

THE SEA-SORROW.

HE sea has given to Hebridean song its fiercest joy and its most passionate sorrow. The former is illustrated in the "Sea-reivers' Song" and "The Ship at Sea;" the latter finds fitting expression in "The Sea-sorrow," "Ailein Duinn," and "The Seagull of the Land-under-waves." The songs of the sea-rapture are much less numerous and are, as a rule, the songs of men; the songs of the sea-sorrow are invariably the songs of women. The men reive and rove, and dream of strange lands and adventures beyond the waves.

Tha na luingis a' seoladh Le'n cuid òigear tro 'n chaol, An tòir air gaisge 's air gàbhadh, Air ceol-gàire 's air gaol. The ships go a-sailing With the young through the straits, In search of adventure and danger, The music-of-laughter and love.

But the women less their husbands and brothers and sons and sweethearts, and the burden of their song is—

Fuar fuar fuar, Fuar an cuan 's gur snàgach, Fuar fuar fuar O h-aigeal gu 'barr i. Cold cold cold,
Cold the sea and snakish,
Cold cold cold,
From depths to top-wave she.

This gloomy picture of the *Tir-fo-thuinn*, the Land-under-waves, is not, however, the one given by those who ought to know best: the spirits of the drowned ones. "Cold thy bed to-night," said a woman once to the spirit of her drowned husband. "It is neither hot nor cold," was the reply, "but just as one might wish, if as he wished he got." "If not cold, lonely at any rate," suggested the woman. "I have the best heroes of Lochlann beside me," said the man, "and the best bards of Erin, and the best story-tellers of Alba, and what we do not know ourselves, the seal and the swan tell us." "Treasure of my heart," said the woman, "are not we the foolish ones to be weeping and sorrowing for the men, and they so happy in the Land-under-waves!" "Is thior duit sin! Thou speakest truth there!" said the man, as he vanished into the night and the sea. To sorrow for the drowned ones is worse than foolish, however, it is actually cruel to the men.

Is trom an t-éideadh am bròn, Is truim' an léine am bròn, A heavy dress: sorrow, A heavier shroud: sorrow,

And more than once the weeping woman on the shore has heard the voice of her lost one in the waves entreating her to lift off him the burden of her grief.

A-Vore, my love, lift off me thy woe, The clouds are above and the clouds are below, The stars are above and the stars are below, The cleric has gone above, but better far to be below A-Vòre, my love, a-vore, my love, Lift off me thy woe, lift off me thy woe.*

"Never a sigh comes from the heart," said a woman of Uist, "but a drop of blood falls in its place." And in Eigg the old folk said that the tears of a woman o' sorrow fell in blood-drops on the heart of her loved one under the sea—"and is it not the sad thing to be drowned twice, once by the waves, and once by the tears of your folk!" And not only is the sorrow of the women cruel to the drowned ones, but it is also a source of danger to themselves. It is considered wrong, for instance, to sing a drowning-song twice in an evening, and some of the older generation refuse to sing one at all after sunset. "It is not right," one is told, "to disturb the rest of the ones-no-more; it is bad enough to put sorrow on them, but it is seven times worse to put anger on them." And stories are current in which the spirits of the drowned ones, exasperated beyond all patience, appear in their old homes between midnight and cock-crow, and give the women-folk a fright which soon dries their tears and banishes their sorrow. It is a remarkable fact, indeed, that in the Hebrides (where one would least expect it) excess, whether of joy or of grief, is regarded as a direct tempting of Providence, and one is often told that "laughing overmuch is an omen of tears, and weeping overmuch an omen of greater evil to come." But the folk will tempt Providence all the same!

^{*} The Gaetic version has appeared in The Celtic Review. vol. IV., p. 248

SEA SORROW.

Am Bron Mara.



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†Old Gaelic words adapted; the translation is practically literal.

*pronounced Hoo-yo-ho-hook-o



Sea sorrow.

^{*}tala : lulling song.



The Air to this song is a form of wailing chant well known in the Isles. The notes of the recurrent refrain are constant, the various members of the reciting phrases are variable and interchangeable, and may be repeated or re-arranged at pleasure. As the old time singers of laments and eulogies were ofttimes bards who improvised under the stress of emotion, they would naturally adapt these traditional chants to the needs of the moment. It is interesting to note how fond they were of the descending pentatonic formula_la sol mi re do_the notes of Wagner's Fire Music motive in the Walküre.

The words of the Sea-Widowhood (partly from Mrs Maclean, the Glen, Barra, and partly from Kenneth Macleod) are sung to the same wailing chant, and strung together on a like linking recurrent "Ho ro bha hug o".

Bantrachas-cuain.

Gura mis' tha fo mhulad 'S mi air tulaich na h-àiridh;

Mi bhi faicinn nan gillean Anns an linne 'gam bàthadh;

Ged is oil leam gach aon diubh, Fear mo ghaoil gur e chraidh mi,

'Se mo cheist do chul dualach 'Ga shior-luadh air bharr sàile:

'S tu 'nad shìneadh 'san tiùrra, Far 'na bhrùchd a' mhuir-làn thu.

