

CHAP. X.

SAINTS AND LEGENDS.

St. Couslan. — The Spanish Princess. — Dr. Smith of Campbelton. — Kileouslan. — Kilcoivin. — A noted Duellist. — Holy Music. — St. Couslan and runaway Couples. — St. Coivin and unhappy Married Folks. — Their several Plans. — A Midnight Conversazione for Discontented Couples. — A Disappointed Divorcee. — Etymology of "Cabbage." — Machrihanish Bay. — Its Scenery and Dangers. — Salt-Pans. — Pan Cod. — How it is caught. — The three Degrees of Comparison in Mountain Altitudes. — View from Cnoc-maigh. — Tirfergus Glen. — The Legend of the Weaver of Tirfergus. — Mac-kinven's Bard outdone. — Raids. — The Story of Boyle's Bible. — The Act Recissory. — Torquil MacNeal's Second-sight. — The Laggan of Cantire. — The Black Fisherman of Lochsanish. — The poor Man's Prayer fulfilled. — Kilchenzie and St. Kenneth. — How MacEachin entertained MacCallum More.

AFTER St. Kiaran's time, there were two saints who laboured to plant the gospel in Cantire, and are still remembered. These are Saints Couslan and Coivin, who have given their names to two places near to Campbelton, Kileouslan and Kilcoivin, where the ruins of their churches are still to be seen.

Kileouslan is situated on a promontory at the entrance of Campbelton harbour on its northern side. There is

a tradition that ascribes it, not to Saint Couslan, but to Cusalan, the daughter of a king of Spain, who died on board a Spanish vessel in Kilbrannan Sound, and whose body was brought ashore and buried in this place. In accordance with this tradition, her grave is still shown, and the spot is variously called Kilchusalan, and Kilcouslan. The church * contains the tombs of the Rev. Dr. John Smith, and his son the Rev. Donald Smith, both ministers of Campbelton. Dr. John Smith was the historian of Campbelton, and a man of varied and distinguished literary attainments. He took a leading part in the Ossian controversy, and was well known (says Hugh Miller), "for his Celtic researches, and his exquisite translations of ancient Celtic poetry." † An old inhabitant of Campbelton who can remember him at the end of the last century, says, "Dr. Smith was a great linguist, philosopher, poet and divine. He lectured on the Book of Revelations, and many assembled to hear him; but, as these productions were never printed, their loss must have been great. By his parishioners he

* See Appendix, "Ecclesiology of Cantire."

† Cruise of the Betsey, p. 114. Hugh Miller visited Mr. Swanston, minister at Isle Ornsay, whose wife was a niece of Dr. Smith. The "advertisement" of Dr. Smith's manuscript poems collected in the Western Highlands and Islands, is given in Mr. Campbell's "Popular Tales" (vol. ii. pp. 472, 473). The manuscripts are in the possession of the Highland Society. Dr. Smith is also spoken of in Mr. Campbell's first volume (introduction, pp. xx. xxxv.).

was much esteemed. Having a very powerful voice, when preaching in the tent at the time of the Communion, he might have been heard at an immense distance. On going to church on a Sabbath, he always appeared dressed in his gown, with his Bible under his arm, taking no notice of any person in the streets as he passed. He seldom preached without shedding tears. Dr. Smith died at Kilcouslan, in the house he built on the glebe. On the day of his death, he called all his family into his room, addressed each of his children individually, and gave directions to his wife respecting his funeral, speaking to them in his usual manner. Afterwards, with his own fingers, closing his eyes, he departed this life without a struggle."

