

## CHAP. V.

## THE LAND'S END OF SCOTLAND.

Cantire, geographical, historical, and antiquarian. — Who knows anything about Cantire? — Maps, Guide-Books, and other Publications making mention of Cantire. — Eureka! a novel Subject. — Scotch Mulls in general, and the Mull of Cantire in particular. — The most southern Northern Light. — Tides. — Highland Vagrants. — Highland Story-tellers. — The Laird of Carskey and his familiar Spirit. — Kilcolmkill and St. Columba. — His History and Miracles. — Modern Miracle-mongers. — Columba's first Hebridean Church at Kilcolmkill. — A romantic Request. — Coneglen. — The Fort of the Land's End of Scotland.



OUR first step on Highland ground has brought us to the Land's End of Scotland, — for such is the meaning of the word “Cantire,” or, as it is written in Gaelic, *Ceantire*, Land's end.” \*

Cantire is the southern portion of Argyleshire. It is a peninsula of more than forty miles in length, commencing at Tarbert with a narrow neck barely two

\* On the authority of the Rev. Dr. Macleod, of Glasgow.

miles in width, and gradually widening out into the respectable peninsular proportions of some ten or twelve miles about the waist. As you look at it upon the map, this forty miles of land hangs by its neck from Tarbert, and dangles alongside the Isle of Arran, with its foot only prevented from treading on Irish ground by barely twelve intervening miles of Atlantic waves, but with the island of Rathlin for a stepping-stone between it and Ireland. Although Cantire as a whole is not equal to other portions of the Highlands in the grandeur, beauty, or diversity of its scenery, yet it contains many attractions; and, from the peculiarity of its peninsular position, has throughout its length and breadth that which many other portions of the Highlands cannot boast, — a grand sea view. Regarded from a historical point of view, Cantire is fully as interesting as any other part of Scotland; for it was the cradle of Christianity in south-western Scotland, and the original seat of the Scottish monarchy. It was the first land that the Scots possessed in what is now called Scotland, and the capital of their kingdom was the town now called Campbelton. Its nearness to Arran, to Ireland, and to the southern Hebrides gives it another special peculiarity among Highland districts, and also affords the chief reason why its sea views are of so varied and picturesque a character. To the historian, the antiquarian, the geologist, the botanist, the artist, the

fisherman, the sportsman, and to the tourist in search of a healthy climate, sea breezes, and fine landscapes, Cantire will amply repay a visit.

And yet, who knows anything about Cantire? Is there one in a hundred who even ever heard of Cantire? To begin at home, *de te fabula narratur*, I confess my own ignorance on the subject and the locality, until a friendly invitation had paved the way towards enlightening my ignorance. But is not there many a one among my readers to whom these pages will first convey the tidings that there *is* such a country, that its boundaries are so-and-so and its population so-and-so, and that its exports are herrings and whiskey, and its imports English sportsmen. Even the very cartographers, although when they draw you a map of Scotland they must necessarily mark down its Land's-end, yet will tell you little or nothing respecting Cantire; or, if they do condescend to mention its more important features, will do it on their own responsibility, and as it were from information supplied "out of their own heads;" for no two maps that I have seen (and, during the last six months, I have consulted as many maps in number as I could count upon the fingers of five or six of my friends) can agree as to the names of the places in Cantire, or to the method of spelling them. Even Cantire itself is variously spelt Kintyre, Cinntire, Cean-tire, Cantyre, &c., while the nomenclature of the villages,

glens, and streams is as varied as it is unpronounceable.\* Beginning with the map in the sixpenny *Bradshaw* (which advertises all the Campbelton steamers, but) which does not even mark down Campbelton, and yet gives prominence to the tiny island of Davar; and running through all the maps up to Mr. A. K. Johnston's large ten shilling "County-Map" of Argyllshire, which (on the authority of Mr. Stanford, of Charing Cross) is "the best map of Cantire," we find, on consulting them, so much diversity and so many errors, that it is very evident that we must wait for the Ordnance Survey before we can obtain anything like a

\* The natives tell me that there are two ways of spelling the word; viz. Cantire, or Kintyre, either of which is correct. And I see that Mr. Campbell, in his "West Highland Tales," spells it Cantire (vol. ii. p. 36) and Kintyre (vol. ii. p. 53), indifferently. "Cantyre," I am told by Gaelic purists, is a word for which there is no authority, although Scott thus spells it, and Macculloch and others follow his example. Among much that is very interesting concerning the Gaelic language and its dialects, Mr. Campbell says, "It is my own opinion, and it is that of Mr. Maclean, that the Gaelic language is the same from Cape Clear in Ireland, to Cape Wrath in Scotland, though there are many dialects, and there is much variety. . . . An Argyleshire Highlander is known in the north by his accent, just as a Yorkshireman would be found out in Somersetshire. . . . The author of a very good dictionary says, under the word *Coig*, that 'in the islands of Argyleshire every word is pronounced *just as Adam spoke it.*' Dr. Johnson pronounced the whole to be the rude speech of a barbarous people; and the Saxon knew as much of Gaelic as the Celt did of Adam." (Vol. i. pp. cxxvi, cxxvii.)

tolerably correct cartography of the Land's End of Scotland.\*

I suppose that it is from Cantire lying so much out of the beaten track of tourists that it has been so little known, or so little described in print. As for the tourist's Guide-books, if they refer to this part of the world at all, they are content with a passing reference to Campbelton, Tarbert, and the Mull of Cantire.† And

\* From a private source I have been informed that "the best and most accurate map of Cantire is that by Langlands and Son. It is on a large scale, and copies of it are now rare." This map I have not seen. In Mr. A. K. Johnston's map of Cantire, above referred to, there are frequent examples where names convey erroneous information, even when correctly noted down, as to locality and spelling. Thus, in the neighbourhood of Glenbarr Abbey, there are some names of other houses marked in equally enlarged characters, and with the like representation of a little house, to denote that they are places of unusual importance; and one would naturally conclude that they are mansions of similar dimensions and rank; whereas they are nothing more than miserable farm-houses, of one story high, and not half so important in size or appearance as the generality of farm outbuildings in an English country village, and sink below the level of an English labourer's cottage.

