The Honours Three

By JOHN STIRLING

At the festive season of the year many a toast is pledged "Wi' a the Honours Three," often by those who are unaware of the true significance of the phrase.

It may be interesting to not a few to learn something of how the Regalia of Scotland was saved at Dunottar Castle, and how a woman's pluck and coolness prevented the Crown, the Septre, and the Sword—"The Honours Three"—from falling into the hands of the Republican Soldiers.

At the advent of the Union, it was confidently believed by many English statesmen that the Scottish Regalia would be conveyed to the Tower of London. This did not take place, however, for the Regalia—consisting of Crown, Septre, and Sword—were placed in a large wooden chest, and deposited in the Crown Room of Edinburgh Castle.

In 1650, after being used at the Coronation of Charles II., the national symbols were removed, for greater safety, to the Earl Mareschal's Castle, of Dunottar, at Stonehaven, in Kincardineshire. At this time, however, the Earl was a prisoner in England, and the defence of the Castle was entrusted to his friend, Captain George Ogilvie, of Barras, when Cromwell's soldiers advanced northwards.

This same Captain had a garrison of 100 men—all stout fellows—and attached to their commander—for whom they would have laid down the lives; but Captain Ogilvie well knew that if it came to an attack, his little band would never be able to stand out against the force which Cromwell would send against him.

In order to preserve "Scotland's Honours Three," it was determined to resort to strategy. On the advice of the Dowager Countess Mareschal, Mrs Granger, wife of the Rev. William Granger, minister of Kineff, asked permission of the English Commander to pass through his lines, in order to visit the Governor's wife (Mrs Ogilvie) in the Castle. The request was granted, and Mrs Granger and her maid paid a short visit to Dunottar Castle.

On returning they each carried a parcel; but as it was thought that it was merely

some present they had got from the Governor's wife, no notice was taken of it. In fact, Major-General Gordon, who commanded the besieging army, very politely assisted Mrs Granger to mount her horse, whilst she was carrying in her lap the Scottish Crown tied amongst a lot of clothes. The ladies, after covering some distance in a slow and decorous manner, so as not to create suspicion, finally fled as fast as possible to the manse of Kineff—about five miles distant.

The purpose of the visit is best told by a letter which the minister himself supplied to the Dowager Countess:—

> "I, William James Granger, minister of Kineff, grant me to have in my custody the Honours of the Kingdom, namely, the Crown, Septre, and Sword. For the Crown and Septre, I raised the pavement stone, just before the pulpit, in the night time, and digged under it one hole, and layed down the stone, just as it was before, and removed the mould that remained, that none could have discovered the stone to have been removed at all.
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> "The Sword, again, at the west end of the Church, amongst some common seats that stand there, I digged down in the ground, betwixt the two foremost of these seats, and layed it down at the

side of them, and covered it up so that by removing the superfluous mould it could not be discovered by anybody.

"And if it shall please God to call me to death, before they be called for, your Ladyship will find then in that place.—William James Granger, 31st March, 1652."

On the surrender of the Castle to Cromwell's soldiers, and when it was found that Captain Ogilvie, the Lieutenant-Governor, or his lady, could or would give no account of the Regalia, they were treated with great severity, being dragged from one prison to another.

Captain Ogilvie's wife died two years later, attributed no doubt partly as the result of the treatment she received, and she enjoined her husband on her deathbed to preserve the secret.

In order to throw Cromwell's soldiers on to a wrong track, the Countess Mareschal circulated a report that the Regalia had been taken to Paris by her son, the Hon. Sir John Keith, and delivered to Charles II., and on that young gentleman's return to Scotland he supported his mother's story, although his life was in danger.

The faithful clergyman and his wife from time to time secretly lifted the jewels and wrapped them anew in cloth, lest they

should become tarnished by damp, and this they did, though suspicion at one time fell upon them. It is also said that they were tortured in order to get them to confess.

At the Restoration, in 1660, the Regalia were lifted and restored to Charles II. Sir John Keith was created Earl of Kintore, and Captain Ogilvie, the Lieutenant-Governor of Dunottar, was made a Baronet.