Kilcoivin is about four miles to the south-west of Campbelton, on the road, and near to Machrihanish Bay. Its name is also written Kilkivan; and instead of the word meaning Kil-Coivin, "the cell of Coivin," it is said to mean *Cil-chaomhan*, "the Cell of the Beloved;" but be this as it may, the memory of St. Coivin is there cherished. The broken walls of the church are still standing in the centre of the burial-ground, where are some stones of elaborate workmanship, — a priest in the attitude of prayer — a man in full armour, and the like.* The last-named is pointed

* "Observe on the roadside the ruins of the chapel of *Cill-chaovain*,

out (and evidently erroneously so), as the tomb of Archibald Mac Neal, of Tirfergus, who died towards the middle of the last century. He was a noted duellist, and, indeed, made it his profession ; for he travelled about to various continental and other cities, challenging them to find an antagonist for him, whom he fought for a sum of money, and — killed. From his sanguine temperament, one would suppose that he must have been of the true Scottish blood, and that his Celtic bump of pugnacity was unusually developed. Near to the church is a hill called *Cnocan-a-chluig*, on which a man used to stand, and ring a hand-bell, to give due notice to the people to repair to church. The bell was consecrated, and called *ceolan-naomha*, “the holy music.” A little more than a century ago it was still used by the town-crier of Campbelton.

Whatever may have been the unity between Saints Couslan and Coivin in point of matters of doctrine, they were altogether at variance in their ideas respecting the indissolubility of the marriage tie. St. Couslan strenuously upheld it. Perhaps he was a married man

or *Kil-chyvain*. Within are some old gravestones, engraven with figures of a two-handed sword, and of dogs chasing deer.” — PENNANT'S *Voyage to the Hebrides*, p. 196.

On the lands of Macharioch, in the parish of Southend, near to the Mull of Cantire, and close by the mansion house of Ballyshear, are also the remains of a religious edifice, called after, and dedicated to, St. Coivin.

himself, and happy in his wedded life, — like that “dark-attired Culdee,” of Campbell’s poem.

“Peace to their shades! the pure Culdees
 Were Albyn’s earliest priests of God,
 Ere yet an island of her seas
 By foot of Saxon monk was trod;
 Long ere her churchmen by bigotry
 Were barr’d from wedlock’s holy tie.
 ’Twas then that Aodh famed afar
 In Iona preach’d the word with power,
 And Reullura, beauty’s star,
 Was the partner of his bower.”

Perhaps St. Couslan had a Reullura of his own, from whom he did not wish to be separated; and this made him the more strenuous in opposing his brother saint’s lax notions on the indissolubility of the marriage tie. At any rate he strenuously upheld it; to such a degree, indeed, that at his church of Kilcouslan there was a large stone, with an open space in the centre, through which runaway couples caught hands.* However closely they might be pursued, yet, if they could succeed in reaching the church, and catching hands through St. Couslan’s *hole-y* stone, before the pursuing *non placets* could interfere, it was held unlawful to separate them, though they might be married with greater form and ceremony when they had the leisure and opportunity.

* A similar ceremony took place at “the Odin stone” of the Brogar circle, in the Orkneys. See Mr. Weld’s “Two Months in the Highlands, Orcadia, and Skye,” p. 161.

Thus St. Couslan was the forerunner of the Gretna Green blacksmith; and many a runaway couple doubtless joined hands through that stone, which (or a similar stone) existed within the memory of man, though, alas, for the modern runaways, it had survived its original use.

But St. Coivin thought very differently to St. Couslan on the subject of marriage, and instituted an opposition ceremony, which appears to have been quite as popular as that promulgated by the favourer of elopements. While St. Couslan was for uniting couples in indissoluble bands, St. Coivin burst the bands asunder and disjoined the married pair. In fact, while St. Couslan was the Gretna Green blacksmith of those early days, St. Coivin was its Sir Cresswell Cresswell, and his church the Divorce Court of the Land's End of Scotland. His theory was, that those who were not pleased with their partners should be indulged with the opportunity of a separation, and of making a second choice. And this was the peculiar practice with which he converted his theory into a startling fact. He instituted an annual solemnity, which all unhappy married couples were invited to attend. A late hour of the night was fixed for the meeting, which our knowledge of human nature tells us was sure to be a crowded one. At midnight St. Coivin and his assistants blindfolded all the husbands and wives, and then started them for

