

actually hugged by a score of Gipsies, 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 Gipsy 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 Nithsdale 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 on 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 Gipsy friends. Many of the band were absent. Those who remained were chiefly old men left to mind the camp and pother at all manner of tinkering upon broken donkey carts, donkey gear that required mending, and pans, pots and kettles which were being renewed in true tinsmith style for peasant housewives round about; many young chauvies (Gipsy children) at all sorts of children's rustic games, fairly dressed and roysteringly happy; and the gaunt old spae-wives, 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 all Gipsy 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 journeyings of this single community of Scottish Gipsies. There were twelve tents and half a dozen "whummeled" carts. The whummeling of a Scottish or northern English Gipsy 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 Gipsies. The hollowed brae chosen for the camp always had its patch of sunlight which Gipsies 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 families of note—the Dunbars, Faas or Falls, Baileys, Boswells and Blythes; most of them descendants from Clydesdale and Yetholm Gipsies whose progenitors figured, if not in the history, in the ballad and romantic literature of Scotland. They were all originally potters, packers and tinkers. Their olden capital city was the now deserted village of Yetholm, by Bowmont side; where the Cheviot 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 delft 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 are 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 dukker (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 Gipsy 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 race of olden Aryan fire worship. There, crouching by cart, or tent, or fire, or on haunches at the camp entrance, as if sentineling the glad eventide return of absent masters, were the brave, loyal, gaunt and voiceless Gipsy dogs. Here and there were the kettle-sticks—not stage tripods which burlesque Gipsy 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 grandmothers' 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 Gipsy homes.

By and by as the shadows lengthened the camp gradually began to awaken with returning life. The fires which had smouldered the day through were renewed by the now busiling old Gipsy women, and the pots and kettles sung merrily of things to come. Gipsy men

and women began coming into camp from all directions, and nearly all came singly or in groups to the tent I had been allotted to emphasize the welcome I had been given as the "Gorgia Chal" (the non-Gipsy friend to the Gipsy) 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. Gipsy 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 woebegone and hang-dog appearance for the moment prevented a recognition. He looked at me appealingly, and at the same moment one of the Gipsy women screamed at him: "Ye're na prince o' the Nökkums (provincial Yetholm Romany for Gipsies). Ye're gang t' the deil a' t'gether!" I knew him then. It was Prince Robert, by royal right king of all the Scottish Gipsies, 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 Gipsy gear upon him; saw that he was shorn and shaven by my own hands; and brought him, a penitent and comfortable, if not an altogether welcome, guest to our Annanside evening meal.

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

"Then ye micht weel gae t' your forbear's, King Robert's, auld castle hame, at Lochmaben, an' tak arles (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 adjurations from the Gipsies 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, or weel lockit 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