressed with the tremendous difficulties of the jargon he is bound to speak,

THE SCOT AND ENGLAND

and, above all, weighed down with the responsibilities of being Scotch.”¹

As I have already mentioned, Dr. Cunninghame Graham is a Scot.

The whole truth about the Scotch relation with England is that the Scot is more than sensible of the advantage it brings him, but, being by disposition wise as serpents, he is afraid that if he did not pretend to deplore it it might not last in its present comfortable unrestrictedness. Of course this fear is entirely baseless. The Englishman is too easy-hearted to make laws against pauper aliens whether from north of the Tweed or elsewhere. All the same the Scot continues to howl on principle. He will not have our King ; he will not have the “numeral ;” to call him English or even include him under the term British is an indignity and an outrage. The Act of Union was a big mistake : the poor Scot has been trodden down forbye ever since, and altogether he is sorry that he is alive. And for my own part I am quite inclined to think that there is much to be said for the latter sentiment.

¹ Cunninghame Graham, “The Ipané.”

CHAPTER XVI

THE WAY OUT

I DO NOT think it is an exaggeration to describe England as a Scot-ridden country. To whatever department of activity one looks one finds therein, "working his way up" for all he is worth and by "none too gentle" methods, the so-called canny Scot. In some professions, notably that of journalism, as I have shown, he has made himself more or less predominant. In banks, offices, and manufactories he is to be found as frequently as not, ruling the roost in the capacity of manager or overseer; and in the general atmosphere of Anglo-Saxon business life there is a persistent feel of him. That he should come from his own heathery wastes and starved townlets to a richer land is quite natural. That he should desire to do his best for himself and for people of his own blood is also natural. But that he should

THE WAY OUT

put on airs and forget that after all he is an alien and a person who by good right is with us only on sufferance, is the mistake he makes. The power that he has got for himself has been won largely by combination and advertisement. The Scotch superstition is the oyster out of which he lives. That superstition was never more general than it is to-day, and the advertisement of Scottish virtues and Scottish capacities was never in merrier progress. The time has come, I think, for Englishmen to make a stand in the matter. At any rate, the time has come for the Scotchman to be taught his place. One would hesitate to suggest that he should be got rid of entirely, for he has his uses and his good qualities. As a hewer of wood and a drawer of water, as a person fitted by temperament for the exercise of mechanical functions, he is all very well ; but in matters where intellect and wisdom are required he should be left severely alone. To rid the Press of his influence would be an excellent thing for the Press. It cannot be shown that he is of the least use in journalism, or that he does things any better, whether as reporter, sub-editor, or editor, than the average

THE UNSPEAKABLE SCOT

Englishman. And it can be shown that he has used his influence on the Press for purposes which, however legitimate they may appear to him, are not in the public interest. It is not in the public interest that every newspaper one picks up should contain certificates of character for the Scotch. It is not in the public interest that he should be continually written down for a person of especial intellect, probity, shrewdness, humour, and the rest. His intellect, in point of fact, is middling; his probity merely average; his shrewdness questionable, and his humour neither here nor there. As a subordinate he is always a very doubtful bargain. As a person in authority he is just a bully—"a bad master," as Dr. Nicoll puts it. Employers of labour would find it distinctly to their interest to look into the question and to discover how far they are being imposed upon by mere sententiousness and wise looks with nothing behind them that is of consequence. It is not too much to say that if you have a Scotchman in your place of business, you are as a rule all the weaker for it. If you go thoroughly into him, you will find that his

THE WAY OUT

only quality is his capacity for plod ; as against this he has many ugly traits—jealousy, over-reachingness, and greediness among them. Rarely, if ever, does he understand his business, and of initiative and originality he is, as a rule, devoid. Changes and advances are not at all in his line. If you ask him for something new, something out of the ordinary, he will bring it to you and impress you (by talk) with the notion that you are getting what you want ; but if you examine it you will find that it is not new at all, and that really it is not what you want.

The Scot, in fact, never soars above mediocrity ; he never has an inspiration or a happy thought ; he cannot rise to occasions, and while he is most punctual in his attention to duty and most assiduous and steadfast as a labourer, his work is never perfectly done, and too frequently it is scamped and carried out without regard to finish or excellence. Of pride or delight in labour the Scotchman knows nothing. He works in order that he may get money and secure his own personal advancement. His loyalty is a question of

THE UNSPEAKABLE SCOT

pounds, shillings, and pence; he will be loyal to you just as long as you are paying him more than he can get elsewhere, and the moment somebody comes along with a better offer, there is an end of you so far as he is concerned.

