

A SKETCH *of* The Munro Clan, *also of*
William Munro *who, departed from Scot-*
land, settled in Lexington, Massachusetts, and of
Some of his Posterity, together with A Letter from
Sarah Munroe to Mary Mason descriptive of the
Visit of President Washington to Lexington in 1789

By JAMES PHINNEY MUNROE

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Gary M. Allen

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To Mr. Daniel John Munroe.

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A SKETCH OF
THE MUNRO CLAN

ALSO

OF WILLIAM MUNRO WHO, DEPORTED FROM SCOTLAND,
SETTLED IN LEXINGTON, MASSACHUSETTS, AND
OF SOME OF HIS POSTERITY

TOGETHER WITH

A LETTER FROM
SARAH MUNROE TO MARY MASON

DESCRIPTIVE OF THE VISIT OF PRESIDENT WASHINGTON
TO LEXINGTON IN 1789

BY

JAMES PHINNEY MUNROE

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A SKETCH OF THE MUNRO CLAN

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P R E F A C E .

In 1898 was published in Inverness, Scotland, a "History of the Munros," by Alexander Mackenzie, M. J. I., a gentleman distinguished not only for his elaborate histories and genealogies of no less than eight of the leading Scottish clans and for his other historical writings, but also for his splendid work before Parliament and before certain of its commissions on behalf of the crofters of Scotland. Largely through his exertions was passed the Crofters' Act, giving security of tenure and compensation for improvements to a class of small tenantry whose sufferings and disabilities had been, if possible, worse than those of the tenantry of Ireland in their darkest days.

Learning that this "History of the Munros" was in preparation, I entered into correspondence with Mr. Mackenzie, and was so far fortunate as to induce him to include in his genealogy as many of the American branches of the Munro Clan as the limited time before publication would permit us to follow up. His untimely death on the 22d of January, 1898, and the long illness preceding his lamented decease, made it impossible for him to realize this plan farther than I, with little time and still less experience in matters genealogical, had been able under his direction to carry it. Therefore it is that the only American branch of the clan to appear in Mr. Mackenzie's History is that of William Munro, the first settler of the name in Lexington, Massachusetts.

As, however, this bare and imperfect chronicle, confined almost exclusively to the direct male line of a single branch, covers more than fifty large octavo pages, it is plain that a thorough geneal-

ogy — even of those branches whose history it might have been possible to ascertain — would have been a stupendous task, with results greatly exceeding the necessary limits of Mr. Mackenzie's volume.

So far as Scotland is concerned, this of Mackenzie's is probably the final history of the Munro Clan. With a strange fatality, it cost the lives of three distinguished men who successively had undertaken it; and, while later researches may bring to light much additional detail of the complicated story of this great clan, a work so heavy in labor and so light in pecuniary reward is not likely — at least, within several generations — again to be undertaken.

In America, however, the field is practically new; and the results of genealogical inquiry would be, as has been abundantly shown by my own limited researches, rich in interest and in honor. It is earnestly to be hoped, therefore, that some leisured member of the clan, with a taste for historical research, will do for the American branches of the family of Munro what Mr. Mackenzie has accomplished in so satisfactory a way for the roots and trunk.

Meanwhile, hoping to stimulate interest in the family history, and believing that this can be done more quickly and fully by a little volume published in the United States than by a large one issued in Scotland, I offer this quite informal abstract of Mr. Mackenzie's six hundred pages, presenting it not in any way as a substitute, but simply as a foretaste of his *History*, scarcely a page of which but breathes such valor and romance as wholly to overshadow the imaginings of the industrious historical-novel mongers of the day.

I gladly avail myself of this opportunity to express my profound obligation to the many Munros, Munroes, Monros, and Monroes who so cordially helped me to assist Mr. Mackenzie, and especially to put on record my indebtedness to the late John Goodwin

Locke and the late Hon. Charles Hudson, but for whose patient and difficult researches — embodied in the "Book of the Lockes" and in the "History of Lexington, Mass." — it would have been impossible to trace without incredible labor the numerous and wide-wending descendants of the thirteen children of old William Munro, that virile Scotchman who, banished for fighting for the king in England, engendered a huge posterity to fight against the king in America.

THE CLAN MUNRO.

THE origin of the Clan Munro is lost in that legendary obscurity which is the sure proof of real antiquity. One may take his choice of many fables, every one of them solemnly attested by high antiquarian authority. If a Munro wishes to feel very old indeed, he may accept the statement of Sir Robert Douglas, who declares that the family — one of the most ancient in Scotland — was driven over to Ireland by the Romans in 357, and that only after sojourning there for seven hundred years did it return to its original Highland home. If one demurs at this Irish residence and admixture, he may subscribe to the statements of Skene and Smibert, proving the purely Gaelic origin of the clan, and showing that it was driven down into the southern Highlands from the rocky islands of the north. Out of the mass of conflicting testimony only one fact emerges: that the founder of the family — that is, the first Munro who held

land¹—was a certain Donald. Whether his surname was or was not O'Cain, and whether he was or was not the son of an Irish king, O'Cathan, Prince of Fermanagh, we may never know. This Donald, tradition says, received at the hands of Malcolm II., for aid given to that king against the Danes, the land on Alness Water called Ferindonald (or Donald's land), subsequently erected into the Barony of Fowlis, and still in the possession of the family. Since Malcolm II. died in 1034, the family origin is more ancient than—and, it is safe to add, quite as authentic as—that of the numerous persons whose alleged progenitors came over with William the Conqueror.

This Donald O'Cain, *alias* Munro, died about 1053, and was succeeded, tradition says, by his son George, who helped Malcolm III., son of King Duncan, to wrest the Scottish throne from that usurper, Macbeth, whom Shakspeare has made immortal. This George died just at the opening of the twelfth century, and was succeeded by his son Hugh, created first Baron of Fowlis. From him the title and estates came down in uninterrupted lineal male descent

for nearly eight hundred years,—a fact, says Mackenzie, “that is believed to be unexampled in the annals of Scotland and England, and only paralleled in the succession of the Lords Kingsale, premier Barons of Ireland.”

The second Baron of Fowlis, the fourth of the Munro line, was Robert. His chief claim to distinction seems to have been that he was the first to be laid in the chanonry of Ross, which was the family burial-place for four centuries thereafter, until in the times of the Covenanters the violent Presbyterianism of the lairds impelled them to seek a spot untainted by papacy in which to lay their bones. The fifth Munro and third Baron Fowlis was Donald, who built the old Tower of Fowlis, which may or may not be standing to this day. This Donald Munro is said materially to have aided William the Lion, the first Scotch king really to establish sovereignty over the Highlands, in suppressing the hitherto unchecked lawlessness of those northern regions.

The sixth Munro, fourth Baron Fowlis, was Robert, who married a daughter of the Earl of Sutherland, and by her had a son George,

who succeeded in 1239 as the fifth Baron Fowlis. All that relates to the first six generations of Munros is founded only upon tradition, — strong tradition, it is true, but unsupported by documentary proof. From the accession of George Munro, however, in 1239, the record of the clan rests upon indisputable written evidence. Therefore, the family history is absolutely authentic and undisputed from a date only fourteen years later than the signing of *Magna Charta*.

The first really attested Munro, George, had all the family lands confirmed to him by a special charter from Alexander II. before 1249; and this charter states that the lands were held of old by his ancestor, Donald.

George Munro died about 1269, and was succeeded by Robert, sixth Baron Fowlis. During his life began the bloody and ever-famous civil wars over the succession to the Scottish throne. Through them all Robert Munro remained steadfast to the party of Bruce, which represented, of course, Scotch independence; and, although an old man, he fought with his clan at the decisive battle of Bannockburn.

There, moreover, his only son was killed ; and eight years later, the old Robert being dead, the succession fell to his grandson George, seventh Baron Fowlis. George, like his grandfather, fought with Bruce, and took part in the battle of Halidon Hill against the combined forces of Baliol and Edward III.,—a battle where were killed at least fourteen thousand Scots and where this seventh baron fell at the head of his clan. He had married a daughter of the Earl of Ross, and left as his successor a mere child, Robert, eighth Baron Fowlis.

Upon arriving at man's estate, this Robert seems to have developed a disposition less warlike than that of his immediate ancestors, and successfully to have set to himself the task of increasing the family estates. He acquired much new land, the mere naming of which is quite beyond any American's powers of pronunciation,¹ and had all these and his earlier estates confirmed by repeated royal manifestoes. He was, furthermore, one of the Baron-Bailies of the Earldom of Ross, a very important office in feudal times.

Robert, having been killed in a clan fight in

1369, was succeeded by his son Hugh, who acquired more lands, mainly at the hands of his cousin, the Countess Euphemia of Ross,—of whom more will be heard later,—and who fought under Donald, Lord of the Isles, against the Duke of Albany in their contest for the Earldom of Ross. By his first wife, Isabella, grand-daughter of Sir Edward Keith, Great-mareschal of Scotland, Hugh had a son, George, who succeeded him in 1425 as the tenth Baron Fowlis; and it is from this tenth baron that the Munroes (some spelling the name “Munro,” others “Monro,” and still others “Monroe”) of Lexington, of Concord, of Woburn, of Worcester, of New York, of Pennsylvania, of Bristol, R.I., of Ohio, of Paris, France, and of hundreds of other places—a great host of men and women—are descended in direct succession.