a pell-mell race three times round the church at top speed. The moment this was accomplished, and while all were in confusion, St. Coivin gave the word *Cabhag*, "Seize quickly!" upon which every man laid hold of the first female near him; and whether old or young, handsome or ugly, good or bad, one-eyed or two-eyed, hunchbacked or straight, she was his wife till the next anniversary, when he could again try his lot at this matrimonial blind-man's buff. If St. Coivin's institution was not as popular as that of St. Couslan's, we may feel sure that it was equally well supported, and that these two holy gentlemen must have driven a considerable trade in the articles of marriage and divorce, and derived, doubtless, a large revenue of fees from the loves and quarrels of their neighbours. Conceive the case of a gentleman who hoped to get his neighbour's young and pretty wife in return for his own old and ugly one, and who had privately made such arrangements with the pretty spouse as should ensure her attendance at St. Coivin's midnight conversation for discontented couples,—imagine this gentleman being blindfolded for his race. Preparatory to that obscuring ceremony, he had noted the position of the lady of his choice: St. Coivin gives the word, and off they go! once, twice,—men and women mixed up in hopeless confusion, jostling, pushing, and tumbling over each other. Oh, that he could slip the bandage!

but St. Coivin has been too sharp for him, and he cannot steal a glimpse of anything or anybody. On they run! the third time round the course — church, I mean,—is completed. *Cabhag* is cried; and he darts at vacancy, until the warm flesh and blood of a panting woman is within his grasp. Hold her tight while the bandages are undone. Now for his neighbour's young and pretty wife, for whose sake he has so often broken the tenth commandment. Horror of horrors! it is his own old and ugly wife whom he had brought here to get rid of, and whom relentless destiny has again given to him for another twelvemonth. Let us close the curtain on this unhappy and mistaken gentleman; the cup of happiness has been dashed from his lips, and, doubtless, the consequent smash and the row will be somewhat awful. There are other gentlemen who have gained their point in losing their wives, but find that they have not gained anything else thereby; and it seems highly probable that if St. Coivin has not received his fees at the commencement of the ceremony, he will have emphatically to whistle for them.

A word as to that word *Cabhag*, "Seize quickly!" Can our cant term *cabbage* be derived from it, I wonder? Pieces of cloth purloined by tailors are known as tailors' "cabbage," from whence that ninth part of a man is represented, allegorically and valentinally, as furnished with an enormous garden cabbage, as a necessary por-

tion of his stock in trade. Hence we get the cant verb “cabbage,” to pilfer or purloin. I have met with but one derivation of the word, which made it out to be from an old word, *cablesk*, “wind-fallen wood.” I venture, however, to suggest to etymologists a consideration of the foregoing anecdote of St. Coivin, as helping to a solution of the derivation of “cabbage.”

St. Coivin’s old parish is close upon Machrihanish Bay, on the Atlantic,—a spot well worth a visit, though



MACHRIHANISH BAY

Macculloch does not seem to have thought very much of it. “The bay itself,” he says, “is wide, open, sandy, and shallow, producing a great surf in west winds; nor is there anything picturesque in this quarter, unless it be under the high cliffs.” The author of “The Statistical Account of the Parish of Campbelton,” who is

more given to bold facts and figures than to decorative descriptions, thinks otherwise of Machrihanish Bay. He says: "There are few bays in the United Kingdom that can compare with this, extending, as it does, in a beautiful curve for nearly six miles; while the beach is composed of a fine white sand of great breadth, and so firm that it affords a most delightful ride. Each extremity of the bay is composed of a huge headland, which projects its dark and sable rocks into the sea, over which the waves dash continually, even in the calmest weather; but when a westerly wind prevails, the Atlantic Ocean then rolls in its mighty billows to the shore, breaking upon the beach with a loud and stunning noise, which is said occasionally to be heard upon the Ayrshire coast, a distance of thirty miles. The islands of Islay, Jura, and Gigha are distinctly visible from this, and add to the beauty and grandeur of the scene. These, together with a boundless expanse of the mighty ocean, form the main features of the landscape." This description, however, has been adopted from that given by Smith in his "Views of Campbelton," who says: "To this scene no description can do justice, and even the pencil can convey but a slight idea of its magnificence and grandeur. There are but few bays in the *world* that can compare with that of Machrihanish," a panegyric that has been somewhat softened by the statistician. As may be imagined, however, from the

