

**LETTERS FRAE' SAUNDERS
MCTAVISH TO HIS GUID-
BRITHER IN THE KINTRA**

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Letters Frae' Saunders McTavish to His Guid-Brither in the Kintra by William Storrie

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WILLIAM STORRIE

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LETTERS

FRAN'

SAUNDERS McTAVISH

TO HIS

GUID-BRITHER IN THE KINTRA.

BY

THE HON. WILLIAM STORRIE,

MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

OF

SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION ONLY.

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With the Author's Compliments.

P R E F A C E.

THE following letters appeared some years ago in the *South Australian Advertiser*.

Begun mainly as a pastime, they attained a certain amount of popularity which led to their being continued much longer than had been originally intended.

Although frequently requested to publish them for sale, the author is aware that, from their local nature, they must necessarily be devoid of general interest, and the present publication is therefore for private circulation only.

With the exception of the correction of a few errors, they now appear exactly as originally printed.

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LETTERS FRAE SAUNDERS McTAVISH

TO HIS

GUID BRITHER IN THE KINTRA.

I.—ANENT THE GOURLAYS AN' ITHER THINGS IN GENERAL.

WEEL! Jock, as ye've been aye speerin' if the Gourlays' enterteenment is as gude as the papers mak' it oot to be, I maun tell ye that it's a hantle better. I gued to see them last nicht, an', man, it was the best three shullins' worth I ever had in a' my life. To begin wi' the leddy: she's a fine braw woman, wi' a sweet voice o' her ain, an' a gude idea o' actin', but I hadna' heard twa three words afore I kent she cam frae the south side o' the Tweed, though, for an English leddy, she gi'es the Scots no' that bad, an' in a way that wadna be deteckit by Englishers, and a gude mony Scotamen as weel.

Bit to hear Gourlay himsel' was a divert. It pit me in mind o' auld times, and gart me think I was in the Gallowgate again. Somehoo, maist o' the Scots that come here seem to be kin' o' shamed o' their ain auld mither tongue, an' when they has been here twa three years, what wi' their whummlin' the words i' their mooths, an' trying to ca' cannily ower the r's, ye can hardly tell what they're sayin'.

But I'm in hopes that wi' the Gourlays' veesit the gude auld tongue 'll come into vogue again, and we'll hae a' the Englishers tryin' to talk Scots, an' vera richt tae, for it's far in advance o' English, baith in scun' an' expression. I've nae doot it was the language Adam and Eve used when they were coortin'; an' my ain idea o' a millenium is, a' the folk wearin' kilts, speakin' gude braid Scots, dancin' reels an' Hielan' flings to the soon' o' the haggpipes, drinkin' the best Glenlivet wi' maybe a wee drap green ginger wine for the leddies, and then sittin' doon to a gude supper o' haggis, pease brose, parritch, an' sheep's head kale. But talkin' o' sheep's heads minds me I maun return to my muttons, as the Frenchie's say.

Weel, Gourlay's a fine buirdly chiel wi' a gude open intelligent coontenance, no' unlike mysel', but maybe no wi' quite siccan a sweet expression aboot the e'e broos. His mooth's no unlike my ain, an' that was aye thocht to be ane o' my best features. Od! but he's a handsome man! An' to hear him speak was a treat. He gi'es ye the true accent an' nae mistak'. Man! I lauched till I maist brak' the chair I was sittin' on. An' it was rich to see the Englishers when they saw the Scotsmen lauchin' they be't to lauch as weel, though the ae hauf o' them didna' ken what they were lauchin' at. But this shows the true power o' the artist. An' here I wad observe what a great advantage a Scot has, for he can speak an' write twa languages, an' the Englisher canna' if ye excep' French an' German an' sic' foreign trash as is no worth mentionin'. It's aye alloc't that the Scots speak finer an' purer English than the bodies dae theirsells. We dinna miss co't oor h's an' pit them in whaur they shudna' be; we dinna pit r's to the en' o' sic words as idea, umbrella, an' the like.

We dinna pronounce fellow as if it was written feller, nor law lor, an' we ken fine the differ a'tween v and w, and that's mair than thae dae. Besides oor poets an' prose writers can write gude Scots, an' the vera best o' English; an' though I winna' deny to the Southern bodies a certain amount o' command o' their ain language, yet I'll defy ye to produce ony Englisher that ever was cleekit that could either write or speak Scots. Na, na, that's a cut abune them.

Wool, there's a callant ca'd Johnnie, that's a rare wee conceit. Od! man, he can sing like a mavis, an' for actin' he bates a'. He's an infant Roscius. An' the bit laddie that plays the piawno, he's a fine actor tae, that lad, an' he has a maist wonnerfu' fine touch. He can play a' the auld Scots airs that noo will gar your heart loup as licht as a lintie, an' syne maist gar ye greet, thinkin' o' auld lang syne, when ye were a wee bit bairnie sittin' listenin' to the playin' o' them whase fingers are noo still in death, an' wha hae been lang gane "whaur the weary cease frae troublin'."

I'm thinkin' it wad be a fine thing if the Captain o' the Scots Company wad tak a' his recruits to see the Gourlay's. Nae doot, bein' sae mony o' them, they wad get in for half price as the schules dae, an' if they gaed in their kilts, wi' their piper playin' afore them, it wad be a gran' sight. I'm tell't there's Germans an' Englishers in that Company, an' it wad be weel if they were learn't twa three words o' the language they're supposed to speak. It's an unco thing that they couldna' get eneuch o' Scots laddies to mak' up their num'er. There's only ae exercise whaur they're like to fail; an' that's stannin' at ease, for I'm fear't the mosquitoes 'll no let them. But if it ever comes to fechtin' they'll be a' richt,