† I must make honourable exception in favour of M'Phun's "Pleasure Excursion to the Highlands," a shilling guide-book, written by Mr. Wm. Wallace Fyfe, and re-published in 1858. I say "re-published," but not re-written; for it is nothing more than an old book in a new cover. The book is identically the same, including the preface (which speaks of "the present edition being enlarged," &c.), with the edition published in 1850 under a different title. Although, from this circumstance, much of the information has not improved in correctness by thus being kept, yet the book is very carefully compiled, and will be found a pleasant and informing companion.

sometimes not so much as that; for the most expensive, and in many respects the best as well as the most popular of all the Guide-books, Black's "Picturesque Guide to Scotland," although in 1859 it had passed through fourteen editions, yet does not even mention Campbelton, or bestow any of its descriptive or illustrative powers upon the peninsula of Cantire. Except from the scanty descriptions in Gazetteers, the curious reader would experience no small difficulty in obtaining much authentic information regarding this interesting Land's End of Scotland. Pennant's account is very meagre: he briefly notices Tarbert and Campbelton, and but little else. Macculloch, in his earlier book, only refers to the geology of Cantire, and in his later work bestows very scanty writing upon Cantire. He briefly notices the Mull of Cantire, but does not even mention Dunaverty; and his account of the thirty miles of country between Machrihanish Bay and Loch Tarbert, is compressed into twenty lines. Dr. Beattie, in his large illustrated work on Scotland, only speaks of Tarbert, and makes no further reference to Cantire.

Lord Teignmouth describes Tarbert and Campbelton and some places (such as Saddell) on the eastern coast, but says, "the scenery on the western side of Cantire is not worth notice.\* This, however, is a matter of opinion; and Lord Teignmouth had already said of the Kyles

\* Lord Teignmouth's "Scotland," vol. ii. p. 375.

of Bute, now one of the great attractions for Scotch tourists, "The Kyle of Bute offers no scenery worthy of notice."\* "A Historical Account of Campbelton" was published by Dr. Smith nearly half a century ago, and has formed the basis for all subsequent accounts; and an illustrated history of "Campbelton and its neighbourhood, by William Smith," in forty-three folio pages, was published in 1833; but I have failed to meet with either of these works in public libraries of nearly 100,000 volumes, and they will probably be unknown to the general reader.† An account of Cantire will be found in the "Statistical Account of Scotland," published in 1843; but this book also would not be easily accessible to the general reader, nor would the information it contained come before him in a very palatable state. From these volumes, however (bringing into use the theory of selection), I will extract, for the reader's benefit, anything that may seem suitable or interesting, duly comparing it with and correcting it by such later information as I have been able to obtain, either by my own observation or by the kindness of Cantire friends, by which means I trust that the reader may gain some reliable information concerning a very interesting but little known country. There is also another account of Cantire that would not come under

\* Lord Teignmouth's "Scotland," vol. i, p. 25.

† I have been unable to obtain a sight of Dr. Smith's work; but it is quoted in the Statistical Account, &c.

the notice of the general reader. It is a pamphlet printed (I believe) for private circulation, and not to be bought, written by Mr. Peter MacIntosh, catechist at Campbelton. From this publication, of which a copy has kindly been given to me, I shall have frequent occasion to quote; but although it contains much that is valuable and interesting, its information is not always to be depended upon, and must be used with caution.\* When Hugh Miller made his "Cruise of the Betsy," he unfortunately sailed round the Mull of Cantire in the dark, and did not land at Islay until sunrise next

\* For example, he says that Beinn-an-Tuire is "1000 to 1500 feet" above the level of the sea. At the best this is a very loose way of giving the approximate height of a mountain; but it so happens that the real height of this mountain, as determined by trigonometrical survey, is 2170 feet. Cnoc Maigh, on the Mull of Cantire, he very precisely determines to be "but two or three feet lower" than this mountain, whose height he is unable to determine to a matter of 500 feet! Its real height is 2036 feet. (See the "Statistical Account of Scotland," pp. 437, 454.) Of Saddell monastery—the history of which we have already seen—he says, "The church was not erected by St. Columba, but is of a more modern construction, though the date of its erection cannot be ascertained." It is clear that this inhabitant of Campbelton had not access to Dr. Smith's "Historical Account," or to Smith's "History," or he would have been able to have given more authentic information concerning Saddell monastery. But his pamphlet has, in certain matters, afforded me very much assistance, which I here beg gratefully to acknowledge. With this general acknowledgment I shall quote from it, and the other works just mentioned, without confusing or encumbering my pages with useless references.



morning. Sir Walter Scott, in the "Lord of the Isles," makes reference to "wild Cantyre,"\* and the narrow neck of the peninsula at Tarbert.