foregoing quotation, Machrihanish Bay is well worth seeing; though, to be seen to perfection, it should be visited either during a storm, or on a clear day, immediately after the prevalence of westerly winds. "The bay is guarded by a reef of rocks," says Smith, "which are visible in many places at low water, and upon which the sea beats with a fury that is almost incredible, sending up huge masses of snow-white foam, and woe to the vessel which at any time may be unfortunate enough to be driven near them; not one of the many which have been driven ashore here having yet escaped, but have been completely wrecked, and soon disappeared in the quicksands with which this bay abounds, and in which the remains of many a brave barque and gallant seaman lie buried." The interest as well as the picturesqueness of the scene are centred in the bay and in the seaward view. The inland view is shut in by sand-hills covered with long bent, and coarse grass, presenting a scene of irrecoverable desolation and barrenness. Whales are sometimes driven in here, and cast ashore upon the sandy beach, a rich treasure-trove for their lucky captors. The quantity of sea-weed, or "sea-wrack," that is also thrown up after a storm is very considerable and valuable; on which point more hereafter.

At the southern extremity of the bay is a cliff called "The Negro's Head," from a fancied resemblance in

the disposition of a portion of the rock to the features of a negro. Here also is the village of Salt-Pans, so named from some works that once existed here for the manufacture of sea-salt. Its present celebrity is due to its excellent cod fishery, "Pan cod" being esteemed the best and finest upon the coast. The village can boast of its little quay, school-house, and inn; and with the exception of a few farm-houses, and gentlemen's seats, all the cottages are inhabited by fishermen. Their old system of hand-line fishing has for many years been abandoned for the more remunerative long-line system. The line is floated by buoys on the surface of the water, and from it are suspended from ten to fifteen hundred lines, with a baited hook on each, and of such length as to reach that certain depth where the fish are known to congregate. The fishermen do not require to keep by this line, as they were obliged to do with the hand-line, which was pulled into the boat as soon as the fish was hooked; but being supplied with two sets, they draw the one which has been in the water for eight or ten hours, and at once lay down the other—"shoot" it, is the local term, while they land their fish. And in this way "Pan cod" is caught. It is then conveyed in carts to Campbelton, to be shipped to its destination.

Near to Salt-Pans, is a spot named Machaireionan, where a battle between the Scots and the Danes is believed to have been fought, somewhere about the tenth

century. An artificial knoll in that place was opened, and within it was found a stone coffin, containing human bones, supposed to be the remains of a chieftain. Similar coffins have been found elsewhere in Cantire, some of them containing urns. A river flows into Machrihanish Bay, at Salt-Pans, passing by Losset, and rising under the hill called Sleit, or Sliabh. Close to Sliabh, to the south-west, towards the Mull, is another hill, called Cnoc-maigh. The hill called Bengullion, which has been already referred to, is within six miles of Sleit, or Sliabh. These three last-mentioned hills ought to express in their names their various degrees of elevation; for, in Gaelic, says the author of the "Statistical History of Campbelton," "*Cnoc* signifies a small surface, eminence, or little hill; *Sliabh*, a hill of considerable elevation; and *Beann*, a mountain of the largest magnitude." These, then, are the three degrees of comparison in mountain altitudes, and when we meet with either of them prefixed to the name of a hill, we ought at once know to which class to assign it. Thus, when we see *Beann*, *Beinn*, or, as it is more commonly written, *Ben*, we might be sure that it denotes some giant — Ben Nevis, Ben Lawers, Ben More, Ben Lomond, Ben Venue, Ben Ledi, or some equally elevated gentleman of the Ben-jamin tribe. And so, by this formula, Bengullion ought to be much loftier than Cnoc-maigh. But as there is no rule without an exception to prove it, I presume that such is the

case here; for Bengullion is very much the inferior of Cnoc-maigh, which, in fact, is the highest mountain in the Mull of Cantire, being 2036 feet above the level of the sea. Cnoc-maigh signifies "the Hill of the Plain," and is a conspicuous object to all vessels sailing from the westward. "From the summit of this mountain," says the late Rev. Daniel Kelly, minister of Southend, "an admirer of the sublime in nature may delight his imagination with one of the grandest scenes in North Britain. The green isle of the ocean is spread in all its magnificence around him. The islands of Islay, Rathlin, Jura, Gigha, and the distant mountains of Mull, are in view. On the east there is a magnificent prospect of the Frith of Clyde, the lofty hills of Arran, the coast of Ayrshire, and the Carrick and Galloway mountains. In the extreme horizon, Ailsa forms an object peculiarly striking."