The brave wife of the minister of Kineff was not forgotten, and was rewarded with a grant of 2000 merks Scot. A merk, I may say, is an old Scottish silver coin, worth 1s 1d in our present day money—2000 merks at that time was considered a large sum of money.

The "Honours Three" were then returned to their former resting place of keeping, in the Crown Room of Edinburgh Castle, where they were lost trace of for a long period of years—namely, till the year 1818.

Prior to the period when the National Records were kept in the Register House, they were secured in hogs-heads in what was known as the Laigh Parliament House, the northern wall of which bordered the damp earth of St. Giles' Churchyard.

Many volumes, through gross carelessness, went amissing about this time. At last a royal warrant was obtained to visit the Throne Room to see what volumes were

still intact. In the course of the search there was found, in an arched chamber, and resting under several inches of dust, a large oaken chest. Everyone was anxious to know what it contained; and as the public mind was uneasy to know about the Regalia, Sir Walter Scott, who was a great friend of the then Prince Regent, obtained leave to make a thorough search. This took place on 4th February, 1818.

No key being found to fit the lock of the chest referred to, the King's smith, who was in attendance, was commanded to force open the lid of the great chest.

The general impression that the Regalia had been secretly moved weighed heavily on the hearts of those present. While the labour proceeded the chest seemed to return a hollow and empty sound to the strokes of the hammer. Even those, whose expectation had been most sanguine, felt the probability of bitter disappointment, and could not but be sensible that, should the result of the search confirm their forebodings, it would serve to show that a National affront—an injury—had been sustained, for which it might be impossible to obtain redress.

The joy was extreme when the ponderous lid of the chest, having been laid open, at the expense of great labour, the Regalia—the Crown, the Septre, and the Sword of State—were discovered lying at the bottom

covered with linen cloths, exactly as they had been left in 1707—being 111 years—since they had been surrendered by William, the ninth Earl Mareschal, to the custody of the Earl of Glasgow, Treasurer-Deputy of Scotland.

The discovery caused much excitement and extreme joy, and was instantly communicated to the public by the display of the Royal Standard, and was greeted by the shouts of the soldiers in garrison and a vast multitude assembled on the Castle Hill. Indeed, the rejoicing was so general and sincere as plainly to show that the people of Scotland had lost nothing of their national enthusiasm.

With the exception of the Sword, which was slightly bent, all the other Honours were in a good state of preservation.

Covered with glass and secured in a strong iron cage, the Regalia now lie on a white marble table in the Crown Room, toether with four other memorials of the House of Stuart, which belonged to the venerable Cardinal York, and were deposited there by order of King William in 1830.

Bathgate, I may say in passing, is the cradle of the Stuart race, they having resided in the old Castle of Bathgate, which was situated some four hundred yards from the Bathgate Upper Station, on the present golf course.

In the year 1315 the High Steward of Scotland came into possession of the Castle, through his marriage with Princess Marjory, only daughter of King Robert the Brice, and was his favourite residence.

From the union sprung the Stuart line of Kings. Marjory Bruce was the "lass" referred to by James V. on his deathbed: When he heard of the birth of Mary Queen of Scots, he said—"Farewell: it cam' wi' a lass, it will gang wi' a lass."

The memorials referred to in connection with the House of Stuart are the Golden Collar of the Garter, presented to James VI. by Elizabeth, with its appendage the George; the Order of St. Andrew, cut on an onyx, and having on the reverse the Badge of the Thistle, which opens with a secret spring, revealing a beautiful miniature of Anne of Denmark; and, lastly, the ancient Ruby Ring which the Kings of Scotland wore at their coronation: it was last used by the unhappy Charles I., and, after all its wanderings with his descendants, is now in its old receptacle together with the Crown, Septre, Sword of State, and the Golden Mace of the Lord High Treasurer.