Professor Wilson speaks of "the many-based, hollow rumbling western coast of that unaccountable county, Argyleshire," but says nothing specially concerning Cantire. Maxwell, in his "Highlands and Islands," † mentions that he sailed into Campbelton harbour in his friend's yacht, yet he does not say one word as to the scenery or the place, but indulges in a rhapsody on the comforts, and luxuries, and "culinary capabilities" of a first-class yacht. One of the authors of Anderson's (half-guinea) "Guide to the Highlands," appears to have satisfied himself that the distant view of the western coast of Cantire, as seen from the deck of a steamer when crossing from Tarbert to Islay, was quite sufficient for all the purposes of his "Guide." "On passing Ardpatrik Point," he says, "the appearance of the bleak, sombre, heathy hills of Cantire and Argyle is quite uninteresting; and the passenger will feel no reluctance in being carried away from the coast" (p. 350). There is a considerable degree of cool assurance in putting forth such a sentence as this. It reminds us of the legal endorsement, "Bad case: abuse plaintiff's attorney!" If, from force of circumstances in compiling a Guide-book, you are unable to describe

\* Canto iv. 12.

† Vol. i. p. 32.

a tract of land, from the very sufficient but unsatisfactory reason that you are carried away from it, the easiest way to get over the difficulty is to tell your readers that the country is utterly uninteresting, and need not call for any remark. "Manners, none: Customs, beastly;" let us get away from the place as fast as we can. And so, because Cantire is out of every one's way, and does not lie in the high road to the most familiar sights, it must either be unnoticed or dismissed with a sneer.

But when we have read nineteen pages further on in "Anderson's Guide" (a book which, despite my present fault-finding, I regard as the fullest and best Guide-book to the Highlands, and which without the aid of illustrations has now held its own for nearly thirty years), we find ourselves taken to another "Route,"—for this is one of those Guide-books that condemn the tourist to a system of "Routes" or "Tours," from which, if the traveller deviates one jot or tittle, or presumes to commence his journey at the wrong end, he is altogether thrown out, and has to read his Guide-book backwards (as though it were a Hebrew volume), or to puzzle out his journey by intricate references to the Index;—and this "Route" takes the traveller to "Cantire and Isles of Ailsa and Arran," and devotes nearly seven pages to a description of Cantire, in which is the following sentence, describing that portion of the

coast condemned as "quite uninteresting," by the writer of the previous "Route." "From its southern extremity (*i. e.*, West Loch Tarbert), the road running almost all the way to Mackerihanish Bay along the shore, forms a pleasing ride, and commands noble sea views towards Jura and Islay" (p. 370).

Since the island of Skye has become the fashion, all Argyleshire south of Inverary, and all the Hebrides south of Rum, or "Mull's mountain shores," have been thrown out of the tourist's track. From Dr. Johnson's time to the present day, nearly every "Tour to the Hebrides" that has been published might have been entitled "Highlands, Islands, and Skye-lands;" for the reader might be very sure that "the Hebrides" was a name given only to a small portion of those three hundred Western Isles, and that that portion related to its northern division, and most probably to "the misty hills of Skye." I have mentioned (so far as a diligent search has enabled me to do this) all the books in which the interesting district of "the Land's End" of Scotland is in any way described. Such books, as we have seen, are but very few: their information is either very scanty and incorrect; or else, in those few cases where it is reliable and tolerably full, it is either mixed up with other matters in a form very hard to be digested, or hid away in books which may very safely be pronounced to be unknown to, and unattainable by,

that highly erudite and otherwise well-informed person, "the general reader."

In these days of multifarious pennings of places and people, when the "Complete Letter-Writer," who provides you with a stereotyped form of epistolary communication for every circumstance of life, is altogether outstripped by the complete "Tourist's Guide," who will give you a more or less faithful description of every place to which you may or may not wish to go, it is a rare accident to light upon a virgin spot of earth innocent as yet of much author's craft, and for whom the scribbler's ink has not yet been greatly spilled. Few districts are there in the United Kingdom whose charms have been as yet unsung. Well, therefore, might the author, in search of a subject, shout an *Eureka* when he steps upon Campbelton pier; and, looking northwards towards Tarbert, sees a long stretch of twice twenty miles of western coast, with its villages, and farms, and country seats; its churches, and manses, and schools; its mountains, and moors, and lochs, and rivers; its fisheries and shootings; its good roads, traversed twice a day by a dashing mail-cart, but not once crossed by an obstructive silver-extracting turnpike, — well, indeed, might the subjectless author echo the glad "Eureka" of Archimedes and Mr. Shirtmaker Ford, for he hath lighted on a land of which there is but the barest record in print.

The Mull of Cantire is the veritable "Land's End," the southernmost point of the Peninsula. Pennant says that it was "the *Epidii promontorium* of the Romans, noted for the violence of the adverse tides, compared to the force of a *mill-race*, from whence the modern name." Pennant's etymology, however, is erroneous; for, although there are many meanings to the word "Mull" in Scotland, yet this particular kind of Mull means "a promontory, or point;" though it does not follow that the point of a Scotch jest is synonymous (in slang language) to the *mull* of that jest, notwithstanding Sydney Smith's declaration that it required a surgical operation to get a joke into a Scotchman. But, to come to the point,—which is to come to the Mull,—we find this Land's End of Scotland to consist of a group of heath-covered hills, or (for in the Highlands it is difficult to say where a "mountain" begins and a "hill" terminates) to use Lord Teignmouth's expression, "the Mull is a huge pile of mountains." The loftiest of the range,—Cnoc-maigh, or Knockmoy, "the Hill of the Plain," may fairly be conceded to range among the mountains of Scotland, for it is 2036 feet above the level of the sea; although, together with its companion Cantire mountain, Beinn-an-Tuirc, whose altitude is 2170 feet, it is not included in the tabular lists of the heights of mountains given in Black's "Guide" and other works, where mountains of not half

the elevation are mentioned.\* The other hills on the Mull of Cantire vary from about 1200 feet down to 200, or 280, the height of the bold rocky cliff on which



