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## CHAPTER I

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### NATIONS AND TRIBES OF THE SCOTTISH MOTHERLAND

SCOTLAND has a most composite people, and probably it is because "Auld Scotia" has in her bounds so many strains and racial elements that the Scottish nation possesses, and has always possessed, men of such varied powers and plastic faculties. Not the pure but rather the mixed races have been the most potential peoples of the world. The traditions and passionate race prejudices of the Highlanders, as shown in "Robertson's Historical Proofs of the Highlands," prevented for a long time the real facts concerning race and language being clearly brought out in Scotland.

But the new era of a scientific anthropology, not yet fifty years old, has cleared the marches and laid bare the truth.

#### *The Iberians (Ivernians, Rhys).*

It is shown now quite conclusively that about the close of the Neolithic period a race, at the present time largely extinct, occupied the British Isles. In the long graves, or barrows, there are

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found buried a race of cave-dwellers who had black hair and a dark complexion, a long skull, a straight face, and feeble frame.

This race, called Iberians, whose remains are found in England, Scotland, and Ireland, have been traced on their course of migration from the Straits of Gibraltar coming from Africa and occupying Spain. They even colonised the valleys of the Pyrenees, and their descendants are found to-day as the Spanish Basques. The Basques are probably the only pure Iberians now known. These survivors of a numerous race speak a language of the agglutinative type, somewhat of the class of language spoken by the North American Indian. The Basque language is so difficult that an old saw states that the devil sought to learn it but gave it up in despair. It certainly differs entirely from the Indo-European or Aryan class of languages.

The Iberians surmounted the Pyrenees and occupied France, and thence, crossing over the Bay of Biscay, the Straits of Dover, and the Irish Sea, took possession of uninhabited Great Britain and Ireland. Few even of their place-names remain. Perhaps the river Urr, in the south of Scotland, may owe its name to this source, as the word "ur" in Basque means water. We are able to draw these conclusions because the long barrows of the Iberians are found in France, especially in Brittany, at Stonehenge, in Wiltshire—a South of England county—in the Scilly Islands, formerly called the Cassiterides, or Tin Islands,

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off the coast of Cornwall, and throughout Wales, where Julius Cæsar speaks of them as the Silures. Traces of a people, of small dark men, of their bodily type are still found in Galloway and farther north in Scotland, in the Hebrides, especially in the Island of Barra, at various points in the West of Ireland, and, it is said, also in far distant Shetland.

### *The Goidel, or Gael.*

But the prolific mother of nations seems to have sent westward tribes, belonging to the vast district between the Baltic Sea and the river Volga, to exterminate or absorb this weaker race. Tribe after tribe of these Aryans, speaking an entirely different tongue from that of the Basques, sallied forth seeking plunder and new homes. The people of this new language have been called Celts, or Kelts—*i.e.*, the *κελται* of the Greeks, which itself is only a variant of the word *γαλαται*, the original of the names Gauls, or Gaels.

The Celts were tall, big-boned, had short skulls, were of fair complexion, accompanied with blue eyes, and were red or yellow-haired. Their language in its common forms was connected, it would seem, with the Etruscan or its offshoot the Latin of Italy. As successive bands of Celts hived off from the parent stock at intervals of perhaps hundreds of years they may have changed their spelling and inflections, and thus dialects arose. Parallels to this may be seen in the various emigrations which have taken place from the British Isles

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and France, for in the relatively short period of less than four hundred years there have been formed the dialects in Canada and the United States.

The Celts of the British Isles, speaking the Gaelic tongue, seem to represent three leading types, and thus probably three different great migrations, perhaps many centuries apart.

### *1. The Irish Celts.*

In all probability this early Aryan tribe pushed its way westward from Central Europe to the coast of France, crossed over in small vessels to Ireland, and finding there a country sparsely settled by Iberians, seized the land, developed a fair civilisation, and though no doubt slaughtering many, yet absorbed a considerable element of the Iberians. It is claimed that it was parties of Irish Celts which were responsible for the great stones of Stonehenge, which from the nature of the rock must have come from either Ireland or Brittany, and were carried up the little river Avon to their present site. Their former contiguity to Italy, as shown by their language, perhaps accounts for a civilisation and progress which made them a Christianised and so far literary people in the early Christian centuries. Their secluded island home protected them from the invading Roman who subjugated Britain.