Righ! nach robh thu'nad chadal Ann an Clachan na Tràghad;

Ann an Eaglais na Trianaid, Far an lionmhor do chàirdean;

Gu'm biodh deoir mo dha shùla Mar an drùchd glasadh t' fhàile.

Faic, a Dhia, mar tha mise___ Bean gun mhisneach gu bràth mi;

Bean gun mhac gun fhear-tighe, Bean gun aighear gun slainte;

Ged bu shunndach an Nollaig 'S dubh dorranach Caisg dhomh.

The Sea-Widowhood.

I am the woman of sorrow On the knoll of the sheiling;

A-seeing the lads
In the gulf a drowning,
Tho' a hurt to me each one of them
He of my love is the wound of me.

Dear to me thy ringleted locks
Ever tossed about on the crest of the waves,

And thou low-lying in sea-wrack Where the high tide has stranded thee.

O king! would that thou wert in sleep In Clachan na Trāghad,*

In the church of the Trinity Where death-sleep thy friends;

Then would the tears of my eyes
Like the dew make green thy grave.

See, O God, how I am_ A woman without heart for ever,

A woman without son, without husband; A woman without gladness or health.

Merry was my Christmas, Black and sorrowful my Easter.

^{*}The Church-of-the-Shore.

A HEBRIDEAN SEA-REIVERS' SONG.

(NA REUBAIREAN.)

Arranged with adaptation and Pianoforte Accomp. by Air from Penny Macdonald. Eriskay. MARJORY KENNEDY-FRASER. Old Gaelic words from Kenneth Macleod. Con moto. Like the wind. VOICE. Hug Hook -Hug Hook -PIANO. R. H.Les. reub-adh mar - a, ghaoth 'san t-seol, B'e ceol bhi sid ar in tha winds do blow, Sea coinn-lean oir, Tha - rin - yo! When reiv - ers know the madd'ning mu - sic. in \mathbf{n} pòr air foid nan dabh-ach ò, $_{
m tha}$ is rin - yo! OnDav - ach low, There's kine and corn and gol - den can-dles tha ghaoth 'san t-seol. thewinds doblow. Ho tha A' ròin nan caol dol 'nan sgaoth gu Eir - inn mar ruinn, shoals of seal Hard fir 'nan drùb A fol - low af - ter fag sinn cal - a. Ho - i ril. great by our keel fast bhios 'nan dùisg mus ò, tha Men at play, ere *kielclose of day Will.coldly - ing. as clay Copyright 1909 by Boosey & Co.

*Keil = Cell _ meaning churchyard _ pronounced Keel. Dabhach = a large corn-vat _ meaning here as much land as that amount of corn would sow.



TIR-NAN-ÒG.

Or, Skye Fisher's Song.

The Celtic Heaven, Tir-nan-Og, the Land-of-the-ever-Young, lies somewhere to the west of the Hebrides, where the sun sets. And the Celtic soul ever waits on the shore of the great Sea for the coming of the White Barge which, year in year out, ferries the elect across the waves to the Isle where they would be. And that same Barge needs wind nor sail nor rudder to make her speed like a bird over the sea; the wish of the Fate that guides her is her all and her in all.

1.

Gàir nan tonn gur trom an nuallan Seirm am chluais do ghlòir, Dan nam beann, gach allt is fuaran, Siaradh nuas le d' cheòl; 'S tu gach là gun tàmh mo bhuaireadh, T' iargain bhuan 'gam leòn, 'S tu gach oidhche chaoidh mo bhruadar, O Thìr-nan-Òg.

2.

Bàs no bròn cha bheò 'nad loinn-thir, Ùir air foill 's air gò, Sàir sior-òl do dheò 's do chaoimhneis, Aoibhneas snàmh 's na neòil; Reultan àrda là 's a dh' oidhche Boillsgeadh sèamh tro' cheò, Teudan tlàtha fàs ad choilltean, O Thìr-nan-Òg.

3.

Cùl nan tonn tha long mo bhruadair
Fuaradh mar bu nòs,
Rùn an Dàin a ghnàth 'ga gluasad
Ciuin le luaths an eòin;
Iubhraich Bhàin na fàg mi 'm thruaghan
Taobh nan cuantan mòr,
Doimhne cràidh is gràidh 'gam dhuanadh
Gu Tìr-nan-Òg.

1.

The roar of the waves, plaintive their sound,
As they chant in my ear thy praise,
The song of the bens, the fountain and stream,
With thy music downward flow;
By day my witchment ever thou art,
Thy longing eternal me wounds,
And by night thou art ever my dream,
O Tir nan Ōg.*

2.