Another river flows into the Atlantic at Machrihanish Bay, supplied chiefly by the waters of Choilipol Loch, and the small loch in the hollow of the high hill of Sliabh. This stream flows through Tirfergus Glen — a glen named, it is said, after King Fergus. There is some very fine timber in this glen; and according to popular tradition, no snakes or reptiles are to be found there, which is accounted for (say some) by the trees having been brought from Ireland, where the MacNeals (to whom Tirfergus belonged) had estates. But others

ascribe this freedom from venomous reptiles, not to the remote influence of St. Patrick, but to the immediate power of St. Columba, when he visited Kilcolmkill, and other parts of the Mull. And herein, is not popular tradition borne out by St. Adamnan? for one of those forty-six miracles that he has ascribed to St. Columba, is, that the saint, shortly before his death, blessed the island of Hy (Iona), and said that from thenceforth poisonous reptiles should not be able to hurt men or cattle in the island. Upon which statement, the latest Romanist editor of St. Adamnan's Life, observes, — "From *whatever cause* it has arisen, it is a singular fact, that no snakes or vipers have ever been seen in Hy, whilst many of a very venomous nature are found on the opposite coast." Perhaps the editor will construct a forty-seventh miracle out of this Glen of Tirfergus.*

* Mr. Campbell also refers to the legend of those places blessed by St. Columba, being freed from serpents and toads. They are numerous in Islay, but are not to be found in certain small islands off the west coast. "I believe that the Gaelic serpent stories, and the Highland beliefs concerning them, are old myths, a part of the history of the oldest feud in the world, the feud with the serpent who was 'more subtle than any beast of the field that the Lord had made;' for the leading idea seems always to be that the holy healing power overcomes the subtle destroyer. Thus Mrs. MacTavish tells that St. Patrick coaxed the last Irish snake into a chest by the promise that he would let him out 'to-morrow,' and then he put him into Lough Neagh, and there he is still. The serpent is always asking, 'Is it to-morrow?' but a to-morrow has never come, and no serpents are to be found on any place belonging to Ireland to this day." — *West Highland Tales*, vol. ii. pp. 371, 372.

The Irish friends of the MacNeals often used to cross the water, and come over to Tirfergus, bringing with them their harpers and bards, and being entertained by the MacNeals with great splendour and hospitality. Our friend Popular Tradition tells the following story connected with Tirfergus.

Once upon a time there lived a weaver in the Glen of Tirfergus. He had a heavy family of young children, and it went hard with him to find them a living. An Irish gentleman had been to visit MacNeal of Tirfergus, and had brought his bard with him. When they left, the bard had forgotten to take back his *cochull*, or hood, which was a mark of distinction and pointed out that the wearer was a bard. Now, the weaver found this *cochull*, and being a sharp-witted man, he thought he would put it on, and see what he could make of it. So he put it on, and went away to try his luck. He went on till he reached Strath House, where lived Mackinven.* When Mackinven's bard saw the Tirfergus weaver wearing the *cochull*, he called out to him, *Am bàrd thusa?* which means, "Are you a bard?" but the Gaelic word *bard* also means "was high," so the weaver pretended to misunderstand him, and replied *Cha b' àrd na iosal mi, a' dhuine*, that is, "Neither high nor low,

* Mac Ionmhuinn, I believe, is the proper spelling. As I am entirely ignorant of Gaelic, I have to trust to the natives for the correctness of the quotations.

man." Then Mackinven's bard asked him another question, which the weaver answered in a similar way *; and a servant ran and told Mackinven that his bard was wrangling with a strange bard. So Mackinven ordered them both before him, and throwing down a piece of gold upon the table, said, that the first of them who could make a verse upon it, should have it. Mackinven's bard began to hum and haw, and clear his throat, but while he was doing this, and thinking of something to say, the weaver uttered rapidly the following verse:—