In the lifetime of this George Munro, in the year 1452, took place that locally famous battle between the Mackenzies and the Munros which is known as Beallach-nam-Brog, or the Pass of the Shoes, so named because the combatants, to protect themselves from one another's ar-

rows, took off their shoes and tied them on as breastplates. The origin of this fight is as romantic as one could wish. It seems that the now venerable Euphemia, Countess Dowager of Ross, who had given much land to Baron George's father, fell deeply in love with Alexander Mackenzie, Lord of Kintail, "a proper handsome young man," and told him so. He being already plighted to Macdougall's daughter, and—what was of more consequence—the countess being not only a mere life-tenant of her estates, but also a "turbulent woman," the "proper handsome" young Mackenzie very properly and firmly refused her. Thereupon she invited him to her castle at Dingwall, and, upon his again declining to marry her, cast him into prison. This turbulent old vixen then tortured the young man's page until he gave up to her the ring which was the agreed token to be sent by Mackenzie to his vassal, Macauley, governor of Ellandonnan, permitting the latter to leave that stronghold. The old countess then sent one of her gentlemen, armed with this ring, to Macauley with a message to the effect that his master was about to wed her,

and that the stronghold of Ellandonnan was to be given into her hands. The Macauley, seeing the ring, obeyed the supposed order, but soon found that, instead of being a bridegroom, his master was a prisoner. Thereupon he loitered under the dungeon window until the "proper handsome" young man found opportunity to make signs that the only way of effecting his release would be to kidnap the countess's cousin, Walter Ross, and hold him as a hostage. This the rest of the Mackenzie family, only too ready for a fight, promptly did, and hurried the luckless cousin off into the mountains beyond Inverness. The Earl of Ross, dutiful son to the amorous countess, immediately sent word to Lord Lovat, the king's lieutenant in the Highlands, of this capture of his cousin; and his lordship thereupon despatched two hundred men to the rescue. They were joined by all the Ross vassals, including the Munros; and the pursuit of the Mackenzies with their prisoner, Walter Ross, began. Overtaken at Beallach-nam-Brog, there ensued one of the bloodiest battles of this savage Scotch history, the Munros and Macken-

zies gladly seizing this opportunity to pay off many an ancient score. The sub-clan of Dingwall was literally extinguished, one hundred and forty of its men being killed; and, according to Sir Robert Gordon, "there were slain eleven Munroes of the house of Fowlis that were to succeed one after another, so that the succession fell into a child then lying in his cradle." In this child, who became John, eleventh Baron Fowlis, the American Munros have no direct interest; for he was the progenitor of the present Scottish barons, while the American branch is descended from his next younger brother, Hugh. This Hugh Munro, who must have been born before 1450, was the founder of the cadet family of Coul, near Alness, and was the third son of George Munro, tenth Baron Fowlis, by that baron's second wife, Christian MacCulloch. This Hugh of Coul was thrice married and had eight sons, the eldest of them being John, a clergyman and a Master of Arts of the University of Aberdeen.

It is interesting to note here that during the time of this Reverend John, the Munro Clan,

through the extinction of the feudal rights of the Lords of the Isles, received their lands— which with true Scotch thrift they were continually acquiring — direct from the crown. Many of their estates they held on the sole condition of furnishing the Scottish sovereign, when demanded, a snow-ball at midsummer. This fee was easily paid, since the snow never melts from certain caverns in the so-called Hill of Fowlis, in the forest of Wyvis; and it is related that after the battle of Culloden the Munros sent to the Duke of Cumberland, as representing the king, a basket of snow from this Ben Wyvis with which to cool his wine. Others of their estates were held on the yearly tender of a pair of gloves.

To return to the Reverend John Munro, second representative of the House of Coul. He married — notwithstanding the battle of the Shoes — a Mackenzie lass; and they had six sons, the eldest of whom, John Mor Munro (Mor meaning great), succeeded to the estates. John Mor married Elizabeth Vass, and by her had several sons. The fourth boy was named Farquhar. As a younger son, he inherited the

lands of Aldie, and was therefore called Farquhar of Aldie. He was succeeded by his son, Robert of Aldie, who was also Commissary of Caithness, and who got himself into a pretty row, accompanied by much Scotch litigation and some murder, with the Earl of Caithness.

Now this Robert of Aldie, Commissary of Caithness, married we know not whom, and had at least five children,—a daughter, Elizabeth, who, being a girl, has no further interest for any British genealogist, and not less than four sons: Robert, George, William, and Benedict. These boys came into the world between 1615 and 1630, the third, William, being born in 1625. They were, therefore, in the prime of young manhood at the time of that last battle fought between Cromwell and the Royalists, the battle after which Charles hid in the Royal Oak, the battle of Worcester.

“ The battle of Worcester [says Carlyle] was fought on the evening of Wednesday, 3d Sept., 1651, anniversary of that at Dunbar last year. It could well have but one issue,—defeat for the Scots and their Cause, either swift and complete or else incomplete, ending in slow sieges, partial revolts, and much new

misery and blood. The swift issue was the one appointed, and complete enough, severing the neck of the Controversy now at last with one effectual stroke. No need to strike a second time.

“. . . The fighting of the Scots was fierce and desperate. My lord (Cromwell) did exceedingly hazard himself, riding up and down in the midst of the fire, riding himself in person to the Enemy's foot to offer them quarter, whereto they returned no answer but shot! The small Scotch Army, begirdled with overpowering force and cut off from help or reasonable hope, storms forth in fiery pulses, horse and foot; charges now on this side of the river, now on that: can on no side prevail. Cromwell recoils a little, but only to rally and return irresistible. The small Scotch Army is on every side driven in again. Its fiery pulsings are but the struggle of death,—agonies as of a lion coiled in the folds of a boa.

“‘As stiff a contest for four or five hours as ever I have seen,’ says Cromwell. But it avails not. Through Sudbury Gate on Cromwell's side, through St. John's suburb, and over Severn Bridge on Fleetwood's the Scots are driven—in again to Worcester streets; desperately struggling and recoiling, are driven through Worcester streets to the north end of the city, and terminate there,—a distracted mass of ruin; the foot all killed or taken, the horse all scattered in flight, and their place of refuge very far.

His sacred Majesty escaped by royal oaks and other miraculous appliances well known to mankind; but Fourteen thousand other men, sacred, too, after a sort, though not majesties, did not escape. One could weep at such a death for brave men in such a Cause."

Fourteen thousand Scots killed at this battle of Worcester and eight thousand taken prisoner! Other thousands — we know not how many — escaped to the Continent, many of them settling there permanently, becoming, in time, not Scotchmen, but Frenchmen, Austrians, Germans. We know, surely, what became of only two of the four sons of Robert Munro of Aldie who entered this disastrous fight. The youngest, Benedict, escaped to Germany, and became, eventually, lord of one of those petty dukedoms which infinitesimally divided the old Germany. He grew to be Baron Benedict von Meikeldorf, and to this day his descendants hold some sort of baronial state there. The third son, William, was taken prisoner in that desperate last stand in the north end of the town; and two months later he was shipped from London with a great company of other Scotsmen, as a political exile, on the vessel "John and Sara," John

Green, master, consigned to Mr. Tho: Kemble, of Boston. There were four "Munrows" on this vessel,— Robert, John, Hugh, and another whose Christian name is obliterated,² but whom Mr. Mackenzie, studying the question from the records on the other side, believes — as Mr. John G. Locke, the careful genealogist of the Locke and Munroe families, on this side, believed — to be William. Whether or not, however, William came on the "John and Sara," it is certain that William Munro, son of Robert of Aldie, born in 1625, was taken prisoner at the battle of Worcester and was deported to America. As the first William of Cambridge Farms was a Scotchman, was born in 1625, and was, without any doubt, sent over as a political prisoner, the proof identifying the two men as one and the same man is as direct — short of William's own word — as one could ask.³

Who were Robert, John, and Hugh "Munrow" it is not our present business to inquire; and, unhappily, Mr. Mackenzie did not live long enough to ascertain. But it would, doubtless, not be a very great task to establish their degree of cousinship to the William who was

the direct ancestor of all the Lexington Munroes. Counting back, William is in the eighteenth generation in direct descent from that first Donald who, in the eleventh century, founded the Clan Munro; and, as most living Munroes are only in the fifth or sixth generation from him, it is clear that the longest roots of the family are still in Scotland.

This William Munro, coming over, as a sort of honorable convict, in his twenty-seventh year, had doubtless to work for nothing until such time as he had earned his freedom. That he had secured at least an individuality in 1657 is probable from the fact that he (or some other William, for there are traditions of several) was in that year fined for not ringing his swine.⁴ That it was an uphill task to secure a competency is pretty plainly shown by the fact that he remained single until 1665, when he was forty years of age. He then married Martha George, daughter to John George, a man of Watertown descent, who created a great scandal in Charlestown by his Baptist leanings.⁵ Indeed, he was one of the founders of what is now the First Baptist Church in Boston, and

for this and other heterodox behavior was driven out of Charlestown.

William Munro and Martha George had four children,— John, William, George, and Martha. This first wife died about seven years after marriage; and within a twelvemonth William married Mary Ball, a name made famous by the mother of Washington. By Mary he had nine more children,— Daniel, David, Joseph, Benjamin, Hannah, Elizabeth, Mary, Eleanor, and Sarah. This second wife, Mary, died when William was sixty-seven; and he married, thirdly, Elizabeth Johnson, widow of Edward Wyer, of Charlestown, a lady of high degree but, apparently, of little property.⁶ She died in 1715; and old William followed her, two years later, in his ninety-second year.