There are not wanting signs that, in spite of the manner in which it has been hidden and bolstered up, the Scotchman's real character is beginning to be properly understood. Nobody can say with any show of truth that the Scot is either loved or admired by the peoples with whom he comes in contact outside his own country. Indeed I believe that throughout England there is a very strong anti-Scotch feeling. I have found it difficult to meet an Englishman who, if you questioned him straightly, would not admit that he has a rooted dislike for Scotchmen. That dislike the Scotchman has himself aroused. His bumptiousness and uncouthness, his lack of manners, his lack of principle, and his want of decent feeling, have brought and will continue to bring their own reward. In this book I feel that I have merely touched the fringe of the subject. Facts that go to prove the main

THE WAY OUT

contentions I have laid down abound. I have not been able to use a tithe of them. Every person of understanding can give you instance after instance of the Scotchman's underbredness, ineptitude and disposition to meanness. Furthermore, Scotchmen themselves are full of such instances. Indeed for the material used in most of the chapters of this work I am indebted to Scotchmen. From first to last I have done my best to convict them out of their own mouths, and if I have failed, the fault is not the fault of the Scotch.

For the general guidance of young Scotchmen who wish to succeed in this country and who do not desire to add further opprobrium to the Scotch character, I shall now offer a few rules, which are worth taking to heart:

I. REMEMBER THAT OUTSIDE SCOTLAND YOU ARE A GOOD DEAL OF A FOREIGNER.

II. BE ASSURED THAT THE KING'S ENGLISH IS THE LANGUAGE WHICH DECENT MEN EXPECT YOU TO SPEAK IN THIS COUNTRY.

III. DOURNNESS IS REALLY NOT A VIRTUE.

THE UNSPEAKABLE SCOT

IV. THERE IS NOTHING SPECIALLY CREDITABLE IN HAVING BEEN BORN ON A MUCK HEAP. DO NOT BOAST ABOUT IT.

V. THERE ARE GREATER VIRTUES THAN THRIFT. IT IS BETTER TO DIE PENNILESS THAN TO HAVE BEEN TOO KEEN AN ECONOMIST.

VI. NEVER UNDERTAKE WHAT YOU CANNOT DO. A SHUT MOUTH AND A SENTENTIOUS AIR WILL NOT SERVE YOU FOR EVER.

VII. DO NOT SET UP TO BE A JUDGE OF ANY OF THE FINE ARTS. YOU ARE NOT INTENDED FOR IT.

VIII. TRY TO FORGET THAT THE BATTLE OF BANNOCKBURN WAS WON BY THE SCOTCH IN 1314. THE DATES OF FLODDEN AND CULLODEN ARE MUCH BETTER WORTH REMEMBERING, THOUGH MOST ENGLISHMEN HAVE FORGOTTEN BOTH OF THEM.

THE WAY OUT

IX. DO YOUR BEST TO LIVE DOWN DR. NICOLL'S SUGGESTION THAT YOU ARE "NONE TOO GENTLE" IN YOUR METHODS OF DEALING WITH COMPETITORS.

X. IF WITHOUT SERIOUS INCONVENIENCE TO YOURSELF YOU CAN MANAGE TO REMAIN AT HOME, PLEASE DO.

ADVERTISEMENT

NEVER apologise before the offence is a good rule, and in certain circumstances a still better rule is, do not apologise at all. I have not the smallest intention of regretting anything that has been written in the foregoing chapters. But I am informed by a Scotchman who has been kind enough to read them in proof that there is some likelihood of their being misunderstood. This of course would be a

THE UNSPEAKABLE SCOT

thousand pities. So that I shall venture on what may be termed, for want of a better phrase, an explanation. When Dr. Johnson was asked to state his reasons for disliking the Scotch, his reply was of the vaguest. Lamb also did not quite know why he disliked them; and on the whole it is difficult to say flatly why one cannot get on with the simple child of Caledonia. As a matter of fact my own antipathy always amuses me. Whether it will amuse the Scotch is another matter. But for the sake of their own peace of mind I should like to ask them not to jump to foolish conclusions about various hard things I have said. Since the time of Burns Scotchmen appear to have yearned for some one who should show them their faults.

“Oh wad some power the giftie gie us
To see oursels as ithers see us!”