“ Chuir Mac Ionmhuinn nam bosa min,
Or fìor-ghlan air a' bhord lom,
Chuir a bhard fein smugaide
Air a' chuid do'n bhonn,”—

which meant that Mackinven of the soft hands, threw down pure gold upon the table, and that his own bard had spat upon or disdained his share of the gold. Then the weaver picked up the gold piece; and Mackinven's bard went off in a rage, and was never seen afterwards. The weaver entertained Mackinven with songs and stories, of which he had a great stock; and Mackinven was so pleased with him, that he offered to support him and his family, if he would come and reside with him,

* “Cìod an tabh air an d' ainie thu do'n bhaile?” *Answer.* “Abh mo shul, abh mo ghlan is abh na h-abhann.” The word *abh*, in Gaelic, means, eyes, knees, hands, and water-way.

and be his bard. But the weaver preferred to return to Tirfergus, and his own family; so Mackinven gave him a good suit of clothes, and rewarded him, and sent him away. Such success had the weaver of Tirfergus when he first wore the *cochull*.

Those were the days when one man made a raid upon another man's cattle; and these raids frequently ended in battle and bloodshed. Once when a raid was made on the cattle of MacNeal of Tirfergus, he collected his men, and pursued the freebooters, and overtook them. A desperate fight ensued, in which MacNeal's men were victorious, and slew many of the freebooters, and brought back the *creach* or plunder. From this circumstance, the farm from whence the cattle were driven, is called *Tilleadh na creach*, "the returning of the plunder."

Another of the MacNeals of Tirfergus possessed (it is said) the only Bible that was to be found in Cantire. The proprietor of Pennyland, in Southend, wished to obtain a perusal of it; but MacNeal would not let it go from Tirfergus without a pledge that it would be returned to him; and so greatly did the laird of Pennyland thirst for a perusal of the sacred volume, that he gave to MacNeal the charter of his lands in pledge that he would return the Bible after perusing it. So runs the popular tradition; which, however, is probably but an erroneous version of the following well-authenticated circumstance, which is sufficiently interesting to be

quoted at length from the old "records of the Presbytery of Kintyre." A copy of the *Irish Bible*, it seems, had been given to the Kirk Session of Southend, by the illustrious Robert Boyle; and Mr. MacNeill of Tirfergus wished to borrow it. Under date of "Campbelton, 3rd of August, 1692," the following entry occurs in the records:—"Forasmuch as John M'Neill of Tirfergus addressed the Presbytery for the loan of the Irish Bible gifted by Sir Robert Boyle, to the parish of Southend, in Kintyre, for the use of the ministers that shall be in the said parish, promising that he will have special care of it, and that he will return it on demand, — the Presbytery, considering the present vacancy of Southend, condescends that Mr. Robert Duncanson (in whose custody the said Bible is at present) deliver the same to the said John M'Neill, he being obliged to return the same, in as good order as he now received it, to the future minister of the said parish, or to any other whom the Presbytery of Kintyre shall appoint, under the penalty of such a sum as the Presbytery shall nominate." The next entry bears date "Campbelton, the 14th December, 1692: Forasmuch as the Presbytery convened at Campbelton, the 3rd day of August, 1692, allowed Mr. Robert Duncanson to give to John M'Neill of Tirfergus, the use of the Irish Bible bestowed by Mr. R. Boyle on the parish of Southend, the said John M'Neill giving in his obligation to be accountable for

the same, Mr. Robert Duncanson declared that he did deliver the said Bible to the said John, and that he received his obligation for the same, of the date the 16th day of November last, which obligation was produced in presence of the Presbytery, and appointed to be recorded *in futuram rei memoriam*." "The tenor of the obligation granted by the said John M'Neill for the above-mentioned Irish Bible:— I, John M'Neill of Tirfergus, grant me to have received from Mr. Robert Duncanson, minister of Campbelton (according to the appointment of the Presbytery of Kintyre), the church Bible of the Irish character, bestowed by the Honourable Sir Robert Boyle on the parish of Southend of Kintyre, which Bible I oblige me to restore sound and entire, and to deliver the same to the minister of the said parish, or to the Presbytery when required, under the penalty of In witness whereof I have written and subscribed these presents at Campbelton, the 16th November, 1692 years. Sic subscribitur. Jo. M'Neill."