SCOTCH MULLS.

the lighthouse is built. This lighthouse, the most southern of the “Northern Lights,” was originally erected at the latter end of the past century†, but was

\* One of the latest and most compendious of the Gazetteers of Scotland, thus sums up its description of Cantire:—“The long narrow peninsula of Knapdale and Kintyre, extending nearly fifty miles southward, with a mean breadth of about seven miles, rises at its southern extremity to an altitude of about 1000 feet above sea level; but elsewhere is *very moderately*, and even *gently hilly*, has many interspersions of plain and valley, and wears an arable, *sheltered*, and softly picturesque appearance.”

† By Mr. Peter Stuart of Campbelton. The light room and the

renewed in 1820 from the designs of Mr. Robert Stephenson, who was the engineer to the Commissioners for the Northern Lights. It has a circular tower forty feet high, domed with copper, and the light can be seen for a distance of thirty miles. Ballycastle, in Ireland, is only eighteen miles distant, and the Irish coast comes still nearer to the Mull. "It is the nearest point of the whole island of Great Britain to Ireland," says the late Rev. D. Kelly, the minister of Southend, "the distance being computed to be only eleven and a half miles between the promontory and Tor Point, in the county of Antrim." This inconsiderable distance would denote the Mull of Cantire as being a favourable spot for laying a submarine telegraph to connect Great Britain with Ireland, unless, indeed, the sea at this point is too perpetually violent for the success of the undertaking. The coast is peculiarly hazardous, and off the Mull there is a great peculiarity in the tides. At the distance of three miles from the shore, a depth

reflecting apparatus were brought from Edinburgh, and carried on men's shoulders over the mountains, for the road through the Mull was not made till 1828. The light was first exhibited on Dec. 1, 1788. "The British Pharos" describes the light as "a stationary light, appearing like a star of the first magnitude at the distance of six or seven leagues." The point of Corsewall bears S.S.E. from this twenty-six miles; Portpatrick Light, S. by E., thirty-seven miles; the Maiden Rocks, S. by W.  $\frac{1}{2}$  W., distant twenty miles; Copeland Light, S. by W.  $\frac{1}{2}$  W., distant thirty-eight miles.





of twelve fathoms is sometimes found. The spring tides run at six miles an hour; the neap tides at about three. Within a mile and a half of the promontory there runs an eddy tide like a whirlpool, and much stronger than that which runs in the channel; as, when the tide runs to the westward, this eddy tide runs to the eastward along shore, and vessels have often been driven on shore from ignorance of this peculiarity. So powerful is the tide that rolls round the Mull, that it throws up the sand and gravel at Carskay Bay, so as to make an embankment, which has turned to the westward the stream that flows down Glen Breckry. The wild and varied magnificence of the rocks projecting into this stormy ocean, and exposed to all the fury of the waves and the outrage of tempests, is peculiarly striking. The solitude of the spot is broken only by the hoarse thundering of the waves, for scarcely a sea-bird is to be seen here; and for the same cause, — namely, the absence of fish who love not the perpetual conflict of the tides, no fisherman here perils his life in his hazardous trade. A wild fury prevails over the scene.

The precipitous sea-wall of this iron-bound shore\* is girt at its base by innumerable rocks, appearing from the waves in all kinds of jagged and fanciful

\* Consisting of immense masses of mica slate and quartz.

shapes; three of these at the foot of the lighthouse cliff, are known as "The Merchants," or "Pedlars." The sea is never tranquil at this spot, but ever in wild unrest; the conflicting tides lash the waves into a state of perpetual madness, so that there ever appears to be a storm raging at the foot of the Mull, when all around is calm and quiet. It requires no great play of the fancy to imagine the scene presented by this coast in tempestuous weather; and, in order to avoid its dangers, boats were frequently dragged across the neck of the peninsula at Tarbert, as we read in "The Lord of the Isles." There have been many hundreds of shipwrecks off the Mull of Cantire, and many crews have gone down without it having been possible to afford them the slightest aid. With this thought before me, it is therefore very gratifying to be able to record the establishment of a life-boat station at a point where it is so terribly needed. Lady Murray, of Edinburgh, has given the munificent sum of 520*l.* for this purpose; and the Royal National Life-Boat Institution have undertaken the formation of the station, which is now in progress. The boat station, however, will be at Campbelton, which, from its central position, equally commands the Mull of Cantire and Machrihanish Bay, besides other dangerous parts of the eastern and western coasts. Besides this station, the Life-Boat Institution have a second station at Irvine (on the west

coast), also in course of formation ; and have eight other stations at Ayr, Thurso, Buckie, Banff, Lossiemouth, Fraserburgh, St. Andrews, and North Berwick. It will thus be seen that the rugged coast of Scotland is very inadequately provided with those appliances for preserving life and property from shipwreck, of which a maritime country ought to be possessed ; and, as the first formation of a life-boat station does not cost more than 400*l.*, and as its efficiency can be maintained for an annual outlay of 40*l.*, it surely is better policy (to take the lowest ground of argument) to invest so comparatively small a sum in such a noble insurance society, than to run the risk of losing priceless lives and valuable cargoes at such dangerous parts of our coast as those of which the Mull of Cantire may be taken as a type. Lady Murray's noble gift is a splendid exemplar text, which preaches to all those who have the ability to "go and do likewise." \*

