

## NOTE ON LETTER OF INVITATION AND BILL OF FARE

THE reference in the letter of invitation to "that wanchancie Covenant" (the Treaty of Union between England and Scotland), represents the intense feelings of objection and opposition to the Union which extensively prevailed in Scotland before the Treaty was made in 1707, and which continued to exist among many of the Scottish people till after the Rebellion of 1745. Much curious information on the subject will be found in Defoe's *History of the Union*, and of the proceedings and negotiations which preceded it. Sir Walter Scott alludes to these feelings in *Red Roy*, where, it may be remembered, Andrew Fairservice vehemently denounces the Union, while the shrewd and pawky Bailie shows a full appreciation of the benefits to flow from it to both countries.

The dishes which form the bill of fare are humorously indicated in the snatches of songs and sayings of the *swan*. They are generally old Scottish dishes, some of which are now scarcely known.

(1) This is "hotch-potch," which continues

to be a favourite Scottish dish. The Shepherd in the *Nectar Ambrosiacus* calls it "an emblem of the hail animal and vegetable creation."

"*Intift's*" is "in it."

The story goes that a Southron, who had greatly relished the soup, wished to learn from the cook how it was prepared, and she replied as in the text, "There's peas intift," &c. He could make nothing of "intift," which he perhaps thought was one of the articles used, and repeatedly asked, "But what's *intift's*?" All, however, he could extract from the somewhat angry cook was, "I have tellt ye already; there's peas intift," &c.

(2) Leek-soup, commonly called "cock-a-leekie," is indicated. This is another prime Scottish soup, and, according to Sir Walter Scott in the *Poems of Nigel*, it was deemed fit for the royal table in the days of "King Jamie," who, after the marriage of "Glenvarlochides and pretty Peg-a-Ramsay," says—  
"Serge, *carrière*—Rise up, Sir Richard Monipplies of Castle-Collop! And, my lords and lieges, let us all to our dinner, *for the cock-a-leekie is cooling.*"

(3) This is a dish designated (*Scottish*) "crappit heads." It is composed of minced beef,

with a considerable proportion of suet and some oatmeal, flavoured with chopped onions or leeks, and any other sweet herbs, and salt and pepper. The mass, when well mixed of the usual consistency of sausage, is stuffed into the heads or skulls of large haddocks, and is roasted in a Dutch-oven till sufficiently cooked. When properly made and seasoned it is a savoury dish.

(4) The reference in the lines, to knowing "neist time a feather frae a flee" (fly), and, in the Letter of Invitation, to "the trouts o' Lochleven," indicate a stew of Lochleven trout, caught by the fly in angling.

(5) A Scotch haggis is here referred to. It is prepared of similar materials to those used for "crappit heads," which are stuffed into the stomach of the sheep (called the "haggis-bag"), and the aperture being firmly sewed, it is boiled till sufficiently cooked. As the haggis-bag, if well filled, swells from the boiling of its contents, and the steam produced, it is often much swollen when brought to the table, and should be opened carefully by a small incision, otherwise its contents may squirt out to the damage of the table-cloth, and perhaps of the carver.

A description is given in the *Notes And-  
erianus*—(Professor Wilson's works, 1835,  
vol.ii. p.134)—of the danger of opening the  
"haggis-bag" rashly. Christopher North,  
Tickler, and the Shepherd have sat down to  
dinner, and the Shepherd says—

"'I'll carve the haggis.'

"North. 'I beseech you, James, for the love  
of all that is dear to you, here and hereafter,  
to hold your hand. Stop! stop! stop!

"(*The SHEPHERD sticks the haggis, and  
the table is speedily overflowed.*" *A  
ludicrously comic scene is then pictured  
of the sufferings of the party from the  
flooding of the room, and of their narrow  
escape from being drowned in haggis.*)

(6) This is a sheep's-head pie. It is usually  
prepared from the head of a fat tup, the wool  
of which has been singed or burnt off to give  
it a special flavour, which perhaps none but  
a Scotsman esteems.

(7) White puddings are prepared much in  
the same way as "crappit heads," the mat-  
erials being equal parts of oatmeal and suet.  
Black puddings have some blood added to the  
materials.

(8) Brose is made by pouring boiling water on toasted oatmeal, and stirred, as the water is poured in, by a blunt knife or the end of a spoon, till it is of the consistency of porridge or pudding. If the water has previously been used for boiling a round or ramp of salt beef and greens, the dish is called "kail-brose"—lauded in the old song—

"O the kail-brose of old Scotland!

O for the Scottish kail-brose!"

(9) A "howtowdie" is a well-grown barn-door chicken.

(10) "Scotch collops" consist of slices of beef with the fat, stewed in a stewing or frying pan, with onions and pepper and salt.

(11) "Kail" is a soup of good stock, thickened with minced greens, and a little flour, till it is of sufficient consistency.

(12) Barley-meal "bannocks" are rolls or cakes of barley-meal toasted on a girdle.

(13) A salted Orkney goose is the dish indicated. It is usually cooked by boiling.

(14) A haunch or other dish of red-deer venison is referred to.