This, as will have been observed, refers only to a copy of the Irish version of the Bible. Perhaps the Laird of Pennyland borrowed it from MacNeal (who, it may be noticed, twice writes his name, and spells it differently). We may, at any rate, believe popular tradition to be wrong in calling it the only Bible in Cantire. It is interesting to see how greatly Sir Robert's

gift was valued, and, from the close connection of Cantire with Ireland, and the immigration of the Irish Celts to the parish of Southend, it would probably prove a valuable gift to the minister of the parish. He, it seems, had been a Mr. David Simson, who, at the passing of Charles II.'s "St. Bartholomew" Act of Uniformity (the Act Recissory, as the Scotch Presbyterians called it), in 1662, had been ousted from his parish, but who was afterwards "indulged;" but, finally, in August 1685, banished by order of the government to New Jersey, where he died.* Sir Robert Boyle, I may remind the reader, had, in the year 1662, been appointed Governor of the Corporation for propagating the Gospel in New England; and, in his strenuous and laudable exertions for the diffusion of Christianity, had

* He was succeeded by his son, who conformed to the prelatie establishment, but, at the Revolution, recanted. In the troubles and persecutions that raged after the passing of "the Act Recissory," several Ayrshire and Renfrewshire gentlemen of the Covenant (the Laird of Ralston, Maxwell of Williamwood, Maxwell of South Barr, Hamilton of Wishaw, Dunlop of Garnkirk, Maxwell of Milnwood, &c.), when cruelly oppressed by the government, fled to Cantire, whither certain of their countrymen and relatives had previously gone, to settle under the auspices of the Earl of Argyle, and were protected by their friends, until they could return in safety to their homes. Some of their followers remained behind, and still constitute the lowland class of the parish of Southend, rarely amalgamating themselves by intermarriages with the Highlanders, and even having a detached place of sepulture to themselves, of which I have already made mention in the preceding chapter.

caused the Holy Scriptures to be translated into Malay, Welsh, and Irish. The translation of the Bible into Irish cost him seven hundred pounds; besides the expense of gratuitously distributing copies throughout Ireland, and to such parishes in Scotland, as at South-end, where it might be turned to good account. The foregoing anecdote shows how much store was set upon the gift.

An anecdote is told of a poor descendant of these MacNeals, named Torquil MacNeal, which may be classed among the tales of second-sight. He left Tirfergus for Ireland, where, for forty years, he kept a school, and then returned to Cantire, to end his days in his native glen. A Mr. M'Math allowed him to live in his house, where Torquil made himself useful in instructing the children. He lived to be one hundred years old, and preserved his faculties to the very last. On the day of his death, he did not appear to be more ailing than usual, but he called the gudeman and his wife to his bed-side, and told them that it was his last day upon earth. Then he affectionately warned them to prepare themselves for a great trial which should befall them in six months from that day. They anxiously inquired what it should be. He told them that their favourite son, little Torquil, his best-loved pupil, would, on that day, be with him in glory. Then the old man closed his eyes, and peaceably departed; and it came to pass

as he had spoken, for little Torquil died on that day six months.

In the neighbourhood of Tirfergus, and on that low ground between Campbelton and Machrihanish Bay, called the Laggan of Cantire, over which the sea is supposed to have formerly flowed, there were two lochs, Doryloch, and Lochsanish, or "the Black Loch;" but both these lochs are now drained, and the land yields excellent crops. The country people tell a legend of the black fisherman of Lochsanish. The loch was a mile in length, and half a mile in breadth, and it abounded in salmon and trout. The black fisherman would not suffer any person to live on its banks, but claimed, by the strength of his arm, sole dominion over the loch. Macdonald of Largie, who lived eighteen miles north of the loch, kept a guard of soldiers, lest the black fisherman should come and make an attack on him. Every day he sent his soldiers as far as Balergy Cruach, to see if the black fisherman was on the loch fishing; and if they saw him fishing, they would go back to Largie, not fearing an attack on that day. One day, a stranger who had come to Macdonald's house, and had asked why he kept the soldiers, was told about the black fisherman of Lochsanish. So he went with the soldiers to the hill of Balergy Cruach, and saw the black fisherman on the loch. Then the stranger told the soldiers that he would go down to Lochsanish

