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# 'Cakes, Leeks, Puddings, and Potatoes'

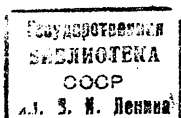
A LECTURE ON THE  
*Nationalities of the United Kingdom.*

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## ‘CAKES, LEEKS, PUDDINGS, AND POTATOES.’

THE mysterious words which compose the title of this Lecture have long formed the subject of a bumper at the annual dinner on ‘George Heriot’s Day.’ They are intended to represent the four constituent portions of the United Kingdom, viz., Scotland, Wales, England, and Ireland; and my object on the present occasion is to say a few words respecting some of the more striking characteristics of the inhabitants of these formerly distinct, but now happily united countries. Each of the four is made up of districts or counties, and each district or county is made up of clans and families. Now, the most careless observer must have remarked that many families, as well as counties, are distinguished by certain characteristics, not only physical, but also intellectual and moral. This is undoubtedly the case on the south side of the Tweed, where many of the great historical ‘Houses’ have long been characterized by remarkable peculiarities, and where the inhabitants of different counties are still essentially distinct. Thus, although all rejoicing in the proud appellation of ‘Englishman,’ the London Cockney, the Yorksheer yeoman, and the Zumersetshire peasant present several distinctive features. In Ireland, also, the inhabitants of the north and south are far from similar; while Scotland furnishes numerous examples of my proposition, both in the case of families and counties, to a few of which I shall here refer.

## *Local Characteristics.*

In his *Popular Rhymes of Scotland*, Mr. Robert Chambers gives several instances of the former, chiefly supplied to him, as he himself once informed me, by a very competent authority—Sir Walter Scott. Among others he specifies, with illustrative comments, the ‘gallant Grahams,’ the ‘gay Gordons,’ the ‘light Lindsays,’ the ‘haughty Hamiltons,’ the ‘handsome Hays,’ the ‘saucy Scotts,’ the ‘muckle-mou’ed Murrays,’ ‘the wild Macraws,’ the ‘greedy Campbells,’ and the ‘dirty Dalrymples.’ Even in my own experience, I have occasionally met with very striking examples of some of these characteristics. Mr. Hannay, in one of his *Essays from the Quarterly Review*, comments upon the same peculiarities; and in his interesting notice of the House of Douglas, he refers to the phrase ‘doughty Douglas,’ as being not a mere unmeaning alliteration, but as admirably expressive of the ‘pluck’ and manhood of the race which produced so many distinguished heroes.

In like manner, in the case of certain localities, special characteristics are frequently associated with the inhabitants. Thus, the people of Lothian and Berwickshire are flatteringly described as ‘Loudon *louts*, Merse *brutes*, and Lammermuir *whaups* ;’ the inhabitants of the three great commercial towns of the west, as ‘Glasgow people, Greenock folk, and Paisley bodies ;’ the natives of the Carse of Gowrie, in Perthshire, as the ‘carles of the Carse ;’ and the male population of Kincardineshire, as the ‘merry men o’ the Mearns.’ Again, while some of the inhabitants of the ‘kingdom’ of Fife are considered to be slightly subject to *lunar* influences, as indicated by the term ‘Fifeish,’ the legal gentlemen of the capital of Angus are not very enviably characterized as the ‘drunken writers of Forfar.’ In allusion to this unfortunate reproach, at a public meeting held several years ago with reference to the proposed drainage of a lake in the neighbourhood of that town, the late Earl of Strathmore