On the slope of the hill behind the lighthouse is a flag-staff, where a rain-gauge is kept ; and not far off is a vitrified fort. The view from this spot is most extensive ; Ireland, the Isle of Man, Arran and Bute, the Ayrshire coast, and Islay and Jura, are included in the panorama. It is said that the Mull of Cantire was once so thickly populated, that a beggar who

\* See Appendix.

commenced his round at Balligrogan on the western coast, could find hospitable entertainment for the space of four months between that place and Southend, on the eastern coast, a distance under twenty miles. These vagrants were the walking newspapers of those times; they played on the bagpipes or fiddle, and they told legendary tales, sang Gaelic songs, and recited the poems of Ossian. They were, therefore, very welcome guests, and there was as much stratagem evinced in obtaining their presence at a farm-house, and as much complacent cackling when the stratagem was crowned with success, as could ever be shown by any Lady Mayfair in entrapping the latest lion to her Tuesday evenings. "If my fiddle won't give me milk," said one of these sturdy rovers, "she will give me music." But he knew very well that the whiskey "mild as milk," would speedily be offered in exchange for the scraping. But another, who was a bagpiper, would not drink whiskey, saying, "It is too strong for me; I saw a far stronger man than myself whom it whirled into a ditch." Another vagrant met the Duke of Argyle, and said to him, "Mr. Duke, I have a petition for you." "What is it, John?" asked his Grace. "I cannot read it," replied John, "but I can say it. I wish you to allow me more fat beef than I am getting." "You shall have plenty of fat beef, John," said the Duke. Another man, with a good knowledge of the

Scripturès, would wander about holding arguments at the very top of his voice, with the devil and the pope. One day, when a lady gave him charity, he said, "Now I must thank God in the first place for this favour, and next the lady." He then uncovered his head, and solemnly thanked God, and then turned to the lady and repeated his gratitude.

Such characters are still to be met with in certain parts of the Western Highlands and Islands, though, it is to be feared, that they will soon be as extinct a race as stage coachmen or old charleys. Mr. Campbell's "Popular Tales of the West Highlands" give us some very pleasant information concerning them, and would appear to assign their partial destruction to the efforts of "the minister and the schoolmaster." We are told that "the recitation of tales during the long winter nights is still very common. The people gather in crowds to the houses of those whom they consider good reciters, to listen to their stories. They appear to be fondest of those tales which describe exceedingly rapid changes of place in very short portions of time, and have evidently no respect for the unities. During the recitation of these tales the emotions of the reciters are occasionally very strongly excited, and so also are those of the listeners, almost shedding tears at one time, and giving way to loud laughter at another."\*

\* Vol. i, p. 12.

“ I found the story-tellers to be men with clear heads, and wonderful memories, generally very poor and old, living in remote corners of remote islands, and speaking only Gaelic ; in short, those who have lived most at home, furthest from the world, and who have no source of mental relaxation beyond themselves and their neighbours.”\* Mr. Campbell mentions more than one West Highland man (who could neither read nor write) who would declaim the poems of Ossian two hundred lines at a time, and tell a wild weird legend whose recital would occupy a couple of long evenings. The late Rev. Dr. Stuart, minister of Luss, knew an old Highlander in the Isle of Skye, who repeated to him for three successive days, and during several hours each day, without hesitation, and with the utmost rapidity, *many thousand* lines of ancient poetry, and would have continued his repetitions much longer if the Doctor had required him to do so.†

This once populous Mull of Cantire is now quite deserted, and turned into a large sheep farm. When Lord Teignmouth visited it in 1827, only three shep-

\* Vol. i. p. 31.

† For other examples of Highland recitations and powers of memory, see Stewart's "Sketches," vol. i. § 8. The Icelanders repeat interminable Sagas, word for word, if compared with a book. For the reciting powers of modern Greek blind bards, see Grote's "History of Greece," vol. ii. p. 197 (4th edition). See also Max Müller's "History of Sanskrit Literature," (p. 497) for the still more surprising facts connected with the early Vedic literature.

herds resided upon it, though, a few years previous, it was inhabited by twenty families. If, therefore, the recruiting sergeant of a Highland regiment should ever beat up this district, the same remark could be made to him that was once made to a Highland chieftain whose clansmen had been driven to other lands, "Ye must recruit with the colly dog, for there is nothing but sheep upon your hills!"

Passing from the Mull towards the east, we come to Carskay, where "once upon a time" lived a laird who had a familiar spirit called *Beag-bheul*, or "little mouth," which talked to him, and took great care of him and his property. "Little mouth" once told him of a great battle that would be fought in Cantire, and that the magpie would drink human blood from off a standing stone erected near Campbelton. The stone was removed and converted into a bridge, but the battle has not yet been fought.

A stream called the Breckry, rising in the mountain of Cnoc-maigh, falls into Carskay Bay. The mountainous scenery of Glen Breckry is fine; the rocks are chiefly composed of mica-slate, and mountain sandstone or quartz. In this glen lived *An Dotair Beag*, "the little doctor," who had cunning power over herbs, and endeavoured to make his patients believe that he performed his cures by the aid of magical charms, an endeavour in which he was tolerably successful. Another

inhabitant of this glen was a Mr. Dunbar, who, for fifty years, kept a school in this wild district.\* It has been said of him, that he could compose a satire that was not unworthy of Burns himself.

