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J. D. Mackie

Excerpt

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INTRODUCTION

Why has Scotland a history of her own? The answer is easy. Scotland has a nationality of her own, and her people have left their mark all over the five continents and the seven seas.

Look at the place-names. Consider the names of the statesmen, soldiers, explorers, doctors and business-men which loom so large in the history of the Dominions, the Colonies, the United States, indeed of every place where British people have been.

Of course, it is curious that Scotland should have a nationality of her own. Her land consists of the northern part of the island of Great Britain—about three-eighths of the whole—with some groups of adjacent islands. The southern part of the main island is occupied by England and Wales.

There is no marked ethnographical difference between the peoples to the north of the Border and those to the south; in both there is a mixture of Germanic and Celtic blood, with an infusion of Scandinavian blood, and doubtless an element usually described as 'pre-Celtic'. It is true that the proportion of non-Germanic blood is higher in Scotland than in England; that some (though not all) of the Scottish Celts are more akin to the Irish than to the Welsh and the people of western England; and that the pre-Celtic element may survive more strongly in the north than in the south. Nonetheless the racial distinction between Scots and English is not very pronounced, and it has been blurred down the centuries by much inter-marriage. Scots and English, for the most part, use the same speech, and Gaelic, though the Scots are very proud of it, is less of a live language than Welsh.

Moreover the general development of Scotland and England has been very much the same. In both countries a primitive population was overrun by successive waves of

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Celtic-speakers in a process which was still going on about the beginning of the Christian era. Both felt the pressure of the formative hand of Rome. In both the Celtic, or Romano-Celtic, population was partly submerged by Germanic invaders, and on both the virile Scandinavians made a definite impression.

Both felt the influence of the forces which streamed in from the south-east in the days when the Mediterranean was the mother of all civilization—of Christianity, of the feudal system, later of the Renaissance—and in both countries there developed monarchies which were strong enough to overcome a turbulent baronage and to stand forth as true expressions of nationality.

Gradually the two monarchies came together. Accident of dynasty made the King of Scots, in 1603, King of England too; a community of interests produced the Union of Parliaments in 1707; and although each country by the terms of the Act of Union retained its own church and its own legal system, they have, in spite of some bickering, steadily grown closer together during the last two-hundred-and-fifty years.

Intermarriage, mutual exchange of population—and far more English people come to Scotland now than is generally realised—common business interests, common service to the crown and common share in a great imperial heritage, are gradually wearing away the old antipathies. Scottish nationality is gradually blending into British nationality or even into Commonwealth nationality; but for all that Scotland is Scotland still as England is England.

Why should this be? Why should Scottish nationality be different from that of England? The answer appears if we consider what is this nationality? Nationality is not the same thing as race; English and Scots both are composed of several races. It does not depend on geographical contiguity; for centuries the Jews had no national home; yet Jewish nation-

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ality was a real thing. It does not lie in the acceptance of a common religion; there are many different forms of religion in Scotland today.

Common race, common speech, common religion and culture, common economic and social conditions, residence in a common homeland, all these things certainly do go to the making of a common nationality. Yet none of them is in itself nationality. Nationality is the result of a common experience of a fairly large group of people over a very long period of time. It is intimately bound up with a history of the people, and it is when we compare the history of Scotland with that of England, that we get the answer to our question. For although the growth of Scotland down the ages resembles in its broad outline that of England, there are nevertheless differences between the two developments, and it is in these differences that the secret of the divergent nationalities is found.

The root of these differences lies in geography. For centuries the island of Great Britain lay upon the fringe of European civilization; it was flat and fertile in the south-east, rugged and hilly in the north-west. Hence it came that the various streams of population and of culture which flowed from the continent established themselves with ease in the south-east, driving before them, in some cases, the less developed populations which they found in occupation. It is quite true that the land now called Scotland received in historic times reinforcements of population which did not come up from the south. From Ireland she received an active Christianity; from the Scandinavian countries a stream of invaders who, though at first they were cruel marauders and later dangerous conquerors, remained at last to contribute a virile element to the native stock.

Nonetheless there remains the essential fact that to some extent new peoples and, to a very large extent, new forms of

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culture came into Scotland from Europe and through the land which is now called England. The history of Scotland for centuries is a repetition of the same process.

Upon the primitive stocks of bronze-users there may have come some early iron-users direct across the North Sea; but the developed iron culture called la Tène, definitely associated with a Celtic people, came through England.

It was in England that the Romans established an organised province; it was in the fertile lands of the south and east that the Germanic invaders made their main assault. It was in the south-east that the Mediterranean influence again asserted itself with the church and the organised force of the feudal system. At the end of the middle ages the stirring of the Renaissance was felt earlier and more strongly in the south than in the north.

