

FIVE FACTORS IN BRITAIN'S PLIGHT

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(By Special Arrangement with the "Sunraysia Daily,"
Mildura.)

A FEW days ago I paused by the bank of Loch Lomond and watched the reluctant sun give way to twilight. The world and its troubles seemed thousands of miles away, and one was at peace with life. Nature still proclaims its law of beauty even in this harsh scorched earth era.

His Majesty's Fleet had gathered in the nearby bay of Gournock for inspection by the King, and my old friend, Rear-Admiral Packer, of Warspite fame, had suggested that I might spend the week-end with him before the Royal programme began. It was good to mix with men of the sea, for there is something in the salty tang of the winds that blows away pettiness and keeps the eternal values fresh.

On Saturday afternoon I acted as his civilian attache, when the local townspeople put on a fete in which members of the Boys' Brigade (a strong institution in Scotland) performed all sorts of acrobatics, and a number of lassies danced with decorous Scottish abandon. The village band played very loudly while its members proved to the listening ear that individualism still exists in Scotland. The cornetist won by a bar and a half, but the drummer was a close second.

But then the pipers came on, varying in age from fifteen to seventy, and it was a very different story. They were truly magnificent, and when they quickened their tempo and the crowd shouted with excitement I would willingly have joined in any movement to march against the English and avenge Flodden. With all due respect I suggest

the English and avenge Flodden. With all due respect I suggest that no one has heard the pipes unless they have been to Scotland.