From Glen Breckry we come to Kilcolmkill, near Keill, where is the ancient church and burying-ground of St. Columba, and the pedestal of a large stone cross, of which we shall hear more in a future chapter. The name of Kilcolmkill is said by tradition, to be derived from that Irish Prince named Colum, whom we know as St. Columba, "the Apostle of the Picts," or, as Martin, in his "Western Isles," funnily calls him "Columba the Clergyman." *Kil* means "a Cell, or Church," therefore the name signifies the "Cell of St. Colum (the founder) of Churches." Shakspeare tells us that the body of King Duncan was "carried to Colm's kill," which was Icolmkill, otherwise called Icolumbkill, and now commonly known as Iona †, but still called by the Hebrideans by its old name of I or Hy, "the island," for, it was *the island par excellence*, the

" Isle of Columba's Cell,  
Where Christian piety's soul — cheering spark  
(Kindled from heaven between the light and dark  
Of time) shone like the morning star." ‡

\* There is a good school house here, supported by the proprietors and by the Edinburgh Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.

† *Iona* would be more correct, just as *Hebrides* should be *Hebudes*.

‡ Wordsworth's "Poems of the Imagination," Tour, 1833, sonnet xxxv.



St. Columba's baptismal name was Criomthan, and his cognomen of Columbnakill, "the Dove of the Church," was simply a nickname given him by his companions out of irony, to express the ungovernable vehemence of his temper, which had brought him into great trouble in his native land, and finally caused his expulsion from thence. For, to avenge the death of a ward, Colum had waged war against his sovereign, King Dermot, and had been defeated in the battle of Kill Drummie. Dermot banished him, and the Abbot Molaise, to whom Colum had vowed obedience, bade him, when he left Ireland, never look upon its shores again; a command which Colum obeyed, for, his final resting-place of Iona was chosen because his native country could not be seen from thence, and when he was called upon by Aodh (Hugh) King of Ireland to attend the meeting of Drumcat, in 588, he landed upon the Irish coast with bandaged eyes. The Abbot Molaise had also bidden Colum expend his superfluous energies in endeavours to convert the Northern Picts, and, in this holy work, to seek for reformation and forgiveness. This was in the year 561, according to the best authorities, when Colum was forty years of age\*, possessed

\* Bede, however, says that Colum did not leave Ireland till 565, when he was forty-two years of age, and that he came to Britain in the ninth year of the reign of Bridius. Keating, in his "History of Ireland," says that there were twenty-two saints named Colum, which may account for some of the discrepancies in dates, &c.

of extraordinary talents, and eminent piety, a model of manly beauty, and with a voice that was even more powerful than that of Mr. Spurgeon. Indeed, if we might believe his biographer, St. Adamnan, his voice had that miraculous quality, that, while it did not seem to be loud to his brethren who were in the Church, yet it could be distinctly heard at a distance of five hundred, or a thousand paces, and even by those who were more than a mile away. And, Adamnan also tells us, that when St. Columba was chanting outside King Brude's fortifications, and the Pagan Druids endeavoured to drown his voice, he sang a Psalm with such amazing power, that it was like the sound of thunder.

A word as to St. Adamnan's work.\* It contains a detailed account of fifty prophecies made by St. Columba, which (of course) came true, forty-six miracles performed by him, and twenty-two apparitions of angels that at divers times appeared to him; and it has therefore found favour in the eyes of Romanists, so much so, that, in the latter part of 1860, a trans-

\* Adamnan was the fourth abbot of Iona. He died in 704, and had conversed with those who knew St. Columba, to whom he was of kin, being descended (through his mother) from Conan, King of Ireland, grandfather to St. Columba. Cnuonian, the third abbot of Iona (who may have seen St. Columba), also wrote a biography of him. Among modern lives of St. Columba, I may mention that published by Dr. Smith, of Campbelton, in 1798. Of modern editions of Adamnan's life, that edited by Dr. Reeves is the most important.

lation of it was issued "to help on the cause of Catholic literature." We cannot be surprised at this, in days when Cardinal Wiseman quotes the Montalembert miracle of "Saint" Elizabeth of Hungary, in his Christmas Pastoral for 1860, and when men (like Newman) think miracles to be "the sort of facts proper to ecclesiastical history." We have had an abundance of these "facts," from the days of "the Thundering Legion," down to the days of winking and sweating pictures, and blood that liquefied to the very moment, in obedience to the command of that laughter-in-his-sleeve, Garibaldi. Classical history too has a plentiful blackberry-crop of similar "facts," and they make very pretty reading, and cast many flowers on the school-boy's thorny path. They have a classical peculiarity about them which is but natural, just as "the sort of facts" to which Newman refers have also their own indigenous peculiarity, viz. that Popish miracles always occur in Popish countries; which, in its way, is as providential a circumstance as the flowing of large rivers by large towns. Nothing is easier than to take the history of the past, and encrust it with fictions. It is an occupation that is the pastime of the Romish writer, and the profit of the Romish priest. In the nature of things, it must fall to the lot of posterity to canonise the dead; and it would be but a useless work to enrol in the list of Romish saints any indivi-

dual whose mortal deeds were not tinged with an immortal hue. Miracles impart this *couleur de rose* to a prosaic life, and "distance lends enchantment to the view," and many an honest gentleman, who, in the plodding round of his everyday life, had never even dreamed of setting the Thames on fire, would, if he could arise from his grave, awake, and find himself famous, after a fashion of which he had no anticipation. It is necessary to bear in mind, that the miraculous narrative is generally considerably posterior to the alleged miracle, as in the case of "St." Ignatius Loyola, the founder of the Jesuits. He was so far an honest man, that he never attempted to humbug his followers into the belief that he was possessed of miraculous powers, nor were they attributed to him in any contemporary narrative, or in any of the Biographies written shortly after his death. But, when his generation was clean gone, and they who could have given evidence on the question of his miracles were in their graves, then, his followers, growing ambitious as they increased in numbers and importance, commenced the invention of that long list of miracles, which gave their founder a place in the Romish calendar, and which have since formed (to Romanists) the most interesting portion of the "Saint's" biography. And, thus it appears to have been with Adamnan's Life of St. Columba. He wrote what he had learned from others;