All but two of William's thirteen children grew to manhood and womanhood, and every one of the eleven married and had numerous children. Little wonder, then, that the descendants of this one Munro are now legion, and are scattered over the entire country. It has been a formidable task to trace even the male lines to the slight extent that I have car-

ried them beyond the point where Mr. Hudson's admirable genealogy leaves them, and the search is really only just begun.

Little, however, as has yet been learned, the barest record of the lives of William Munro's posterity would fill an immense number of pages. It is possible, therefore, to deal only with the six sons of William, and to mention a few of their descendants, totally ignoring the many fine women who, by marriage, surrendered forever the name of Munro. Furthermore, no attempt will be made even to mention the Munros who fought in the Revolutionary War.⁷ The records make it evident, however, that, whatever the clansmen may have lost in emigrating, they abated not one whit of their Highland pugnacity.

William's three sons by his first wife, Martha, were John, William, and George. From the eldest, John, was descended that Marrett whose house still stands opposite the Lexington Green. Marrett's son, Josiah, was a close friend of Lafayette, was presented by him with a sword, and was one of the pioneers who, under General Rufus Putnam, settled the North-west

Territory.⁸ His son, Josiah Fitch Munro, married a sister of General Lewis Cass; and their descendants are numerous and well known in and around Ohio. Others of John's descendants settled in Ashburnham, establishing the chair-making industry there, and reaching honorable prominence in that region, in Vermont, and in Eastern New York.

From William, the second son of the original William, descended Colonel William, orderly sergeant of the minute-men at the battle of Lexington and proprietor of the Munroe Tavern; also Edmund Munroe, founder of the New England Glass Company and one of the three founders of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. Among Edmund's descendants are (Charles) Kirk Munroe, the story writer, and Munroe Smith and Henry Smith Munroe, professors at Columbia University. Other descendants are the Bowmans, once so prominent in Lexington, and later conspicuous in public life in Pennsylvania,⁹ and the progeny of Dr. Thomas Monro, of Concord, who settled in Bristol, R.I.,¹⁰ and made an honorable record in that region and

in Pennsylvania. Of this line of the second William also are Captain Edmund Munroe, who was killed at the battle of Monmouth after a most distinguished military career; the Munroe of the early publishing firm of Munroe & Francis; Augustus Munroe, who played such a noble part when the steamer "Atlantic" was wrecked in Long Island Sound in 1846;¹¹ and the Munroes of the well-known banking-house of Munroe & Co. in Paris.¹²

From George Munro, the third and last son of William and Martha, are descended the Munroes who still live in that part of Lexington called "Scotland," on the very estate granted to the original William;¹³ also Timothy Munroe, who settled in Lynn, and whose grandson, "Colonel Tim," led the first troops from Essex County to the Civil War. From George are descended also Ensign Robert Munroe, the first man killed at the battle of Lexington; Isaac, for many years editor of the Baltimore *Patriot*; many distinguished soldiers of the War of 1812; Philemon, from whom descended, among others, Otis Munroe, the well-known Boston merchant, and Edmund

Munroe Bacon, for a number of years editor of the *Boston Post*; Professor Charles E. Munroe, dean of the graduate school of Columbian University in Washington, and one of the greatest authorities on high explosives in America; old Mrs. Sanderson, who lived to be one hundred and four years old; and James, of the publishing firm of James Munroe & Co.

Of the four sons of William Munro by his second wife, Mary Ball, the second, David, probably died young. From the eldest, Daniel, were descended William, the first and for many years the only maker of lead-pencils in America, and his son, William, who presented to Concord its public library building. From Daniel was descended, too, Elbert B. Monroe, a rich jeweller of New York, who made to the people of Southport, Conn., a similar gift. James Munroe, the chronometer-maker, was also of this line of Daniel Munro.

The third son of the original William Munro by his second wife was Joseph, known as "Corporal Joe," who, although born in 1687, took some part in the Revolution, and did not die until 1787, in his hundredth year. His de-

scendants settled in Concord, Carlisle, central Massachusetts, and southern New Hampshire.

Of the descendants of William's youngest son, Benjamin, who settled in what is now Lincoln, less has been learned than of any of the other branches.

The search for descendants of William has discovered Munros, Munroes, Monros, and Monroes in every corner of the United States, and has unearthed many extraordinary legends of the origin of the family in America. Most of these stories — like that of the three brothers, one a famous physician, who came over and settled on Salisbury Plain, the physician being blessed with twelve sons — are undoubtedly variants of the true record; but others — like that of the William who settled in Boston, who had sixteen children, and whose descendants moved down into the south-eastern part of the State — are difficult to fathom, for the records of Boston fail to disclose any such person. Then, too, there are many Munroes who trace back to Connecticut ancestors or to ancestors in western Massachusetts, whom the most careful searching cannot connect with any one of the

Lexington family, although they all possess, as an heirloom, some legend of Cambridge Farms. There are certain eminent persons in Washington and in Maryland who trace back to a Thomas Munroe, son of Horatio, and who have traditions of Lexington descent; but the relationship has not yet been established.

President Monroe, it seems pretty well settled, was descended from a Major Andrew Munro who emigrated to Virginia some years earlier than William came — perforce — to Boston.¹⁴ As this Andrew was of another cadet branch of the clan, the relationship of the Lexington Munroes to the fifth President is somewhat remote, although far back in the fifteenth century they did have a common ancestor, George Munro, tenth Baron Fowlis.

Leaving America, let us return to Scotland to that line of Barons Fowlis whose eleventh representative was left, metaphorically, lying in the cradle; although, as a matter of fact, he was five or six years old when he succeeded to the headship of the Munros. He and his successors in the direct line of the barony were, with a few exceptions, not particularly distin-

gushed except in matters of fighting. Their pugnacity never flagged, and, apparently, was never satisfied. As the brawls of these men and their neighbors have little—save a romantic or antiquarian—interest, it is worth while to mention only the few barons of the clan who really did something to merit recording. Robert Mor Munro, for example, the fifteenth baron, was one of the first of the Highland chiefs to renounce the Roman Catholic religion, voting in the Parliament of August, 1560, for the overthrow of the Church. The first spot, it is said, in the Highlands where the reformed faith was preached was at a hamlet called Waterloo, between Fowlis and Dingwall; and the minister was Reverend Donald Munro, of Coul, younger brother of John Mor Munro.

This canny baron, Robert Mor, doubtless found his spiritual zeal not a little encouraged by the confiscated lands of the Church, which fell richly to his share and largely augmented the Munro estates. A curious light is thrown upon the times by the fact that this Robert Mor's second wife was publicly tried for witchcraft, being accused of attempting to destroy

her stepson both by philters and by causing elf-arrows to be shot into an image of him made from clay. Although acquitted, she was plainly quite as guilty as her wretched accomplices, of humbler station, who were ingeniously tortured and burned at the stake. Immediately upon her acquittal, her stepson, in turn, was put on trial for "sorcery, incantation, witchcraft," etc., in having caused a deadly sickness in his half-brother; but he, also, was acquitted.

The eighteenth Baron Fowlis, known as the "Black Baron," a wild, reckless, and generally disreputable person, so encumbered and alienated his estates that he finally had no choice except to seek military service on the Continent. With admirable humility he enlisted as a subaltern in the army of Gustavus Adolphus, but rapidly rose and highly distinguished himself, particularly at the battle of Lützen. It is said, in this connection, that there were engaged in the Continental Wars of the seventeenth century, mainly under Gustavus Adolphus, no less than three generals, eight colonels, five lieutenant colonels, eleven majors, and thirty captains of the name and clan of Munro.

The twenty-second baron, *Sir* John Munro, — for some time before this the Barons Fowlis had been elevated into baronets,¹⁵ — was famous both for his steadfastness during the troublous times of the Restoration and for his huge bulk, being known familiarly as the “Presbyterian mortar-piece.”

The best as well as the most romantic of the Barons Fowlis was, undoubtedly, that twenty-fourth one, Sir Robert, of whom Dr. Doddridge, in his *Life of Colonel Gardiner*, writes with much enthusiasm, but with some inaccuracy.¹⁶ This Sir Robert was one of the six clan leaders who founded the famous regiment, the 42d Highlanders, known as the “Black Watch.” He was its first lieutenant colonel, and, the colonel being incapacitated for duty, was its leader during that second contest for the Austrian Succession which is known as the Second Silesian War.

So superb was the *morale* of the Black Watch that it was seemingly invincible; and the Elector Palatine, writing to his envoy in London, begged him to thank the king of Great Britain for the behavior of this Highland regiment, its

prowess being due, he adds, "to the care of Sir Robert Munro, their colonel, for whose sake I will for the future always esteem a Scotchman." The conduct of the Black Watch at the battle of Fontenoy was especially noteworthy, and has become historic. Throwing themselves, as they advanced, flat on their faces while the enemy's bullets passed harmlessly over them, they would suddenly spring up, rush forward while delivering a deadly fire, and then as suddenly prostrate themselves again. This extraordinary manœuvre was repeated throughout the day, Colonel Munro alone remaining upright beside the colors; for he was of a bulk so enormous that, had he fallen down like the rest, only the efforts of a number of men pulling at his legs and arms could have put him on his feet again. His preservation, therefore, was well-nigh miraculous, and was regarded by the pious Scotsmen as a special act of God.