### *2. The Caledonians, or Picts.*

Probably from a more northern seat in Central Europe went north-westward a wandering band of

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Celts, similar in language and ideals with the early Irish Celts. They seem to have crossed from the Low Countries to the north of Scotland, where the remains of the Iberians are comparatively few. Caithness and its neighbouring districts were more easily accessible than any other part of the British Isles. The same love of high colours and a gaudy dress as seen in the Irish Celts was found in these people of Caledon.

These Caledonians, whom the Romans could not conquer, were known as the Picts, or "painted people." True, this derivation of Pict is disputed, but there is much to be said for it. Holding fast to their mountains, they became a warlike race, and were not amenable to the sweet influences of culture as were the early Irish Celts. It will thus be seen that the antiquity or priority of the Irish as compared with the Pictish Celts is an insoluble question; probably they were coeval in their occupation of Ireland and Northern Scotland.

### *3. The Brythons, or Britons or Welsh.*

What is now properly called England and probably a part of the Lowlands of Scotland seems up to several centuries before the Christian Era to have remained in the hands of the Iberians. At this time another eruption took place in the teeming seed-bed of Central Europe, and the coasts of England were beset by the people who afterwards met Julius Cæsar in his invasion just before the Christian Era. They had driven back the older inhabitants to the rock fastnesses of Cambria, as

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Wales was called. The history of these invasions has largely perished, and the evidence for so much as we have given is largely linguistic and archæological. The long barrows of the Iberians and the round barrows of the Celts still tell their tale. The linguistic argument springs from the use of the letter P.

The following illustrates this :—

Test Word.	Irish Gaelic.	Pictish Gaelic.	Latin.	Welsh.
<i>father</i>	athair	athair	pater	retain p
whale or sea-pig	orc first syllable of Orkney.	—	porcus	retain p

N.B.—It is an interesting fact that the use of the letter p was retained nearly up to the Forth, showing the Brythonic influence. The same thing is found in Galloway, and shows the widespread influence of these Welsh Celts in Cæsar's time.

### 4. *The Saxons.*

Five centuries of Roman rule in Britain had completely destroyed the manliness and courage of the Britons who had accepted the foreign yoke, as represented by the Roman camps extending from the South of England to the very foot of the Grampians in Perthshire. No doubt the more restless spirits of the Britons had fled to Wales and made common cause with the persistent Silures, whom they had formerly driven thither.

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The excavation in late years of Roman camps, and even towns with carefully constructed temples, theatres, and systems of elaborate drainage, are showing us that Tennyson's picture of King Arthur's architecture and state in the "Idylls of the King" is not wholly a work of imagination. The withdrawal of the Roman legions from England and the Lowlands of Scotland left the thriving merchants of London and the skilled men of industry helpless to resist any determined foe. The new band of raiders coming from Northern Germany and farther north, roughly called the Saxons, were the most daring, bloodthirsty, and capable intruders who had yet set foot on Albion's devoted shore. Kent was first to give up to the Jutes, a Saxon tribe. Southern England was overrun by the South and West Saxons, and Eastern England by the Middle and East Saxons. Carried on with fire and sword, this conquest was the most relentless which Britain had seen. Churches, temples, books—everything that meant civilisation was destroyed, "root and branch." Every trace of Roman culture or religion was obliterated. For our purpose in the history of Scotland we are chiefly concerned with the Saxon tribe of Angles who established themselves on the north-east coast of England—the Kingdom of East Anglia—and also encroached on the Scottish Lowlands. At the time of the Roman departure, in the middle of the fifth century, the Angles had reached the Forth, and though this Scottish region was far from being subdued, yet Dunedin, the Celtic

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capital, was in Anglian hands, in full sight of the seat of that Arthur whose name involved the myth or mystery of all the Celtic peoples. About A.D. 600 Edwin, King of Deira, overcame the Anglian king, Ethelfrith of Northumberland, fortified Dunedin, took advantage of the old Celtic place-name Duneadain—*i.e.*, “Fort of the hill slope”—and translating “dun” into his own Saxon tongue of “burgh,” with characteristic modesty put his own name first and called the northern capital Edinburgh.