and, with great simplicity, he tells us that though he did not actually see those wonderful miracles that he has recorded, yet that his belief in them is confirmed beyond a doubt, by the *miracles* that he himself saw on three several occasions (which are detailed), when, after the invocation of St. Columba, unfavourable winds were changed into propitious breezes. But, perhaps we cannot wonder at modern Romanists for bringing St. Adamnan into prominence, for he was the first who introduced Romanising innovations into the apostolic simplicity and purity of the Church of Iona.

To continue the narrative of St. Columba. "He left his country," says Mrs. Hamilton Gray, "with a heavy heart, accompanied by twelve coadjutors\*, and landed in Cantire; where he remained until his sentence had been partially reversed by an Irish Council, which declared that he had acted upon great provocation, and that the punishment exceeded the offence. In

\* Commonly said to be in imitation of the twelve apostles; but St. Columba's character does not warrant this belief; and Bede too says that there were thirteen. Adamnan mentions one of them, by name Lugbeus Mocumin, to whom St. Columba had told of a fire of sulphur that was then being poured down from heaven on an Italian city, and destroying 3000 souls; and that sailors should come from Gaul and speak of this, before the year was out. (It was then just after harvest time.) In a few months after this Lugbeus accompanied the saint to Cantire, and there met with the captain and sailors of a ship that had just arrived from Gaul, who told them of the fate of the city and its inhabitants, as it had been prophesied by St. Columba.

Cantire he exercised the charm of his great superiority over every one whom he approached; and Connal," the fifth king of the Dalriad Scots, "was soon completely under his influence, and engaged in every way to forward his penitential mission. He sent him with an honourable escort, and as a master in wisdom, to Brude, King of the Picts; and Colum made so wonderful an impression upon that monarch, that, notwithstanding the opposition of the Druids, he declared himself a Christian, and recognised Christianity as the religion of his people. The chiefs followed their monarch, and the people their chiefs; and thus, without persecution, Christianity silently and surely settled its churches in every district of Pictavia. Colum converted the Arch-Druid Broichan by curing him of a lingering disease; and he appealed to the Prince of Orkney, whom he met at the Court of Brude, to favour the Christians already in Orkney, and to protect the preachers whom he should send there." \* Soon after, the beautiful "Island of Druids," *Innis nan Druid a nach*, soon to be world-renowned, under the name of Iona, whence "savage clans and roving barbarians derived the benefits of knowledge and the blessings of religion," † was conferred upon Colum, by Kings Connal and Brude.‡

\* The Empire and the Church.

† Dr. Johnson.

‡ Brude, Bridius, or Bridei, surnamed "Potentissimus," ascended the Pictish throne in 556. He defeated the Dalruadhini in 557. It

Colum became "Iona's saint," in the year 565, having arrived in Cantire either in 561, or 3,— for both dates

would be out of place here to enter upon any disquisition on that oft-mooted question, Who were the Picts? It is evident that they were of the Caledonian race. Caledonia, it will be remembered, was that great section of Scotland comprising the Highlands north of Loch Fyne, but not including Cantire. The Scots and the Picts were congenial races, of a common origin, and of common tongues, and could easily be fused into one people. Kenneth was the very person who could best do this, for he was the grandson, on his mother's side, of the Pictish kings Constantine and Ungus the Second. On the death of Uven, the last son of Ungus, Kenneth had claimed the Pictish crown as his by right. "Two successive and successful competitors kept it for five years from his grasp, but both wore it amid disturbance and in misery, and at last met a violent death at Forteviot, the seat of his power. Kenneth could dexterously take advantage of such confusions as arose from the loss of a battle, or the death of a king, to achieve an important revolution; and, finding no man bold enough again to contest his claim, he easily stepped into the vacant throne. In his person a new dynasty, and a consolidation of popular interests among two great peoples who had hitherto been at variance, began." (Forsyth.) A new period now began, generally called "the Scottish" (in distinction to the Dalruadhinian period), which continued up to 1097, when the Scoto-Saxon period commenced. We must claim, however, for the Dalruadhinian the title of *the* Scottish period, and for Dalruadhain the name of the Scottish capital; for if the one period is Scoto-Irish, the other is Scoto-Pictish; and there was more of the Scottish element in the former than the latter. The obscurities and perplexities that beset this early history, are well treated in the first volume of Chalmers' "Caledonia." For the Scoto-Irish Celts, see also Mr. Campbell's "West Highland Tales," vol. i. pp. 100—118; the chapter on "Ossian" in Macculloch's "Highlands and Western Isles," vol. ii., and also vol. i. p. 301; and Keating's "History of Ireland." Skene, in his "Scottish Highlands," derives the name Pict from the Celtic

are given. It was at this part of the Mull, that he is supposed to have landed, and given his name to the parish of Kilcolmkill, which, with its adjoining parish of Kilblaan, now forms the parish of Southend. His passage from Ireland was made in a *currach* or boat, made of wicker or woven osiers, and covered on the outside with hides. The British *currachs* are spoken of by Julius Cæsar, who says that they were furnished with a keel, and a mast of light wood. Adamnan describes the *currach* employed by St. Columba at Iona, as possessing all the parts of a ship, with sails and oars, and with a capacity for passengers; and he adds, that, in this roomy, though apparently fragile, vessel, he sailed into the North Sea, and, during fourteen days, remained there with perfect safety. That portion of the shore of Iona, where Colum's *currach* first touched, when it conveyed him from Cantire, is still called *Porna Currach*, "the Bay of the Boat;" and its exact model, or counterpart, is pointed out in a rocky heap upon the shore, about fifty feet in length. There is a tradition that one of the missionaries who accompanied Colum to Cantire, was St. Kieran, "the Apostle of the