Because of his long Continental service under the Duke of Cumberland, this Colonel Sir Robert Munro and, of course, his clan ranged themselves on the Hanoverian side against the Pretender, and fought, therefore, with the

English instead of with the Scotch at Culloden. Humanity forbade, however, that the men of the Black Watch, who would have followed their idolized leader anywhere, should be sent to fight against their own brethren. So they were detailed on other duty, while Sir Robert was put in command of an English regiment, the 37th. At the battle of Falkirk, however, these Englishmen, seized with panic, deserted their commander, leaving him, bravely defending himself against overwhelming numbers, to be slain. "Ochoin, Ochoin," wailed an old clansman, who died early in this century, when describing this almost-worshipped Munro chief to a boy who still lives, and cursing the English regiment,— "Ochoin, had his ain folk [meaning the Black Watch] been there!"

Colonel Sir Robert's son, Sir Harry Munro, the twenty-fifth baron, who was educated at the University of Leyden, seems to have been a scholarly person and a writer. His literary methods, however, must have been slower than those of the much-heralded Scotch writers of to-day; for Sir Harry gave thirty years to the writing of a dissertation on Buchanan's "Psalms

of David," and then — forbore to publish it. Of greater moment than this work of erudition, however, was the deed of entail which he executed during his lifetime, giving rights of inheritance to certain females of the clan,— a deed that proved to be a source of long and disastrous litigation.

For Sir Harry's son, Sir Hugh, was, to speak mildly, not a nice person; and he contracted in London, where he lived during the greater part of his life, a Scotch marriage (not legal in England), the only issue of which was a daughter, Mary Seymour Munro. By the unfortunate deed of entail this daughter, were she legitimate, would inherit; and it required years of lawsuits and, finally, an appeal to the House of Lords to establish her legitimacy. By the irony of fate she died within eight months of her father's decease; but, during the long and bitter litigation, the beautiful old estate of Fowlis had been despoiled of its magnificent timber, the fine house had been completely dismantled, and most of the ancient charters, deeds, and family manuscripts had been carried off to London and wantonly destroyed.

At the death of this Mary Seymour Munro, in 1848, the line of succession passed over to the cadet branch of Culrain, to Sir Charles Munro, grandfather to the present baronet. Sir Charles had distinguished himself not a little under Wellington in the Peninsula; and his son, the second Sir Charles, was, as his grandson, the present Sir Hector, is, a man of force and influence. The estates, though much reduced, are still not inconsiderable; and it is plain, from the reports of those who have been fortunate enough to visit the Inverness country, that the head of the Clan Munro is still regarded as one of the great men of the region.

It is impossible to go into any extended account of the numerous cadet families of Munro, or to give even a list of the generals and other officers, the clergymen, members of Parliament and public men, who have given weight and sometimes more than local fame to the name of Munro. A few only of the most distinguished can be named. Having thus far dealt mainly with warriors, it may be a relief to turn from them to the cadet family of Auchenbowie, with its line of famous physi-

cians. The first of these was Dr. John Monro, whose father fought at Worcester, and who died in 1737, having been one of the founders of the great School of Medicine in Edinboro. His only son was Dr. Alexander Monro, known as Dr. "Sandy, *primus*," to distinguish him from his more famous son, Dr. "Sandy, *secundus*." This first Dr. "Sandy" was the founder of the Royal Infirmary in Edinboro, was the first Professor of Anatomy in the university there, and was the author of no less than fifty-two volumes on medicine and surgery. This first Dr. Alexander's eldest son, John, became a leader of the Scottish bar; his second son, Robert, went to London, and attained eminence there as a surgeon; while the third son was the Dr. "Sandy, *secundus*," already mentioned. This second Dr. "Sandy" Monro succeeded his father as Professor of Anatomy at the University of Edinboro, holding the position for forty-four years. He was, moreover, a founder of the Royal Society there, and wrote many medical treatises, of standard authority, which were translated into foreign languages, giving him a European reputation. He discovered, or

identified, a crevice in the brain that is still called the *Foramen of Monro*; and an eminent Scotch surgeon who visited this country some years ago, and who, in his youth, attended the lectures of Dr. "Sandy's" son, Dr. Alexander Monro, *tertius* (of whom presently), said that that surgeon was wont to refer, with much complacency, to "me feyther's hole in the haid."

This Alexander Monro, *tertius*, succeeded his father and grandfather as Professor of Anatomy in the University of Edinboro, and was president of the Royal College of Physicians. In 1847, when he retired from the chair of anatomy, it had been occupied from its foundation, nearly a century before, solely by this one family. Mr. Mackenzie says, in this connection: "Alexander, *tertius*, was the fourth in direct succession of physicians in the family,—a circumstance unexampled, we believe, in Scottish medical history, but surpassed in England, where Dr. Henry Monro, a descendant of the Munros of Fyrish (of the same clan), was the fifth physician in direct descent of the same family."¹⁷

This Dr. "Sandy" *tertius's* fourth son, David,

emigrated to New Zealand, became one of the leaders in that colony, was speaker of its Parliament, and was knighted in 1866.

But the cadet families, like that of the baronets, were famous, too, for warriors. First among them, General Robert Monro, a doughty soldier, who seems to have been master of the pen as well as of the sword; for not only did he command the famous Scots Brigade that did such yeoman service under Gustavus Adolphus in his wars to establish Protestantism in Europe, but he wrote a book about these wars which is said to be both extremely entertaining and of high historical value.

Its title is a model of comprehensiveness:—

MONRO

His EXPEDITION

WITH THE WORTHY

SCOTS REGIMENT (CALLED MAC KEYES REGIMENT,) LEVIED IN
 AUGUST, 1626, BY SR. DONALD MACKAY, LORD RHEES,
 COLONELL FOR HIS MAJESTIES SERVICE OF DENMARK
 AND REDUCED AFTER THE BATTLE OF HERLING,
 TO ONE COMPANY IN SEPTEMBER, 1634,
 AT WOONES IN THE PALTZ.

DISCHARGED IN SEVERAL DUTIES AND OBSERVATIONS OF SERVICE :
 FIRST UNDER THE MAGNANIMOUS KING OF DENMARK DUR-
 ING HIS WORRIES AGAINST THE EMPEROR, AFTERWARDS
 UNDER THE INVINCIBLE KING OF SWEDEN
 DURING HIS MAJESTIES LIFE TIME ; AND
 SINCE UNDER THE DIRECTOR GEN-
 ERAL THE REX CHANCELLOR
 OXENSTERNE, AND HIS
 GENERALLS.

COLLECTED AND GATHERED TOGETHER AT SPARE HOURS BY COL.
 ROBERT MONRO, AT FIRST LIEUTENANT UNDER THE SAID
 REGIMENT, TO THE NOBLE AND WORTHY CAPTAIN
 THOMAS MAC-KEYNEE, OF KILDON, BROTHER
 TO THE NOBLE LORD, THE LORD EARLE OF
 SEAFORTH ; FOR THE USE OF ALL WORTHIE
 CAVALIERS FAVOURING THE LAUD-
 ABLE PROFESSION OF ARMES

TO WHICH IS ANNEXED THE ABRIDGEMENT OF EXERCISE, AND
 DIVERS PRACTICALL OBSERVATIONS, FOR THE YOUNGER
 OFFICER HIS CONSIDERATION ; ENDING WITH THE
 SOULDIER'S MEDITATIONS GOING
 ON SERVICE.

LONDON :

PRINTED BY WILLIAM JONES IN RED CROSS-STREET

1637.

This General Sir Robert Munro, whose sword was as long as his titles, took a prominent part, after his return from the Continent, in the early wars of the Covenant, and was a pillar of strength to the Protestant cause.

In the latter part of the eighteenth century, Scotland and Europe having become rather tame fields of action, the fighting Munros are found in India, being most notably represented there by General Sir Hector Munro and by Sir Thomas Munro. Hector went out in the service of the East India Company in 1761, and rose so rapidly in military prowess, was so energetic in his handling of native troops, and made such a brilliant capture of the French-Indian city of Pondicherry that, although a young man, he was soon promoted to be major-general, commanding all the British forces. But, either through too rapid promotion or through incurable faults of disposition, his subsequent career in India was disastrous — indeed, almost fatal — to the cause of the East India Company. Although knighted and created a Commander of the Bath, he was recalled to Scotland in 1782, receiving the command of the

Black Watch, and spending the remaining years of his life in raising and equipping Scottish troops. Among his descendants—though with a bar-sinister—are Hugh Andrew Johnstone Munro, owner of the Novar collection of paintings,—of world-wide celebrity in the early part of this century,—and Hugh Andrew Johnstone Munro, 2d, professor of Latin at Cambridge University about 1850, “universally admitted,” says Mr. Mackenzie, “to have been the best Latin scholar of his day in Britain,” his edition of Lucretius giving him European fame.

The last Munro to be noted from among the cadet families is Sir Thomas,¹⁸ of the Culcraggie branch, who sought his fortune in India in 1780, and who finally achieved such distinction as brigadier-general in the conquest of Hyder Ali, Tippoo-Tib, and other native princes, and such signal success as governor of the Province of Madras that in 1819 he received the thanks of both Houses of Parliament, Mr. Canning moving the vote in the House of Commons, and describing him as a man “than whom Europe never produced a more accomplished

statesman, nor India, so fertile in heroes, a more skilful soldier." Thomas Munro was made a K.C.B. in 1819 and a baronet in 1825.

