

# ST. ANDREW'S DAY IN MADRAS

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SCOTSMEN are much the same wherever they are to be found, whether sent east of Suez in search of the ten commandments or of a thirst, or at home. They are no sooner settled in a place far away from home than they set about to establish schools, build a Kirk, take part in important business and celebrate St. Andrew's Day with almost immoderate gusto.

In Madras they became numerous and formed an influential element in the great Indian city. The placenames furnish evidence of their presence. Anderson Road, Brodie Castle, MacKay's Gardens are a few of the notable reminders.

The move for the building of St. George's Cathedral (Church of England) Mount Road, Madras, completed in 1816, gave an impetus to the Scotsmen to build a Kirk of their own. The directors of the East India Company were not unmindful of the need for a Kirk. They readily sanctioned it. A public notification, dated the 1st of September, 1815, called upon the Scottish people of Madras to give in their names in order to ascertain the accommodation required. There was a cordial response. The first divine service was held in the College Hall. The foundation of the present church on the Poonamalle High Road, Egmore, was held in 1818, and the church itself was completed in 1821. Considering the fact that Hugh Elliott, Governor of Fort George (1816-1820) was a Scotsman, it can safely be said that he and Sir Thomas Strange, Chief Justice, had no small hand in seeing through the beginnings of St. Andrew's Church—the Kirk—perhaps the noblest Christian edifice in Hindustan.

Sir Thomas Andrew Lumisden Strange, to give him his full name, was one of the most prominent Scotsmen in Madras in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. He was Chief Justice of Madras. Previously, he had been Chief Justice of Nova Scotia from 1789 to 1797. He played a most distinguished part in India in the discharge of both judicial and military duties. While he was Chief Justice of Nova Scotia he had filled the office of President of the North British Society in 1794; and when he came to Madras, he was determined that there should be established there a society similiar in organization and purpose to the one he had graced as President earlier in his notable career. He was one of the founders of the Madras Caledonian Society (originally known as the Highland Society), and he introduced into Madras social circles such things as

bagpipes, haggis, Scotch whiskey, "sair heeds," and other things loved by the Scots.

The customary celebration of St. Andrew's Day in Madras has been an annual feature since the days of John Company. The earliest report now available of one of these dinners is to be found in the Madras Gazette of December 29, 1810, and I understand that the ceremonies were very much of the same character as those of the Halifax Society on the same night. It is my purpose to give an account of how the Madras Scotsmen spent the evening.

The story is that on St. Andrew's Day a party of forty or fifty Caledonians, with a proportion of English and Hibernian friends, assembled in honour of the day at Moore's Rooms, where an excellent entertainment had been provided. A little before eight o'clock the company sat down to a varied and substantial dinner and in addition to the usual dishes of the English table, there were provided others peculiarly suited to the occasion. Among these, sheephead and haggis were not overlooked; and so well prepared were those national dainties that had they been brought to table at John-o-Groat's house or in any other part of the "Land of Cakes," they might have passed as approved specimens of native production.

The chair was taken by Sir William Keir, who ably discharged its duties. Mr. Dourvie and the Hon. Mr. Neville, as senior and junior stewards, officiated with spirit, judgment and effect. Under such auspices, conspiring with the occasion on which the party assembled, gaiety and cheerfulness naturally diffused their magic charm around the festive circle. A band of music lent its cheerful influence and re-echoed in its modulations the social and patriotic sentiments that warmed the bosoms of the votaries of St. Andrew. The after-dinner toasts were followed with songs and music appropriate to the particular toast. The toasts, honoured with appropriate libations, and music were in this order:

1. The Kirk of Scotland—MAGGIE LAUDER
2. The King—GOD SAVE THE KING
3. The Immortal Memory of St. Andrew and ilkabed  
that Hauds the Day—WITHIN A MILE OF EDINBURGH  
TOWN
4. The Prince of Wales—PRINCE OF WALES MARCH;

5. The Duke of York—O' SEND ME LEWIS GORDON HOME
6. The Queen and Royal Family—QUAKER'S WIFE
7. The Land of Cakes—BANNOCK O' BARLEY MEAL
8. The Countries of the Rose and the Shamrock: May they ever cordially entwine with the Thistle—ROAST BEEF OF OLD ENGLAND AND PADDY WHACK
9. Lord Minto and the Bengal Government—IN THE GARB OF THE GAEL
10. General Hewatt and the Bengal Army—THE BRITISH GRENADIERS
11. The Army and Navy—RULE BRITANNIA
12. The East India Company—GOW'D IN GOUPONS; LORD MOIRA, LORD LOUDON'S MARCH, HONEST MEN AND BONNIE LASSIES, JOHNNY'S GREY BREEKS, THE BEGGAR'S BENISON AND JOY BE WI' A'.

It will be observed that in the intervals of the toasts the company were gratified with many excellent songs adapted to the spirit of the evening. Towards the close of the evening the bagpipes were introduced. The strains of the pibroch smote sweetly on the Scottish ear and, reaching the heart at this moment of social elation, awakened a cloud of pleasing sentiments and brought to mind the days of Auld Lang Syne. On the band striking up the *Reel of Tullochgorum*, the table was deserted by the greater part of the company, who repaired to the ball room and indulged in country dances and reels. About one o'clock the party broke up, not without the satisfactory reflection of having celebrated the Festival of St. Andrew in a manner worthy of Caledonians.