and see the fisherman, and they might watch how he got on. So he went down, and the black fisherman attacked the stranger, and they fought for some time. Then the black fisherman fell ; and the stranger cut off his head, which was large and heavy ; and he carried it to Largie, and laid it at Macdonald's feet. Then he went away without telling anyone his name ; and he was never seen again. When the loch was drained, a rude boat, cut from the trunk of an oak, was discovered ; which, as a matter of course, was believed to be the boat that had been used by the black fisherman.

Lochsanish and the surrounding estates were purchased about a century ago by a Mr. Charles Campbell, a native of these parts. It is said of him that when a youth, and walking one night near to Kilcoivin, he found a poor man lying in a ditch by the wayside in a state of extreme exhaustion, unable to extricate himself and at the point to die. Campbell took him to the nearest house, placed him by a good warm fire, provided him with food and raiment, and acted the Good Samaritan part towards him. He had the old man taken care of until he was sufficiently recovered to pursue his journey. When the old man bade him farewell, he prayed that his preserver might live to be the proprietor of the lands surrounding the spot where he had found him in the ditch. And this prayer was fulfilled ; for Campbell entered the army, went to the East Indies,

was advanced to the rank of colonel, and, returning to Cantire with a large fortune, purchased the estates around Lochsanish.

The number of the churches and their antiquity mark the former importance of Cantire, which was more thickly populated than most other portions of the kingdom. On the west coast, and adjoining to Campbelton, is the parish of Kilchenzie, the remains of whose ruined church are still to be seen in the midst of the ancient burying-ground.* Kilchenzie is, in Gaelic, *Kilchaoinich*, "the Church of St. Kennek," who lies buried in a small island upon the coast of Mull, called after him "Kennek's Isle." Perhaps he was (for there is neither oral tradition nor written record concerning him) one of those zealous missionaries who issued from the celebrated monastery of Iona, to propagate the gospel through Scotland and the Hebrides. The burial-ground of Kilchenzie is still used, and is crowded with monumental memorials. I will conclude this chapter with a legendary tale relative to a monument that has now been broken up and removed, but which existed within the memory of man inside the north corner of what was once Kilchenzie Church. The monument bore the figure of a man in armour, with an inscription well nigh obliterated, but in which the words *Hic jacet M'Eachin* were discernible. This M'Eachin is said to

* See Appendix, "Ecclesiology of Cantire."

have been the Laird of Tangie, a beautiful glen six miles north-west of Campbelton. A stream flows through the glen from Loch-nar-cannach to the Atlantic; and the ruins of a large house, on which was the date 1670, were to be seen in the Glen at no very distant date. M'Eachin (runs the tale) invited the great "Maccallum More" * to his mansion; and Argyll came to Tangie, riding in great style, with ten young men in white clothing running before him, and crying out to clear the way for Maccallum (Mac-chailean). M'Eachin had prepared for Argyll's entertainment a dinner of a very novel character. Upon his table — which must have been a tolerably large one, and which may literally have "groaned" under the load — he had placed a specimen of every eatable animal that was to be found in Cantire. They were roasted whole, and set up on their stumps! There was an ox, a sheep, a stag, a roe, a goat, a pig, besides such other small deer as hares and rabbits.

Shade of Soyer! imagine the disgusting spectacle presented by such a liberal display of roast meat, and all these animals slaughtered to make a Highland chieftain's banquet; and brought, like the brave old man in "Chevy Chace," to fight upon their stumps against the fierce onslaught of ravenous men.

* Or, more correctly, "Mac Callen Mor," the chief of "Clan Dhiarmaid."