As already stated, the Munro estates in Ross-shire have been greatly reduced by litigation; and the decay of the clan-system has made the head of the family a person of less importance than was once the case. But in the seventeenth century, when the spoils of the Church had enriched its estates and the feudal power of the lairds had scarcely begun to decay, the Munros shared with the Mackenzies and the Rosses the control, almost absolute, of that great central Highland shire of Ross, which stretches, north of the Caledonian Canal, from sea to sea. Their lands, lying just north of Inverness, which stands at the upper entrance of the great canal and is the capital of the Highlands, covered a large territory.

At an event comparatively so unimportant as a funeral they could easily at that time muster a thousand fighting men of the name of Munro.¹⁹ Their tartan is a very gay affair; but they have the right to wear, also, the more sombre plaid of the Black Watch,—a right shared with the

five other clans who established the regiment in 1729.

The crest of the family is, "On a shield or an eagle's head, erased gules; crest, an eagle on the perch proper; supporters, two eagles proper; motto, 'Dread God.'" ²⁰ The badge of the clan is the common club moss, with its pretty red flowers; its slogan, or war-cry, is "Casteal Fulis na theine" (meaning, "Fowlis Castle is on fire"); and its marching tune is the "Bealach-nam-Brog" (the Pass of the Shoes).²¹

In an anonymous manuscript in the British Museum which has just been published is described a journey through the Highlands in 1750. Therein the unknown author says: "To the West of the Earl of Cromarty's Seat, upon an arm of the Sea called Cromartie Firth, is the Country of the Monroes. The Gentlemen of this Clan are all Firm and Steady to a man, and the Commons are well-affected, Honest, Industrious, and Religious People. Those who call them Enthusiasticall, Revengeful, and Lazy do not know them or are highly prejudiced against them."



NOTES.

1. See, for example, in the deed of entail of Sir Harry Munro (*Mackenzie*, p. 140) such lists as the following: "The grazings of Aldnakerach, Easterlairs, and Killaskie, and the forest of Wyvis, Corrienaserrach, Corriemore, Soltach, Lochcorrie, Corrienafoela, Corrienacon, Altchonire, and the davoch lands of Cabrill and pendicles and outsets of the same, to wit—Easter Ballachladdich, and grazings of Badgarvie and the shealings of Letter, Wyvis, Killingshie, Corrierachie, Luvreach, Imrichnandanh, Benmonie, Kianlochminochin, Altitudinem of Frarick-Gillandrish, Tomconish, Carnafearanvorar, Reballachcoillie," etc.

2. In Liber I. of the reprint (Boston, 1880) from the much-torn and obliterated *Suffolk Deeds* is given the following (p. 5):—

London this 11th : of November 1651:

Capt. Jno Greene

Wee whose names are vnder written freighters of your shipe the John & Sara doe Order you forthwith as winde & weather shall permitt to sett saile for Boston in New: England & there deliuer our Orders and Servants to Tho: Kemble of charles Towne to be disposed of by him according to orders wee have sent him in that behalfe & wee desire yow to advise with the sajd Kemble about all that may concerne that whole Intended vojage vsing your Indeavors with the sajd Kemble for the speediest lading your shipp from New: Eng: to the barbadoes with provisions & such other things as are in N. E. fitt for the west Indies where you are to deliuer them to Mr Charles Rich to be disposed of by him for the Joint account of the freighters & so to be Retourned home in a stocke vndevided thus desiring your Care & industrje in dispatch & speed of the vojage wishing yow a happy & safe Retourne wee Remajne your loving freinds

Signatum, et Recognitum

in prucia: Jo: Nottock notar Publ

13 May, 1652

Entred & Recorded per Edward Rawson Recorder

JOHN BEEK

ROBT RICH

WILL GREENE

(A list of 272 passengers follows, including "Robert monrow, John Monrow, Hugh Monrow," and (obliterated) "monrow"; also, "Daniell monlow, Saunde^r morrot, John murrow, James Rowe, Neile Murrow, Jonas murrow, James murrow," and "John murrow," all of whom, in view of the atrocious spelling of the Scotch names throughout the list, may well have been Munros.)

3. Since there is no doubt that old William Munro, of Lexington, was a Scotchman, and since, being so, he must have been of the Clan Munro, the question of his exact descent is really one of minor consequence. Even should it be disproved that he was one of the sons of Robert of Aldie, it would still be beyond dispute that he was a descendant, through one of the many lines, from some of the Barons Fowlis.

4. "The first mention which I find of him in the Cambridge records is in 1657, when 'Thomas Rose and William Row' were fined for not having rings in the nose of their swine.'" — *Hudson's History of Lexington (Gen. Reg.)*, p. 147.

5. "The Baptists still held meetings, and were summoned before the General Court October 11 (1665). . . . The sentence was 'that Thomas Gould, Thomas Osborn, Edward Drinker, William Turner, and John George, such of them as are freemen, to be disfranchised, and all of them, upon conviction before any one magistrate or court of their further proceeding herein, to be commanded to prison until the General Court shall take further order with them.'

"The Baptists were presented, April 17, 1666, at the County Court, Cambridge, and Gould, Osborn, and George fined four pounds each, and ordered to give bonds to appear before the next court of assistants. On refusal they were imprisoned. A special General Court, September 11, ordered them to be released on paying fines and costs." — *Frothingham's History of Charlestown*, p. 168.

6. "In the papers connected with the inventory of his estate we find an inventory of the property which belonged to her [Elizabeth Wyer], consisting of one bed, one bolster, one pillow, one chest, one warming-pan, one pair of tongs, and one pewter platter."—*Hudson's History of Lexington (Gen. Reg.)*, p. 148.

7. The very imperfect record in Mackenzie's History notes the participation in the Revolutionary War of twenty-five Munroes, descendants of the first William of Lexington, fifteen of these being present at the battle of Lexington. Most of these twenty-five, in addition to thirteen other Munroes who died before 1775, are recorded as having served in the various Colonial wars, notably in that against the French and Indians.

8. Captain Munroe's monument in Mound Cemetery at Marietta, Ohio, bears the following inscription: "Captain Josiah Munroe, born at Lexington, Mass., February 12, 1745; died at Marietta, August, 1801. He was an officer in the Revolutionary Army, and became the friend of Lafayette, who recognized his services in the war by the gift of a sword. He was one of the original Ohio Company, who landed at Marietta April 7, 1788, and was appointed postmaster at Marietta, 1794, which office he held at the time of his death."

9. Captain Thaddeus Bowman and six of his sons were in the battle of Lexington. One son, Solomon, was lieutenant in the Twenty-fifth Regiment of the Continental Army, was in the battle of Bunker Hill, and was killed at the battle of Monmouth. Another son, Captain Samuel, was aide to Alexander Hamilton throughout the Revolutionary War. He escorted Major André to the scaffold, having been with him the night before the execution. Another son, Ebenezer (Harvard, 1782), was a prominent lawyer of Wilkes-Barre, Pa. The fourth son, Joseph, married Catherine Munroe, and had eight children. Among these was General Isaac Bowman, a distinguished citizen of Wilkes-Barre, Pa., being colonel of the Second

Regiment, Pennsylvania line, in 1813, and brigadier-general of militia until 1834. Of his four sons, the eldest, Isaac Munroe, was a graduate of West Point, and saw distinguished service in the Mexican War, as also did another, Francis Loring, who was subsequently major-general of militia. A third, Samuel, was lieutenant-colonel of the Eighth Pennsylvania Volunteers in the Civil War. Among the sons of the elder Captain Samuel Bowman (aide to Alexander Hamilton) was Alexander Hamilton Bowman (West Point, 1825), who superintended the erection of Fort Sumter, was superintendent of the Naval Academy from 1861 to 1864, and at the time of his death, November 11, 1865, was president of the board of engineers appointed to examine sites and locate forts along the New England coast. He also built Bowman's Breakwater for the protection of Charleston Harbor, and was engineer-in-chief of the Treasury Building at Washington and of all custom-houses, courts, post-offices, marine hospitals, mints, and assay offices of the United States. His brother, Samuel, was bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church for the diocese of Pennsylvania.

10. In this connection see the quaint letter of Hector Munro, dated from Rehoboth February, 1764, given in the *Book of the Lockes*, p. 304.

11. "When in 1846 the steamer 'Atlantic' was wrecked in Long Island Sound, William Augustus [Munroe], by his bravery and presence of mind in carrying a rope to the shore and improvising a life-buoy, saved over one hundred lives, for which he received many tokens of gratitude and appreciation."—*Mackenzie's History of the Munros*, p. 575.

12. John Munroe, of Northboro, Mass., after serving his apprenticeship with the dry-goods firm of Eliphalet Baker, of Boston, was sent to Europe in the interests of that firm about 1832. After many voyages to and from America, he settled in Paris as a commission

merchant and buyer for American firms about 1834. In 1852 he established the firm of John Munroe & Co., American bankers in Paris, at the head of which he remained until his death, Dec. 20, 1870.

13. The cellar of the old house, surrounded by a clump of trees, may still be seen on the right of the Woburn Road, a few rods beyond its intersection with the old Lowell Turnpike.

14. George Munro, fifth son of Robert Munro (fourteenth Baron of Fowlis) and great-great-great-grandson of the tenth Baron of Fowlis, from whom the Lexington Munros are descended, founded the Cadet family of Katewell. He had a son, George, and a grandson, David. The third son of this David was "Andrew, who under his distinguished relative, General Sir George Munro I., of Newmore, fought with the rank of major at the battle of Preston on the 17th of August, 1648; was taken prisoner there, and banished to Virginia, America. Andrew managed to effect his escape, and settled in Northumberland County, Virginia, where he had several grants of land made to him, the first extending to 200 acres, designated as one of the 'Head Rights,' being dated the 8th of June, 1650. He married and had issue, from whom, it is believed, President Monroe, of the United States of America, was descended."—*Mackenzie's History of the Munros*, p. 480.