The political results of this long process can readily be discerned. The English kingdom was larger, wealthier, stronger and better organised than that which arose in Scotland. And throughout the centuries it made, with varying degrees of intensity, efforts to overrun or absorb its weaker neighbour to the north.

Sometimes, as in the days of Edward I, Edward III and Oliver Cromwell, England nearly succeeded in her ambition; even in the days of Henry VIII she tried hard to realise her claim of suzerainty. Yet somehow Scotland contrived to maintain her independence, and when she entered into full partnership with England it was as a sister and not as a bondswoman.

Her survival as a free nation was due in part to geography; the rugged land of the north was difficult to approach and, though there may be an element of 'sour grapes' in the English attitude, hardly worth a great effort at conquest. It was due partly to England's pre-occupation with the necessity of dealing with the Scandinavians and later with her desire of

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making conquests in France. Yet it was due also to Scotland's sense of her own being and dignity, reflected in the long genealogies which take the descent of her kings back to Noah. At all events Scotland was able, if sometimes only just able, to repel the attacks from the south; and in the very act of repelling them her nationality became an articulate thing. Scotland was born fighting.

The nation which emerged differed from England in various ways. In the first place the central power was long in asserting its authority. There remained a radical division between the Gaelic-speaking Highlands and the Lowlands, where Anglo-Norman influences of every kind—religious, governmental, linguistic and architectural—steadily infiltrated. Again, even in the south, the crown had difficulty in controlling its baronage, and the 'New Monarchy' which emerged in the reign of James IV (1488-1513) was not the well-organised machine of the Tudors. Yet again, while it is true that, owing in part to the eternal struggle with England, Scotland lagged behind in cultural development, it is true also that Scotland received something direct from France. The 'Auld Alliance' was primarily political, but it had other sides as well. Scottish churchmen were in touch with France; from France, Scotland got her university system, some of her architecture, some of her literature and some of her speech. It may be added that, through the church, she got some of her law from Rome.

The differences between the kingdoms were accentuated by the Reformation. Generalities are dangerous; but, broadly speaking, in England a strong king allied with a competent 'third estate' against the old church and the old nobility; while in Scotland it was the nobles and the 'third estate' who attacked the old church, and the crown which tried to defend it. In the issue the King of England emerged as head of a Protestant Episcopal church while in Scotland the Kirk,

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which in the course of its struggles became Presbyterian, tended always to oppose the crown. It is true that James VI had established the royal control in very large measure before he ascended the throne in 1603, but Presbyterian opposition still remained.

The 'Union of the Crowns', though of great significance did not produce at once a common British nationality; it did not even 'open a new chapter in the history of Scotland', but rather gave a new direction to old tendencies. At first the crown, strong in a new prestige and power, established better order and endeavoured to refashion the Scottish church upon the English model; but it overplayed its hand and Charles I was confronted with opposition against an authority disliked partly as being dictatorial and partly as being English. In Scotland began the attack which culminated in the death of Charles. Yet Scotland could not join hands with the triumphant revolutionaries of England; she had no love for Cromwell because she was still Royalist and still Presbyterian, while he was a regicide sectarian.

It is true that Cromwell gave good order, good justice and a measure of toleration. But he remained a great Englishman, and though he endeavoured to unite England and Scotland under a single parliament, the arrangements he proposed were such that, as Robert Blair remarked, 'as for the embodying of Scotland with England, it will be as when the poor bird is embodied into the hawk that has eaten it up'.

In Scotland the Restoration of 1660 was generally welcomed, but it soon appeared that the restored monarchy was more authoritarian than ever, and Scotland joined with England to extrude James VII and II. When after this 'Glorious Revolution' some kind of parliamentary authority was established in both countries it soon became apparent that a mere Union of Crowns would not do; for king and parliament in Scotland might decide one thing and king and

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parliament in England the exact opposite—witness the disastrous ‘Darien Scheme’. Either each country must go its own way or the two parliaments must be united.

So in 1707 the parliaments were united. Since then, the two countries have grown closer together, and although the harmony is not always perfect, each realises that the union is advantageous to both. Scotland still keeps her own kirk and her own law, and in spite of constitutional union, to a marked degree her own nationality.

That is a good thing. For nationality is a precious thing. It is a dear-bought experience. It is, in fact, indestructible; and the union of the kingdoms has been a success only because each side has contributed to the common stock something of its ancestral virtue.

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READING LIST

It is impossible to include all the printed material for Scottish history in any list of books; for many of the most important sources are to be found in Government publications—Calendars, Registers, etc.; in the books issued by the great historical clubs; in the *Scottish Historical Review*, the *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* and other periodicals.