Inspired with enthusiasm, Mr Henry Scott Riddell wrote the song "Scotland Yet." The song proved very popular. The spirited music to which it is sung was composed by Mr Peter Macleod, and was first published

by him in a separate sheet, the profits being given for the purpose of putting a parapet round the monument of the National Bard on the Calton Hill ; in connection with which Mr Joseph Teenan, a now forgotten Edinburgh poet, composed the Couplet—

> "Puir Burns, amang the Calton rocks,
> Sits lanely in his pepper box!"

Mr Henry Scott Ridell, the Scottish Poet Preacher, was born at Sorbie-on-Ewes, near Langholm, in the year 1798, and died in 1870. He was first a shepherd, and afterwards educated for the ministry ; he settled in 1833 at Teviothead, Roxburghshire, and retired in 1841 from the ministerial office. His best known songs are "Scotland Yet," "The Crook and the Plaid," and "The Wild Glen Sae Green."

It may not be amiss to give you a short description of the Regalia.

The Crown is of pure gold, enriched with many precious stones, diamonds, pearls, and curious enamellings. It is composed of a fillet which goes round the head, adorned with twenty-two large precious stones. Above the great circle there is a small one formed with twenty points, adorned with a like number of diamonds and sapphires alternately, and the points tipped with great pearls ; the upper circle is elevated with ten crosses floree, each adorned in the centre with a great diamond between four great

pearls placed in the cross, and these crosses floree are interchanged with ten high fleurs-de-lis.

From the upper circle proceed four arches, adorned with enamelled figures, surmounted by a mond of gold, enamelled blue semee, powdered with stars, crossed and enamelled with a large cross patee, adorned with great pearls.

The tiar, or bonnet, was originally of purple velvet; but, in 1685, it got a cap of crimson velvet, adorned with four plates of gold, on each of them a great pearl, and the bonnet is trimmed with ermine.

The Crown is 9 inches in diameter, 27 inches in circumference, and $6\frac{1}{2}$ inches high.

The Septre, which is of silver double over-gilt, is two feet long, of a hexagon form, with three buttons or knobs. Upon the top of the stalk is an antique capital of leaves embossed, surrounded with three small statues—the Virgin, St. Andrew, and St. James.

The Sword is 5 feet in length: the handle and pommel are of silver overgilt, in length 15 inches; the cross of the sword is $17\frac{1}{2}$ inches in length: its form is like two dolphins with their heads joining and their tails ending in acorns. The scabbard is of crimson velvet, covered with silver wrought in philegram work into branches of the oak tree leaves and acorns.

Such are the Scottish Regalia, which, since the destruction of those of England by Cromwell, are the only ancient regal emblems in Great Britain.

In concluding, let me say that I have endeavoured to give you an explanation of the term—"Wi' a' the Honours Three."

The following are the full words of the song—

SCOTLAND YET.

Gae bring my guid auld harp aince mair,
Gae bring it free and fast;
For I maun sing anither sang
Ere a' my glee be past.
And trow ye as I sing, my lads,
The burden o't shall be,
Auld Scotland's howes and Scotland's knowes,
And Scotland's hills for me;
I'll drink a cup to Scotland yet,
Wi' a' the Honours Three.

The heath waves wild upon her hills,
And, foaming frae the fells,
Her fountains sing o' freedom still
As they dance down the dells.
And weel I lo'e the land, my lads,
That's girded by the sea;
Then Scotland's dales, and Scotland's vales,
And Scotland's hills for me;
I'll drink a cup to Scotland yet,
Wi a' the Honours Three.

The thistle wags upon the fields,
Where Wallace bore his blade,
That her foemen's dearest bluid
To die her auld grey plaid.
And looking to the lift, my lads,
He sang this doughty glee,
Auld Scotland's right, and Scotland's might,
And Scotland's hills for me;
I'll drink a cup to Scotland yet,
Wi' a' the Honours Three.

They tell o' lands wi' brichter skies,
Where freedom's voice ne're rang;
Gie me the hills where Ossian dwelt,
And Coila's minstrel sang;
For I've nae skill o' lands, my lads,
That ken na to be free;
Then Scotland's right, and Scotland's might,
And Scotland's hills for me;
We'll drink a cup to Scotland yet,
Wi' a' the Honours Three.