15. "On the death of his brother, the Black Baron [Robert, sixteenth baron], . . . Colonel Hector temporarily returned to Scotland to take possession of the family estates and assume his position as head of his house. While in London on his journey to the north, he waited upon Charles I., by whom he was graciously received, and was shortly afterwards, in 1634, created a Baronet of Nova Scotia. The royal patent, or diploma, conferring the title is dated the 7th of June, and addressed, 'Domino Hector de Foulis, militi baronetto, terrarum baroniae et regalitates de Foulis in regimine Novae Scotiae in

America, et haeredibus suis masculis quibuscunque.' ”— *Mackenzie's History of the Munros*, p. 84.

16. “Some Remarkable Passages in the Life of the Honourable COL. JAMES GARDINER Who was SLAIN at the Battle of PRESTON-PANS. SEPTEMBER 21, 1745. With An Appendix relating to the antient Family of the MUNRO's of *Fowlis*. by P. DODDRIDGE, D.D. GLASGOW, Printed for JOHN ORR, and sold first shop above Gibson's Wynd. M.DCC.LXIV.”

17. I. Dr. James Monro, F.R.C.P., born September 2, 1680. Graduated Balliol College, Oxford, B.A. 1703; M.D. 1712; Harveian orator, 1737; physician to Bethlehem Hospital.

II. Dr. John Monro. F.R.C.P., born November 16, 1715. Graduated St. John's College, Oxford, B.A. 1737; M.D. 1747; Harveian orator, 1757; succeeded his father as physician to Bethlehem Hospital; specialist in insanity.

III. Dr. Thomas Monro, F.R.C.P., born 1759. Graduated Oriel College, Oxford, B.A. 1780; M.D. 1787; Harveian orator, 1799; principal physician of Bethlehem Hospital, in succession to his father; patron of fine arts, especially of J. M. W. Turner; attended George III. in his last illness.

IV. Dr. Edward Thomas Monro, F.R.C.P., born November, 1789. Graduated Oriel College, Oxford, B.A. 1809; M.D. 1814; treasurer of the College of Physicians; Harveian orator, 1834; principal physician of Bethlehem Hospital, in succession to his father.

V. Dr. Henry Monro, F.R.C.P., born January 10, 1817. Graduated Oriel College, Oxford, B.A. 1839; M.D. 1863; president of Medical Psychological Association, 1864-65; consulting physician to St. Luke's Hospital, London, for thirty years.

18. See *Life*, by Rev. G. R. Gleig (3 vols., London, 1830), and *Memoir*, by Sir Alex. J. Arbuthnot, K.C.S.I. (London, 1889).

19. "In 1632 the Monroes mustered 1,000 strong at the funeral of Lord Lovat in Kirkhill. The Grants were 800, the Mackenzies 900, the Rosses 1,000, and the Frasers 1,000,—all in arms,—a singular gathering." — *The Scottish Clans and their Tartans*, p. 79.

20. There is much variation among the coats-of-arms named by the several authorities on heraldry. That given receives the most general sanction.

21. For this and other like information, see *What is my Tartan?* by Frank Adam, F.S.A. W. & A. K. Johnston, 1896.

LETTER FROM SARAH MUNROE TO
MARY MASON.

PREFACE.

On the 5th of November, 1889, the Lexington Historical Society commemorated the one hundredth anniversary of the visit of President Washington to Lexington by giving a public dinner. As a descendant of the innkeeper at whose house the illustrious general was entertained, I was asked to speak.

Wishing only to be informal, to avoid the conventions of after-dinner speaking, to relieve the solemnity of history with a touch of human nature, in an evil hour I forged the name of a great-aunt (dead these many years) to a letter that she did not write, that (kindly soul) she would not have written, that — so circumstantial is it — she could not have written, had she tried; and for ten years have I been attempting to disentangle myself from the consequences of what seemed then so innocent a deception.

Real historians have frowned at this poor letter, and consigned its luckless author to a literary penitentiary. Amateur historians, keen for "historical sources," have quoted its statements as veritable and convincing. Students of history have wrangled over the question of its genuineness, appealing to him who read it to settle their disputes. In short, the eagerness with which the present generation study the early periods of American history in order, by a strange inversion, to make themselves god-children to certain wars and skirmishes, has given the letter, as throwing light upon a century-old period, a prominence which it has in no wise deserved. Even the Boston Evening Transcript, that admirable newspaper, which dares to be clean and wholesome and to verify

its facts, has quoted the forged epistle more than once, not, however, without being sharply called to task for doing so.

As a sort of public penance, then, I put the letter forth again with this foreword of confession. More fully to emphasize the fact that it is not genuine, I preface it with the last of my letters of expostulation to the Transcript and with the words, fatally disingenuous, which preceded the reading of the letter to its original hearers,— words which were not altered in the printed “Proceedings of the Lexington Historical Society.”

The last, and I hope final, letter to the Transcript, which follows, was called forth by a citation of Sarah Munroe as authority for the prevalence of influenza in the last century :—

To the Editor of the Transcript :—

Having already sent one protest, which you kindly published a year or two ago, against the use, as an historical source, of a letter purporting to have been written by Sarah Munroe to Mary Mason, published in the “Proceedings (vol. i.) of the Lexington Historical Society,” I hesitated to burden your columns again upon seeing it quoted, not long ago, as an authority for the prevalence of grip in 1789. Your courteous request, however, for the particulars of that letter gives me an opportunity of which I am glad to avail myself.

In November, 1889, the Lexington Historical Society celebrated the one hundredth anniversary of Washington’s visit to that town by a public dinner, with speeches. As a great-grandson of Colonel William Munroe, at whose tavern in Lexington Washington dined, I was asked to give an account of so much of his visit as was connected with that old house. To make the story more interesting, I put it into the form of a letter supposed to have been written by my great-aunt, Sarah Munroe — at that time a young

girl — to her friend and neighbor, *Mary Mason*, alleged to be on a visit to *New York*.

To prepare this letter, I consulted every authority available, including *Washington's "Diary,"* the "*Familiar Letters on Public Characters,*" *Hudson's "History of Lexington,"* the newspapers of the day (preserved in the State library), and other volumes that I do not now recall. In addition, I gathered from elderly persons in *Lexington* all relevant traditions. Weaving this material together, imitating the epistolary style of the time, and placing myself as far as possible in the mental attitude of a young country girl of that day, the letter was evolved.

It contains nothing — except the minor character sketching — for which I did not have either contemporary authority or the most reliable tradition. The statements regarding the weather, the prevalence of grip, the behavior and words of *Washington*, the personnel of his following, the "reception committee" at *Lexington*, the family at the tavern, the bill of fare, the gowns of the children, — in short, all the details, — were dug out either from journals, reminiscences, newspaper columns and advertisements of 1789, or from well-authenticated tradition. Therefore, while the letter itself is a fiction, it contains scarcely anything but historical facts placed, for the entertainment of an after-dinner company, in an unconventional setting.

The fraud seemed to me so patent, the possibility of belief by any one that a half-educated young girl would prepare a narrative so straightforward and circumstantial appeared to me so remote, that I had no thought of the skit being taken seriously. I have been greatly annoyed, therefore, at the quotations which have appeared implying this letter to be genuine; and I beg that, in future, all references to this unfortunate epistle may be excluded from your paper.

The prefatory words to the reading of the letter were — excluding the bracketed comments which now gauge the depths of the speaker's duplicity — as follows: —

“When I was asked to assume the honorable task of representing my great-grandfather here to-night, I, naturally, searched the old Munroe tavern for memorials of him, but without success. [Which was wholly true, and a musty, dusty search it was.] A hunt through the garret of the old Mason house was, however, more fortunate, as it resulted in this letter. [True only in the Hibernian sense that, the Mason house having no garret worth mentioning, the non-existence of that attic suggested a manufactured letter.] The original, of which this is a copy [alas! how many copies of their originals do most poor writers have to make!] bears the date [and it did] Nov. 7, 1789, and is indorsed [as pains were taken that it should be] in a fine Italian hand, ‘Miss Sarah Munroe, Lexington, to Miss Mary Mason, New York.’ Sarah was the second daughter of Colonel William Munroe, the other children being William, Anna, Lucinda, Jonas, and Edmund. Mary was the only daughter of Mr. Joseph Mason, a famous pedagogue, and for many years, including 1789, town clerk. [All of which was fact.] Of the reason of Miss Mason’s sojourn in New York we are not informed.” [As, indeed, we were not.]

The Munroe Tavern, built in 1695 by William Munro, son of the original William Munro, of Lexington, and kept by him for a few years as a bostelry, passed to his brother-in-law, John Comey, and thence to a Mr. Buckman. Purchased into the family again in 1770 by William Munroe, grandson of the builder, it was kept by him and by his son Jonas as a public house until the building of railroads changed transportation, closed most of the inns that had for so long given shelter to great com-

panies of travellers, and brought the name of tavern-keeper — one of high dignity seventy years ago — into a sort of ill-repute. This third William Munroe was orderly sergeant at the battle of Lexington, and at the time of Washington's visit was forty-seven years old. His children — all by his first wife, who had died in 1781, and had been succeeded by a second, Widow Polly Rogers — were: William, at the time of the President's visit twenty-one years of age; Anna, nineteen; Sarah, the supposed writer of the letter, sixteen; Lucinda, thirteen; Jonas, eleven; and Edmund, nine.