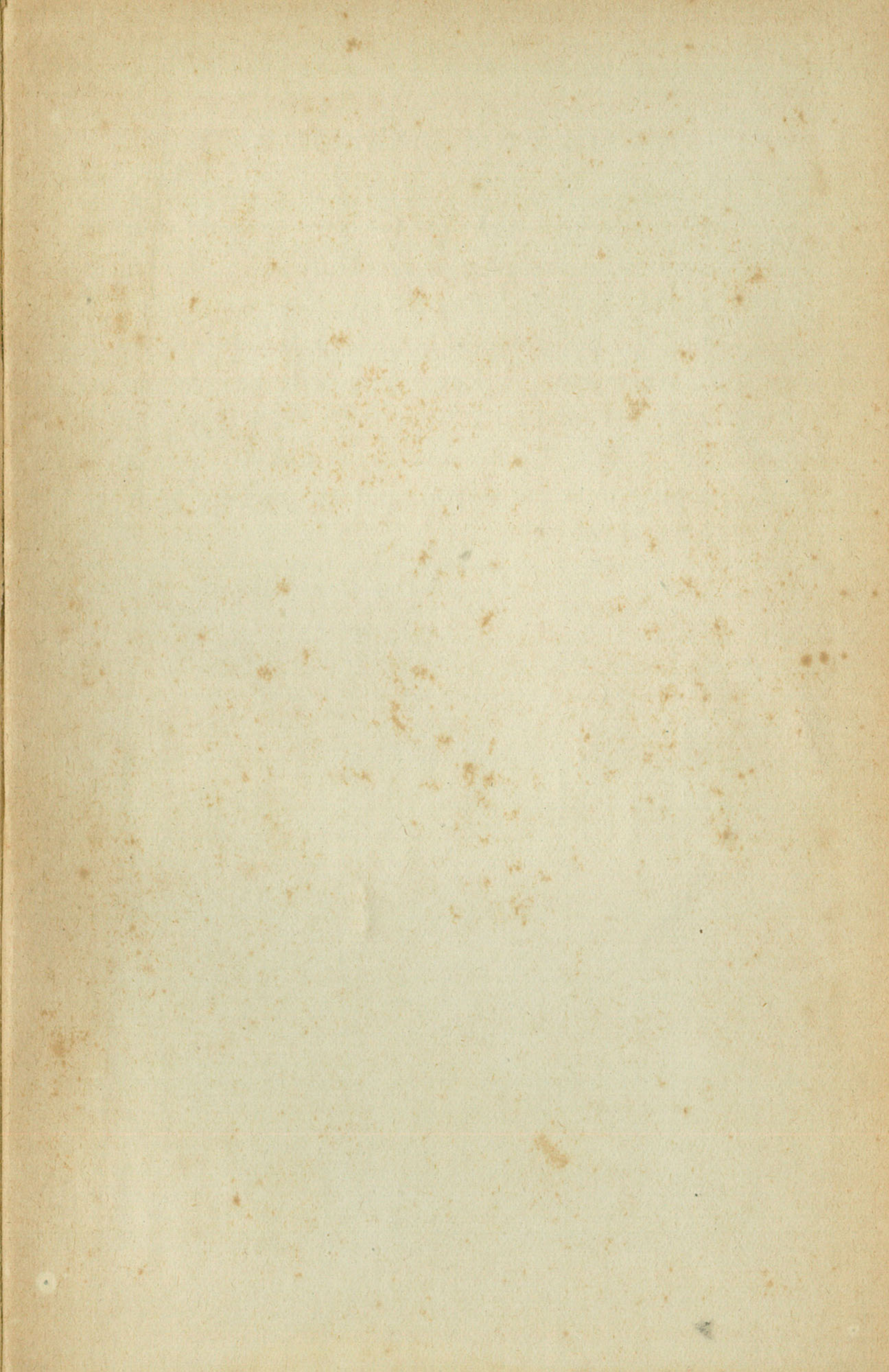
is as frequent on their lips as “the best laid schemes o’ mice and men,” “a man’s a man for a’ that,” and the rest of them. And, in this instance, I have simply done my best to play the role of “some power.” To put an ugly man in front of a mirror is not perhaps to do him the most tender of services,

ADVERTISEMENT

especially if you comment upon his style of beauty the while. For all that I am hoping that in some small measure I may be doing great and useful things for the Scotch as a nation. If they would only be at a little pains to discover their faults and at a little more pains to correct them, one could encourage hopes for Scotland. Much may be done with the Scotchman, said Dr. Johnson, if you catch him young, or words to that effect. I am afraid that to all Scotchmen who have passed the age of forty the present volume will be a wasted lesson. But there appear to be a very large number of Scots who have not yet attained the prime of life, and it is among these that I expect my counsel to have effect. They really cannot do themselves the smallest hurt by taking to heart the warnings and advice which, as the result of great labour, are here put before them. O my dear young Scottish friends, let me implore you to be wise in time. If I have beaten you with clubs, be assured that it is as much for your good as for my emolument. If you have bought this book, you never spent a few sixpences to better advantage in your life. If you have borrowed it, as I expect most of you have, you are forgiven,

THE UNSPEAKABLE SCOT

providing you will really try to mend. For all things to which I have set my hand that may cause you pain I am truly sorry. Yet, as the chastisers of one's youth were wont to say, the punishment hurts me far more than it hurts you. I know you will believe me and do your best to love me. Whether you do or not, I shall ever continue to take a kindly interest in you, and to pray for your general reform.



Brown has had the old pattern,
many of the old, low up pattern.

He has the de alert, the
large head & thin

The content of his notes
& the content of his notes
are not quite the same
as the given in the
notes he has given.