The list here presented is long; and yet it is incomplete; many works worthy of inclusion have perforce been omitted. It may well appear uneven. The explanation is this. Much of the recent work has taken the form of criticism, either expressed or implied, of the recognised canon; some of the old 'standards' have therefore been included along with the new books. Unevenness, too, appears in the content of the different sections. That is because in different periods different factors dominated. At one time, political history seemed to be all important. At other times constitutional and ecclesiastical issues bulked largely in the national history. Recently great attention has been given to social and economic history. These differences are reflected in the lists of books. A very few of the most essential books have been signalled by asterisks.

The following abbreviations have been used:

S.H.S.	..	..	Scottish History Society
S.T.S.	..	..	Scottish Text Society
S.H.R.	..	..	Scottish Historical Review
Hist. Ass.	..	..	Historical Association.

So far as possible dates of the latest editions are given. Prices (net and subject to alteration) are those prevailing in March, 1956, and are given only where a book is known to be available new as this list goes to press.

HISTORICAL APPARATUS

It is impossible to signalise here all the sources available to historians. The following books are of special interest.

BLACK, GEORGE F. comp. *List of Works in the New York Public Library Relating to Scotland*. New York Public Library, 1916.

An immense work, admirably arranged in sections. The best bibliography of Scottish history.

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STAIR SOCIETY. *The Sources and Literature of Scots Law*. 1936.

Sections contributed by experts. Very valuable for constitutional history.

MEIKLE, H. W. *A Brief Bibliography of Scottish History*. Hist. Ass. Pamphlet, 1937.

Very convenient.

MACGREGOR, M. B. *The Sources and Literature of Scottish Church History*. John McCallum, 1934.

A slight work, but convenient.

TERRY, C. SANFORD. *A Catalogue of the Publications of Scottish Historical and Kindred Clubs and Societies* continued by Cyril Matheson. 2 vols. Milne & Hutchison, 1928.

An indispensable and extremely efficient index to the works of the great Scottish Clubs in whose publications so much of Scottish history is preserved.

THOMSON, J. MAITLAND. *The Public Records of Scotland*. MacLehose, Jackson, 1922.

A brief, lucid presentation, by a master of his craft who was modest and humane, of a subject which might have been very dull.

DUNBAR, A. H. *The Scottish Kings 1005–1625*. 2nd edn. David Douglas, 1906.

Brief but well authenticated notes upon every reign. Very useful and reliable.

PAUL, Sir JAMES BALFOUR. *The Scots Peerage*. 9 vols. David Douglas, Edinburgh, 1904–1914.

The work of a Lyon King. Extremely important for a history in which the great families played so great a part.

STUART, MARGARET and PAUL, Sir JAMES BALFOUR. *Scottish Family History*. Oliver & Boyd, 1929. 24s.

A very useful guide to the materials for Scottish family history, and to the manner of using them.

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GENERAL HISTORIES

SCOTT, SIR WALTER. *Tales of a Grandfather*, 1829–1830.

Begun as a set of stories for his grandson 'Little Johnny Lockhart'. The first series adheres to the idea of a juvenile book. It accepts romantic tales and suffers from Scott's tendency to regard the Middle Ages as static. The second series is from 1603 to 1707 and is definitely a 'grown-up' book; and the third series, though over-weighted with Jacobitism, contains some valuable pictures of life in eighteenth-century Scotland. Still a very useful book.

*BROWN, P. HUME. *History of Scotland*. 3 vols. C.U.P., best edn. 1911. Each vol. 50s. 1. *To the Accession of Mary Stuart*; 2. *To the Revolution of 1689*; 3. *To the Disruption*, 1843.

The work of an accurate, well informed and fair-minded historian who wrote at a time when authors hoped to attain complete detachment. In fact, liberal and Presbyterian in tone. Accepting the Whig doctrine, and assuming that 'representation' was the *palladium*, the author is weak upon the Scottish Parliament, and upon the Scottish constitution as it is now understood. Nonetheless, commended by its tolerant outlook and excellent documentation, it remains perhaps the best of the general histories.

LANG, ANDREW. *History of Scotland*. 4 vols. Blackwood, 1900–1907.

A full history in tone generally critical of the 'Whig Tradition'. The author was something of an advocate as well as a historian, but a fair-minded advocate. Rather weak on constitution but strong on periods and aspects which interested him.

MATHIESON, W. L. *Politics and Religion in Scotland*. 2 vols. J. MacLehose, 1902.

— *Scotland and the Union*, 1905.

— *The Awakening of Scotland*, 1910.

— *The Church and Reform in Scotland*, 1916.

In all, a history of Scotland from 1550 to 1843, with special reference to religion. Marked by 'moderatism' and a general distrust of enthusiasm. Well documented.