LETTER FROM SARAH MUNROE TO
MARY MASON.

NOVEMBER, 1789.

My ever deare Mary:—

I crave your patience in this Epistle, as I must finish it to go by the Sunday Coach, and therefore indight it by a bad candle, dip'd, I warrant, by Brother Jonas, who is ever slack in all except his play. We have had great doings here. Our Loved President has journied here to Lex. & has took dinner at our very House. I suppose *you*, in the Great City of New York, can have little interest in the small haps of a Country Town, but *remember* that it is the birth-place of you, and of American Freedom! I suppose, by this time, the Boston news have reached you, with the relation of the Journey of M^r. Washington to Boston and of his reseption therein, how he stood many hours in the peircing Wind, waiting for

an end to the bickerings of the Honourable Selectmen, and how, therby, he incured a most vile *Grippe* wh. his loyal subjects thereupon took to themselves, being only too Happy, so they declare, to share even the Infloowenza with the Noble Washington!¹ But know you, what the News-letters have doubtles not recount'd, that this very infloowenza has been to my Respected Step-mother the cause of much Distres. For you must know that our reverend Parson having gone to Town of a friday, to see the great President and to aske the helth of his Cousⁿ the Wurshipfull Gov. Hancock,² w^{ch} is sorely plaged with the Gowt, comes back with the tydings that M^r. Washington with Gen^l. Lincoln and many others with him, was Minded to come to Lexington of the Monday folowing, being the 26th of the last mo. And therupon did the Parson make, on the Sabbath, 3 most eddyfying Discourses, tending to prepare our Hearts for the Visit, (they being, of a course, Decent, and touching upon Worldly things only so far as might be Seemly.) Now, after 2d meeting, my respected Step-mother had much ado wether or no she could put the

Pyes and pudings w^{ch} we, with the aid of Mistress Downing and your Worthy Mother, had prepar'd on the Saturday, into the Oven on a Sabbath afternoon afore the Sun setting. Hapily the afternoon was over-cast and the hour of Setting come early. Then did we all, exsept the Children who have little care in these maters but to require to be constant Chid, set up the whole night to watch the oven lest some misschance befall the contents. You may juge we looked befrowzel'd, come Morning, but soon after cock-Crow came a messenjer rid out at the Comand of the Sec'y of the wurshipfull Gov^{or}, to tell us that M^r. Washington was to sick, the infloowenza having seazed his left Eye, to attend us, the day being Raw and blusterry.³ Then such a borling as was heard from the children, espesially Lucindy, who is ever forward in the making of noyse, and my step-Mother was like to say hard words dispite the Parson his so recent eddyfying Discourses. Now was great Questioning if his Highness⁴ (for so I like to call him) w^d come to our Town at all, till at last 'twas rumered that having great Desire to see the field of

Lexington, therefore he w^d turn his road in this Direction on his coming back from the State of New Hamshire. Mother, thereupon, bad Lucindy, who still borled lustyly, to make her respects to naybors Mulliken and Downing (and I warant you Naybors Mason were not forgot) and to ask them come eat the President his Feast. They all come in good time and my honnered Father set out to make them Merry, but 'twas easy seen that he tho't naybor Downing but a sorry makeshift for his expected guest. *Your* good parrents be, of a course, *always* Wellcome.

But you must be uneasy to hear tell of Mr. Washington his *real* Visit. 'Twas on Thursday last, and Wednesday, you may be bound, was a bussy day, what with Baking and mixing and the Brewing of a fresh Lot of beer for the Flip. Then to, had all the plate to be scowr'd and the brases rubbed and the Floors new sanded ('tis a shame to my thinking, that we sh^d have no carpet when even the Taylor, Master Bond, hath one) and my ribbands and gown to be furbish'd, for 'twas decided that none but *Lucindy* sh^d have a new frock, so *I*

had to go without, while she, pert minx, had a most loveley Gown of green callimanco, with Plumes to her hat. I wore my old tammie which is to thin for the seeson and has, more-by-token, been turn'd.⁵

We were not, *this* time, so Forward in setting up the Night, as we were mightyly tyred, you may beleive. Come Morning 'twas clear, tho' somewhat Frosty, and good sister Anna minding to stay home & help Step-mother lay the table, Jonas & Edmund & I and the pert Lucindy, who is truely a great cross to me, set out for the Green. 'Twas tho't that M^r. Washington wo^d come by ten of the clock, but 'twas full noon ere he come. As he must enter by the road by the Parson's, I was for Walking out to meet him, but Jonas would not, wether from Sloth or from fear, I know not. Betimes M^r. Washington appered, bestridding a most handsome White horse. He wore a millitary Habit, much like that of my Worthy Father, only gayer and with fine things, I mind not what they call 'em, on the showlders.⁶ His Hat he wore under his arm, and he bent himself to the one side and the other

as he Passed. I promise you we huzzared stoutly, but he bowed not, only leaned, as one sh^d say, towards us. Beside him road the Hon^{ble} Mr. Phillips, the Worshippfull President of the Sennate. Behind come the two Seccretar^s Major (or Col^o) Jackson & Mr. Tobbias Lear, & ahind all grined a Black man. Over against the Meeting House stood to meet M^r. Washington all the great men of the Town (exsepting my Father who could not be spar'd from the House) and them that was in the fight. There was the Selectmen Masters Hammond Reed, John Chandler, Amos Marrett and Joseph Smith, there was the Hon^{ble} Mr. Simons of the General Court and there was old Mr. Bridge, and Maj. John Bridge, Sarjent Brown with his cheek all scared, Nath. Farmer with his arm in a Sling, tho' 'twas well, years agone,⁷ well favored Master Chandler who has gone and marryed more's the pitty and is to be a Capⁿ in the Millisha, many Harringtons & Smiths and Sundry others, not forgetting Prince Estabrook the Black man, who was being made ackwainted, tho' stiffly, with M^r. Washington his servents, who had come up with his Coach.

And there in the Front was your Father and the Parson. Your dad w^d have held the Pres^t his stirup, but he w^d not permitt of it, & threw himself from the sadle with a Jump, for 'tis said he is wonderus strong, tho' so old. Then was there some figetting, none knowing what 'twas fiting to do. But M^r. Washington let them not stand long abbashed, for he said, "Where is Leftenant Tidd, who was next to Cap'n Parker?"⁸ and when they put Master Tidd forward, the President gave him a fine grasp of the hand, saying nought, however. Then took he respectfully the Parson his Hand, saying, "Our distinguish'd and dear Friend the Hon^{ble} Govener has told me much of his fearless Kinsman, Parson Clark." Then followed some Speach which I heard not, daring to venture no nearer than I was, being that I had an old Frock, and compeled to hold back Lucindy. Soon the whole Troupe betook themselves to the Spot where the Blood was spilled.

M^r. Washington seemed somthing sollem at first, but soon waxed livlyer and asked many Questions, they told me, of the Fight. He

would, moreover, see the Houses round about, and when he entered M^r. Buckman his Tavern, I was in great figget 'till he come out, fearing lest he might be entreated into Eating *there*. At last it being close onto two of the clock, the hour set for the dining, we set out, the Pres^t and the rest riding and walking at the head, and the Coach and the Townsfolk taging after, huzzaring and waving kerchefs. 'Twas a pitty we gave him no set speach as 'twas did in many Towns no bigger than ours,⁹ and your Father could have writ it exselent. When we come to the house there stood my Father and step-mother at the tap-room Door, Anna and the naybors skulking in the parlour. My Father looked grandly in his rejimentels and proud indeed was I of him as he led the way to the Dinner-room prepar'd for M^r. Washington in the upper room, looking towards your House. 'Twas arrang'd that my Step-mother dish the vittles in the kitch'n, yours should bring them to the stares (the short way, thou knows't, thro' the shop & the Tap-room) and then my Father sho^d serve them to the gests. 'Twas permitted me to stand in the corner

betwixt the windows, to give what help was needed. We had a right fine feast, I can tell you, and much of it; roasted Beef, a showlder of pork, Chickins, pyes, Puddings, Syillybubs, and, best of all, some fine young Pigenes sent in by the Widow Mulliken. M^r. Washington would have none but plane things, however, saying, as my Father handed the others to him, *That is to good for me*. When the pigenes, of which there was but few, were served, the Pres^t said *Are all these fine kickshores for my ser-vents to?* My Father stamering that he had not tho't to give them Such, his Highness bade the dish of Squobs be divided in half that his *Black men*, forsooth, might have the same as him. During the dining he talked of little other than the Vilenes of the Roads, calling them as Blind and Ignorent as the directions of the Inhabittents.¹⁰ He had more to say than was seemley, to my thinking, of the Ladyes, how hansome he found them, their black Hair being to his liking.¹¹ He was exceeding Frugall in his drinking, as well as in his Feeding, for he took but one Mug of beer and two glasses of wine during the whole meal.