### *The Scots.*

As we have seen, the recall of the Roman legions from England left the subjugated and spiritless Britons of the country helpless. Ireland had during the years of British occupation by the Romans fared well. Its island retreats had been free from outside attack; religion, and to a certain extent letters, had flourished, and Ireland had a distinct advantage among the Celtic peoples. But the dream of conquest took possession of the Irish Celts. About the time when the Saxons were making their descent on Britain and carrying all before them, even into the Lowlands of Scotland, the Irish Scots—whose name was derived from “scuite,” a wanderer or intruder—made a dash in their wicker boats upon the rocky coast of Argyll in the west of Caledonia, captured a number of the Western Isles, and took such a grip of the country that they were never afterwards displaced. These adventurers founded the



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kingdom of the Dalriad Scots. As we have seen, these invaders were Celts of a much earlier date than the Brythons ; and though probably of the same age in Northern Caledonia as were the Scots in Ireland, yet they had been so long removed from one another that when the great Irish missionary Columba visited the Picts he required an interpreter to speak with the Pictish king, so greatly had their Gaelic tongue changed in the meantime. By and by the Picts and Dalriad Scots were united by marriage and acquaintance ; and although it took more than two centuries to expel the hated Sassenach rule from the north of the Tweed, yet it did come when Kenneth McAlpine, a true Celt, reigned in Dunedin as the first King of Scots.

### *The Norsemen.*

But while this conflict was going on in the South of Albin, the Norsemen and Danes, of kindred race—the former fair and blue-eyed, the latter dark in complexion—attacked the devoted country from every side, and, conquering the Celts, gave their own names to cape, bay, valley, and town of the captured country. Shetland and Orkney have not a trace of their former people or language, and so it is with other parts of the old kingdom of the Picts. In Shetland are found Lerwick and Scalloway ; in Caithness, Wick and Thurso ; in Sutherland, Golspie, Helmsdale, and Tongue ; in Ross, Dingwall and Tain ; in Bute, Rothesay and Brodick—all Norse names. The

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people of Sutherland and Caithness and of counties farther to the south speak Gaelic in many parts to this day, but in complexion, eye, and appearance are Norse, with possibly an intermixture of Celt or even Iberian.

In Orkney and Shetland the Norsemen completely obliterated the British Celt, and there is not a trace of Celtic influence, or a single complete Celtic place-name in the Orcadian Isles. Only the word "Orkney" itself is supposed to derive its first syllable *orc* (a pig) from Gaelic, meaning the sea-pig or whale, which led the Orkneys to be known as the Whale Islands.

Through conquest and intermarriage Scotland at length succeeded in gathering her scattered races into a loosely formed unity within the territory which she to-day holds, but it was exceedingly heterogeneous, and the conflict of races, families, rival lords, and different sections led to constant bloodshed and commotion. The fire of patriotism was chiefly kept aglow by the claim of England, continuing from old Saxon times, to be the overlord of the country, under the prevalent feudal system of the Middle Ages. Bloodshed, murder, and assassination were common occurrences, and Scottish history is a succession of raids, combats, and personal rivalries. The rise of the two national heroes, Wallace and Bruce, and the combining effect of the union of Celt, Pict, Dane, Scot, and Saxon landowner, in resisting King Edward II. at Bannockburn was the first indication of a national unity.

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The period of the Stuarts was one of disorder ; and of the six Stuart sovereigns from James I. to Mary Queen of Scots only one died a natural death.

Two centuries and a half after Bannockburn Scotland became really one through the mighty, all-absorbing, fusing religious movement of the Reformation, which bound Dane and Pict, Highlander and Lowlander, Orcadian and Islander into a consolidated, religious, and patriotic people.