

ST. ANDREW'S DAY

by Hamish Hendry

In this little book you have already been presented to three patron saints. There was St. David, the patron saint of Wales; St. Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland; and St. George, the patron saint of England. Now we come to St. Andrew, the patron saint of Scotland, who is honoured by Scotsmen on the 30th November in each year. The first mention of this Saint is in the New Testament where he, with his brother Simon Peter, became a disciple of Christ, after having been a disciple of John the Baptist. After the death of Christ this first disciple of his became a missionary in many lands. From tradition we learn that St. Andrew travelled and preached the gospel in Scythia, Thrace and Asia Minor. Finally, we are told that he suffered martyrdom for the Christian faith at Patræ, in Achaia. The cross on which he died was in the form of an X, and that is now known as the St. Andrew's cross.

But how did this Saint come to be connected with Scotland? Well, the story told is this: There was once a monk who lived in the fourth century called Regulus, or Rule, who brought the bones of St. Andrew from Constantinople—where they had been deposited in a church by the Emperor Constantine—and buried them near the sea on the east coast of Scotland. There he built a church, and round the church there gradually gathered a little hamlet. In course of time, the hamlet became a City with a cathedral and a university, and in your geography books you will find it called St Andrews. I am not sure that I can ask you to believe all this story, for it is only a monkish legend. But at least part of it is true. If there was no such monk as Regulus, there is certainly a very pleasant city called St. Andrews, in which there is a building called St. Rule's Tower.

Here is another sure thing that I can tell you. There is an Order of Knighthood called the Order of St. Andrew, although it is more often called the Order of the Thistle. It was created by James II. in 1687, and it includes the King and sixteen knights. The insignia of the Order consists of a gold collar composed of thistles interlaced with red; the jewel is a figure of St. Andrew in the middle of a star of eight pointed rays; and the motto of the Order is *Nemo me impune lacessit*. This is a motto which Scotsmen carry with them all over the world.

All over the world, also, Scotsmen keep in remembrance two days; and on these days they meet together to express love of the old home. One of these days is the 30th November—St. Andrew's Day. Curiously enough, it is not a holiday in Scotland, nor do the people there hold it much in remembrance. But when a Scotsman goes into a strange country—though it be no further than London—he begins to think a very great deal of his homeland, and all the ill things he said of it when he lived there are quickly forgotten. Bleak and barren it may have been to them once, but when Scotsmen meet on St. Andrew's Day, or on the birthday of Robert Burns, they discover that Scotland is the most lovely country in the world. This is just as it should be. I hope that all you children, wherever you may travel, will keep a great love for the land where you were born.

Source:

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