After the second Glass he related sundry Anecdotes, but with such gravity & slowness that none durst smile. He told us that Mr. Franklin having been much Vexed in England by the British complaining that the *Yankees*, as they term us, took a wrong advantage on the 19th of April, in firing from behind Stone-walls, the great philosopher had retort'd "Were they not *two* sides to the Walls?"¹² The only other Storey I mind his telling is of his having come to a Tavern where the Host was away and where they had to arouse the Mistress, she being in bed; on hearing that the President was below, seeking shelter, she would have nought to do with him, believing him to be but the President of the little Yale Colledge in Conn'. A most diverting Thing took place after this; Mr. Washington, you must know, is much besstirred over Farming matters and had much to ask of the crops *et cetra*, and so talking, he turned to Mr. Marrett and asked if he tho't not that the hogs in N. E. have exceeding long legs; this well-nigh upsett the comp'y, for you must know that 'twas Mr. Marrett who, at the last

town meeting, contend'd that the Hogs sh^d be impownded, &, more by token, he will soon be named for Hog-reave himself, being about to Marry. The mirth at this might have prov'd Unbecoming had not just then arose a great cracking and howling. We rushed to the Window and there in the butt'nwood Tree was Jonas, clinging to the fril of Lucindy's skirt, and she dangeling in mid-air. Before we could get out of the Room, one of the Black-men had climed the tree and caught Lucindy by the Neck like a Cat, and carryed her down. The silly child had led Jonas into climing the Tree with her to look in at the dinner-room Window, and a limb having snapped she wo^d, but for Jonas, have broke her neck. Her new frock was quite spoyled. After the meal my Father shew the comp'y the Massonic Hall over the shop for M^r. Washington is a mason, but, sayes my Father, a very lukewarm one, thro' Pollicy. The forwerd Lucindy had meanwhile been put into an apon to hyde the Rents in her frock, and now she pushed herself into the President his presense. He notised her, perforce, and the minx was thereat

Bold enough to intreat him go with her to get Pares from the old button-pare tree in the Hollow. He indulgently consent'd & she led him thither. He raised her in his arms that she might reach the Pares, and on leting her down, I cannot Sware to it, but I firmly beleive, that he gave her a Smack. She is quite to Old, to my thinking, for such foldy-rol. His Highness then stood for a while afore the House, admiring at the trees, himself the center of all Eyes. Spying something White behind the wall oposite, he queried what it might be, at w^{ch} we well-nighe burst with larffing, for, in truth, 'twas your Granney herself, who had crawled up with much ado, & who was now peeping, her Cap all a-wry, to see the Pres^t.

The Sun being now low, M^r. Washington entered his carrige, and started off to-wards Watertown, having denied a Mug of Flip which my Father, with much pains, had prepar'd. Messieurs Tobyas Lear and Jackson and the Black men did not say him nay, tho', I warant you.

I have burned 3 Dips, which is sinfull, &

have set up long beyond Bell-ringing to send you this, so now must I stop.

Your ever affectionate

SALLY.

Post - scriptum. The President payed no Heed to me w^{ch}, indeed, I would not have allowed, as did Lucindy.

Post-scriptum 2. If thou have a new Shalloon for Madam Washington's Friday route,¹³ do not akwaint me of it, lest I die with covetting.

NOTES.

1. "In 1789 President Washington visited the Eastern States. He travelled in a post-chaise with four horses. He was accompanied by Major Jackson, official secretary, and by Tobias Lear, his private secretary, and attended by his famous man, Billy, who makes a conspicuous figure in the forged letters. A disagreement arose between the Governor (Hancock) and the Town's Committee to which of them belonged the honor of receiving the President at the line of the town. From this cause there was a long delay, during which the President was exposed to a raw north-east wind, by which exposure he was visited by a severe cold. Many other persons were exposed and affected in like manner, and the affection became so general as to be called the Washington influenza."—*Familiar Letters on Public Characters, etc., second edition, Boston, 1834, p. 14.*

"The Influenza, which has raged in the Southern states, is so prevailing in the town, that nine-tenths of the citizens now labour under it."—*Massachusetts Centinel, Nov. 7, 1789.*

"The *Influenza*, as it is termed, which is now so common among us, has raged greatly in Europe, as well as in the Southern States of America, and to some has proved fatal."—*Independent Chronicle, Nov. 12, 1789.*

2. Jonas Clarke, minister of the church at Lexington from 1755 to 1805, married Lucy Bowes, grand-daughter of Thomas Hancock, minister of the same church from 1698 to 1752. Governor John Hancock was a grandson of this Reverend Thomas. As to this famous attack of the gout, which forced the governor to absent himself from the state banquet given in Boston to Washington, Lodge says: "Hancock, as the chief officer of what he esteemed a sovereign State,

undertook to regard Washington as a sort of foreign potentate, who was bound to pay the first visit to the ruler of the Commonwealth in which he found himself; while Washington took the view that he was the superior officer of the Governor of Massachusetts, and that, as the head of the Union, Hancock was bound to visit him first. Washington's sense of dignity, and of what was due to his position, had often been exemplified; and the governor's vanity and State Sovereignty were no match for it. Hancock prudently made the gout an excuse for giving way; and, having as fine a sense as the first Pitt of the theatrical properties of the malady, appeared at Washington's door swathed in flannel, and was borne on men's shoulders to the President's apartments" [at the corner of Court and Tremont Streets].—*Memorial History of Boston, vol. iii. p. 199.*

3. "Monday, 26th.—The day being Rainy and Stormy, myself much disordered by a cold, and inflammation in the left eye, I was prevented from visiting Lexington, (where the first blood in the dispute with G. Brit'n was drawn)." — *Diary of George Washington from 1789 to 1791, etc., edited by Benson J. Lossing, p. 35.*

4. There was much uncertainty and controversy over President Washington's title. In many instances he is referred to as "His Majesty," but "His Highness" was the commonly accepted term, until at the town meeting held in Boston, to prepare for his visit to that town in 1789, the three hundred citizens present, without a dissenting voice, voted that he be called simply "the President," — a usage which has ever since prevailed.

5. "TO BE SOLD, at the lowest advance for Cash
A GENERAL ASSORTMENT OF GOODS,
by WHOLESALE AND RETAIL, consisting of
Broadcloths, from 4s. to 20s. per yard,
Coatings and Lambskins, from 4s. to 10s. ditto.
twilled Lambskins, blue and light mixt Bath
Beavers, forest Cloths, low-prized Kerseys.

Baizes, milled Baizes, black Calimanco, 15 to 18 inches wide, black Rousellets, Tammies, Durants, Anteloons and Shalloons, Wildbores, Corderets and corded Corderets, with many other articles.

At SHOP, No. 52, CORNHILL.

N.B. A variety of striped COATINGS.

Boston, Sept. 30, 1789."

— *Massachusetts Centinel*, Oct. 14, 1789.

6. "The President's dress, on his arrival in the town [Boston], was the American uniform, with two rich epaulets. His other dress is black velvet."— *Massachusetts Centinel*, Nov. 4, 1789.

7. "Francis Brown . . . was one of the gallant band which boldly stood before the British troops on the memorable 19th of April, 1775. He met the enemy in the morning; and on their flight from Concord they were again met by Captain Parker's company in Lincoln, where Brown received a very severe wound,—a ball entering his cheek, passed under his ear and lodged in the back part of his neck, from which it was extracted the year following."— *Hudson's History of Lexington (Gen. Reg.)*, p. 29.

"Nathaniel Farmer . . . received a severe wound on the morning of that memorable day (April 19, 1775). A ball struck his right arm, and so fractured the bone that he was disabled for a long time; — pieces of bone were extracted from the arm for several months afterwards."— *Ibid.*, p. 65.

8. Captain John Parker, who commanded the minute-men at the battle of Lexington, died Sept. 17, 1775. His officers, in 1775, were: *Lieutenant*, William Tidd; *Ensigns*, Robert Munroe and Joseph Simonds; *Clerk*, Daniel Harrington; *Orderly Sergeant*, William Munroe; *Sergeants*, Francis Brown and Ebenezer White; *Corporals*, Joel Viles, Samuel Sanderson, John Munroe, and Ebenezer Parker.

9. The newspapers of the day were largely filled with these addresses and with Washington's replies to them.

10. "The roads in every part of this State [Massachusetts] are amazing crooked, to suit the convenience of every man's fields; and the directions you receive from the people equally blind and ignorant; for, instead of going to Watertown from Lexington, if we had proceeded to Waltham, we should in thirteen miles have saved six."—*Washington's Diary*, p. 48.

11. "At half after seven I went to the assembly [in Portsmouth, N.H.] where there were about 75 well dressed, and many of them very handsome ladies—among whom (as was also the case at the Salem and Boston assemblies) were a greater proportion with much blacker hair than are usually seen in the Southern States."—*Washington's Diary*, p. 45.

12. "*Anecdote.*—When the PRESIDENT of the United States, in his late tour, was at Lexington, viewing the field where the first blood was shed in the late war—he with a degree of good humor, told his informant, and others that were present, that the Britons complained to Dr. *Franklin* of the ill usage their troops met with at Lexington battle, by the Yankies getting behind stone walls and firing at them; the doctor replied, by asking them *whether there was not two sides to the wall.*"—*Independent Chronicle*, Nov. 27, 1789.

13. "*Friday, 13th (November).*— . . . between two and three o'clock arrived at my house at New York, where I found Mrs. W. and the rest of the family all well—and it being Mrs. Washington's night to receive visits, a pretty large company of ladies and gentlemen were present."—*Washington's Diary*, p. 52.

"*Friday, 25th (Christmas Day).*—The visitors to Mrs. Washington this afternoon were not numerous, but respectable."—*Ibid.*, p. 64.

"*Friday, 26th (March, 1790).*—The company this evening was thin, especially of Ladies."—*Ibid.*, p. 114.

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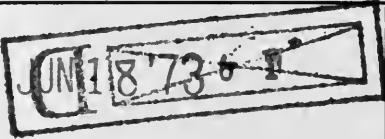
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