

THE STORY OF PRINCE GATHELUS

[1] ONCE upon a time there lived in Greece a king who had a son called Gathelus. Prince Gathelus was very handsome and brave, but he was wild, and gay, and wicked, and he caused his father much sorrow and trouble. Over and over again the King punished and imprisoned his son for his evil deeds. But in spite of all his father could do, Gathelus grew no better but rather worse. At last the King had no more patience with him, and banished him from the land.

When Gathelus knew that he was banished, he took a ship, and gathering as many of his friends as would come with him, he sailed away to a far country called Egypt.

When they arrived in Egypt, Pharaoh, the ruler of the land, received them very kindly, for he was at that time fighting great battles, and he hoped that these gay young knights would help him against his enemies.

This, Gathelus and his friends did, and when Pharaoh had, with their aid, defeated his enemies, he rewarded them richly and gave them a city in which they could live together. Gathelus alone was not content with the rewards, for he had seen Pharaoh's beautiful daughter Scota, and he longed to marry her. And as Pharaoh could refuse nothing to the gallant Prince who had freed [2] him from his enemies, he

gave his consent, and Scota and Gathelus were married.

For many years Gathelus lived in Egypt, growing rich and great, and ruling over his people, who became more and more numerous as the years went by. And Gathelus loved his wife so much that he commanded that in honour of her name Scota, all his people should be called Scots.

But when Pharaoh began to be unkind to the Children of Israel, and terrible plagues fell upon the land, Gathelus wished to live there no longer. So he gathered a great fleet of ships, and with his wife and children, and all his soldiers and servants, and a great company of people, he went on board and sailed far away across the sea in search of another country.

After many storms and adventures Gathelus and his company arrived at last on the shores of Spain. They had been tossed and buffeted about by winds and waves for many days. They had eaten all the food which they had brought with them, and they were nearly starving. So they were very glad to be safe on land once more.

But the people of Spain were not glad to see these strangers, and they made ready to fight them. Gathelus too made ready to fight, and a fierce battle followed in which the Spaniards were beaten.

But Gathelus and his Scots wished to live at peace with the people of the land, and although

neither could speak the language of the other, the Scots found means to make the Spaniards understand that they did not wish to fight against them or to hurt them in any way. So the two nations became friends, and the Spaniards gave a part of their country to the Scots, where for many years they lived in peace.

As the years went on, the Scots grew to be still richer and greater than they had been in Egypt, and Gathelus, [3] who had been so wild and wicked when he was young, became a wise and good King. But when the Spaniards saw that the Scots had become a powerful nation, they were once more afraid of them, and they resolved to drive them out of the country.

Then both the Scots and the Spaniards gathered their mighty men, and there was a great and terrible battle, with awful slaughter on both sides. But in the end the Scots won the victory. Then once more peace was made, and the two nations agreed again to live side by side as friends.

But when Gathelus saw how the Scots still went on growing richer and greater day by day, he feared that the Spaniards would again become angry and want to fight. So he began to think how this might be avoided. At last, hearing of a Green Island which lay in the sea not far distant, he resolved to send some of his people there.

Gathering a great number of ships, he filled them with soldiers, and making his two sons, who were

called Hiberus and Himecus, captains, he sent them away to seek for the Green Island.

For some days the ships sailed upon the sea seeking the Green Island in vain. But at last they came to it and landed there. The Scots soon found out that there were very few people on the Green Island, and those who were there were gentle and kindly, and had no wish to fight.

Hiberus and Himecus therefore, instead of fighting, tried to make friends with the people. This they easily did, for the inhabitants of the Green Island, seeing that the Scots meant them no harm, welcomed them gladly.

So the Scots settled in the Green Island and taught the people many useful things. They showed them how to sow and plough and reap, how to build houses, how to [4] spin, and in many ways how to live more comfortably. Then presently, in honour of Hiberus, who was their Prince, they changed the name of the island to Hibernia. The island is still sometimes called by that name, although we generally call it Ireland.

For many years the Scots lived in Hibernia. Gathelus died, and Hiberus died, and after them ruled many kings. At last, when many hundreds of years had passed, a prince called Rothsay sailed over to the islands which lay opposite Hibernia, and took possession of them. The island upon which he first

landed he called Rothesay, and to this day there is a town on the island of Bute called by that name.

The Scots, finding that these islands were fertile, and good for breeding cattle, sailed over from Hibernia in greater and greater numbers, bringing their wives and children with them. At last they filled all the little islands, and some of them landed in the north of the big island, which was then called Albion.

After many, many years, the north part of Albion came to be called the land of Scots, or Scotland, just as the south part was called the land of Angles, or England.

Some people think that this story of Prince Gathelus is a fairy tale. But this at least is true, that in far off days when people spoke of Scotia, they meant Ireland, and when they spoke of Scots, they meant the people who lived in Ireland, and Scotland took its name from the people who came from Ireland and settled in Scotland.