*Efechti*, "a warrior;" and says, "We may hold it as an incontrovertible fact, that the Picts and Caledonians were the same people, appearing at different times under different appellations." Vol. i. p. 14. He also makes out the Northern Picts, who, called themselves Gael, and spoke the Gaelic language, to be "the real ancestors of the modern Highlanders." Vol. i. chap. iv.



Cantire," who had been tutor to Colum.\* There seems, however, every reason to believe that St. Kieran had been settled in Cantire many years prior to Colum's banishment from Ireland; and, we may conclude, that, on his disgrace, and in consequence of the parting advice of the Abbot Molaise, Colum would naturally direct his thoughts to that portion of Cantire, where his old tutor had preached the Gospel. If St. Kieran was still alive, we may believe that Colum would wish to have the benefit of his counsel and companionship. But if (which seems more probable, so far as we can judge from the light glimmer thrown on the subject by a confusion of dates and statements) St. Kieran were already dead, Colum would still seek that portion of Cantire which had been the scene of his labours, where he could catch up his mantle, and continue the good work that his tutor had commenced. As in a future chapter, I shall have occasion to refer to the little that is known (or conjectured) concerning St. Kieran's history, I will not more particularly refer to it in this place; but, while I claim for St. Kieran the proud position of being the first preacher of Christianity in the kingdom of the Scots, we have ground to show that St. Columba trod in his footsteps, and preached the Gospel in Cantire for the space of two if not four years,

\* His other tutors were Finian, Bishop of Clonard, Fenbar, and Gemman of Leinster.

before he embarked for the scene of his well-known labours in Iona.

It is this that lends to Kilcolmkill its chief interest. We are here on the traces of St. Columba, amid the scenes that surrounded him, when he first set foot on Scottish ground. The name of the place suggests that he here founded a church, and it is highly probable that he would do so; if so, it would (in all probability) be the first of those Hebridean churches, of which so many were founded by this venerated "Apostle of the Picts." Tradition says, that St. Columba *built* the little church, whose walls, pierced with Norman doorway and windows, may still be seen upon the sea-shore. If this is not strictly correct, the church would doubtless be an early successor to one built by Colum on that spot, which was probably erected (as were the greater part of his churches,) *more Pictorum*, with timber, and enclosed with a rude stone wall. The church, at any rate, was dedicated to St. Columba, and is called after his name; and the stone cross, of which the pedestal alone remains, is also supposed to have been dedicated to the memory of the saint.\*

The present parish church, built in the year 1774, is a plain structure. It contains the tomb of the wife of Colonel Fullerton, who died soon after the marriage:

\* See Appendix, "Ecclesiology of Cantire," for St. Columba's Church at Keill, and also for Kilblaan, &c.

and when, many years after, the husband was dying in America, he directed his servant to bear his heart to Kilcolmkill, and inter it in his wife's grave: a request which was duly carried out. It lends a poetic interest to the place to recall this circumstance,—the dying man's thoughts wandering to this lonely spot, where all that was mortal of his young wife was laid, and his wish that the heart that had throbbled with love for her during his life, should be laid beside her in death.

This church (with its Manse) is well situated on a high bank over the stream of the Coniglen, which flows into the sea at Dunaverty. The river abounds in salmon and trout. The glen is between six and seven miles long, and has some rich land, bounded by considerable hills of claystone porphyry, and Old Red Sandstone. The river, which was subject to sudden and dangerous risings, has been straightened and embanked by the Duke of Argyle, at the expense of 1600*l*. One of those sudden risings of the river washed away the old church and its burying-ground. Religious houses were very numerous in the neighbourhood of Kilcolmkill. The names of Kildavie, Killravan, Killeolan, Killoran, preserve the memory of churches and cemeteries, of which all other traces have been lost. No vestige too remains of the parish church of St. Blane, at Kilblaan; but there are a few ruins of St. Catherine's Chapel, in a lovely spot on the banks of a stream in the secluded

pastoral vale of Glenadle, where close to the chapel there is a cemetery and holy well, frequented by diseased persons up to a late date.

Caoran Glen is about a mile north of Coniglen; it runs from west to south-east, for three or four miles, winding round Cnoistapail, and then mingling its waters with those of Coniglen. Glenreith Glen is to the north, and Kildavie Glen to the east. There are some Danish forts in this district of Cantire. The remains of the chief fort are to be found on the farm of Balemacumra, near to the Mull. The situation is almost inaccessible, being on the head of a perpendicular rock, 180 feet in height, the base of which is about thirty yards from the sea. The fort is surrounded by three walls; the inner wall being 12 feet in thickness, the second 6 feet, and the outer wall 3 feet. The space between the edge of the precipice and the inner wall is 66 feet in length, and its medium width 22 feet. With the natural and artificial defences of precipices and walls on the one side, and with the Atlantic waves on the other, forbidding a landing, by the strength and current of their tides, this old fort of Balemacumra must have been one of the safest, as well as the wildest, of retreats, and was literally the Fort of the Land's-End of Scotland.