

## Scotland after the Union

*Daniel Defoe (c. 1661-1731) was an English businessman, writer and journalist. He is still particularly well-known today for his novel, Robinson Crusoe. This text is taken from the account of his trip around Britain which he published in 1724.*

From hence, keeping the sea as close as we could on our left, we went on due West to Dumfries, a Sea-Port Town at the Mouth of the River Nid, or Nith, which gives Name to the third Division of the County call'd Nithdale; but the Town is justly the Capital of the whole Shire, and indeed, of all the South West Part of Scotland.

5 Here, indeed, as in some other Ports on this Side the Island, the Benefits of Commerce, obtain'd to Scotland by the Union, appear visible; and that much more than on the East Side, where they seem to be little, if anything mended, I mean in their Trade.

10 Dumfries was always a good Town, and full of Merchants. By Merchants, here I mean, in the Sense that Word is taken and understood in England (viz.) not Mercers and Drapers, Shopkeepers, etc. But Merchant-Adventurers, who trade to foreign Parts, and employ a considerable Number of Ships. But if this was so before, it is much more so now; and as they have (with Success) embark'd in Trade, as well to England as to the English Plantations, they apparently increase both in Shipping and People ; for as it almost everywhere appears, where Trade increases, People must and will increase; that is, they flock to the Place by the necessary  
15 Consequences of the Trade, and, in Return, where the People increase, the Trade will increase because the necessary Consumption of Provisions, Cloths, Furniture, etc. necessarily increases; and with them the Trade.

This is such a Chain of Trading Consequences, that they are not to be separated; and the Town of Dumfries, as well as Liverpool, Manchester, Whitehaven, and other Towns in England  
20 are Demonstrations of it.

This Town is situated also for an Increase of Commerce on the River Nid, for tho' it stands near two Leagues from the Sea, yet the Tide flows up to the Town, and Ships of Burden come close up to the Quay; but at about four Miles below the Town the largest Merchant-Ships in Britain might come up, and ride in Safety.

25 There is a very fine Stone Bridge here over the River Nid; as also a Castle, tho' of old Work, yet still good and strong enough; also an Exchange for the Merchants, and a Tolbooth, or Town-Hall for the Use of the Magistrates. They had formerly a Woollen Manufacture here. But as the Union has, in fame Manner, suppress'd those Things in Scotland, the English supplying them fully, both better and cheaper; so they have more than an Equivalent by an open Trade to all  
30 the English Plantations, and to England itself.

Daniel Defoe, *A Tour thro' the Whole Island of Great Britain* (1724)