Death nor sorrow in thy Beauty-land lives,
In the grave are deceit and guile,
The brave ever drink of thy generous life,
Gladness swims in the clouds;
Lofty stars by day and by night
Shine softly through a mist,
Mellowest harps grow up in thy woods,
O Tir nan Og.

3

Behind the waves, the ship of my dream Goes sailing as of yore,
The wish of Fate ever speeds her way Silent and swift as a bird;
White Barge, O leave me not in distress On the shore of mighty seas,
Depths of pain and love me song-draw To Tir-nan-Og.

^{*}Cheer nun ök (or in Italian spelling cir nan ök)

TIR-NAN-ÒG,

Or, *Skye Fisher's Song.







Tir-nan-Òg.

SEA-SOUNDS.

N Eilean a' Cheo, the Isle of Mist, as the folk of the Hebrides call Skye, there is a certain headland which ought to be named, but is not, the Headland of Waiting. Many years ago, and yet not so many either, on one of those beautiful nights which have passed away with the fairies, a young maiden,* tempted by moonlight and love of the sea, found her way to the furthest point of that same headland, and also found when there that she was not alone. Sitting on the rocks were the women of the township, waiting and listening till the dip of the oars and the sound of the iorram†, the boat-song, should foretell the return of the men from the fishing-banks and the luck of their catch. By-and-bye, there came across the waves the sound of a light airy iorram (perhaps the sea-reivers' song) accompanied by short quick strokes. "Och! och!" said the women, "light is the fishing to-night, but lighter still are the hearts of our men, and warm the welcome before them, be their luck what it may." Later on came other sounds, fainter this time, the tired thud of long laborious strokes and the rising and falling of the slow-rowing iorram, Iùraibh o hi, iùraibh o ho. "Isn't it the beautiful sound!" said the women, "there is luck on someone to-night, and the luck of one is the luck of all."

The sounds of the western sea are aye such as can be "understanded" of the folk. They foretell good weather and bad, birth and death in the township, the drowning of dear ones on far-away shores. In the storm they voice the majesty of the King of the Elements, and in the quiet evening they fill one with a longing which is hope born of pain. Perhaps other seas have voices for other folk, but the western sea alone can speak in the Gaelic tongue and reach the Gaelic heart. To an Islesman the German Ocean, for instance, seems cold and dumb, a mere mass of water seasoned with salt; it has no mermaids and no second-sight, and if it has seals, they are not the children of the king of Lochlann. To one sea only does the old Gaelic by-word apply:

Dh' iarr a' mhuir a bhi 'ga tadhal. The sea invites acquaintance.

And if the sea-sounds are sweet to the Islesman at home, they are sweeter still when by faith he hears them in the heart of the mainland, with the unfeeling mountains closing him in. "Columba must have seen a vision of angels to-night," said a man of the glens to one of the Iona monks, in the course of a missionary journey on the mainland; "there is the joy of heaven in his face." The master overheard the remark. "Angel nor saint have I seen," was his reply, "but I have heard the roar of the western sea, and the isle of my heart is in the midst of it." Centuries after, a daughter of Macneill of Barra, home-yearning in a glen far away from the isles and the sea, heard the same eternal roar:

'S trom an ionndrainn th' air mo shiubhal, Cha tog fidheall e no cannt; Gàir na mara 'na mo chluasaibh, Dh' fhàg sid luaineach mi sa' ghleann; Fuaim an taibh 'gam shior-éigheach: Tiugainn, m' eudail, gu d' thir-dhàimh. Deep the longing that has seized me, Song nor fiddle lifts it off, In my ear the ocean sounding Sets me roving from the glen, And sea-voices ever call me: Come, O love, to thy home-land.

Centuries come and centuries go, but the sea-voices never lose their old charm. A few years ago a young Skyeman working in Glengarry succeeded, by sleight of heart, in glorifying a very tiny waterfall into a mighty sea. "I sit in the heather and close my eyes," he said, "and methinks the waterfall is the western sea—and, O man of my heart, my heaven and my folk are in that music." More wonderful still was the "gift" of the Lews servant girl in Glasgow, who could hear twelve different sea-sounds in the roar of the electric cars and the street traffic. The blood! It is aye the same. St. Columba in the sixth century, the Barra lady-lord in the sixteenth or seventeenth, the Skye crofter and the Lews servant girl in the twentieth—they are all of the west and of the sea, and deep ever calleth unto deep.

^{*}The young maiden of the moonlight is still with us, a venerable gentlewoman beloved of all who love goodness and music; and she still sings furaibh o ht, iuraibh o ht—as this book knows.

[†] Iorram=yĭram.

SEA-SOUNDS.

Gair na Mara.

(A Slow Skye Rowing Song.)

Air and words noted from the singing of Frances Tolmie.

English adaptation and pianoforte accompaniment by MARJORY KENNEDY-FRASER.







AILEIN DUINN.

F by some happy chance this book should find its way to certain remote corners of the earth, both east and west, there are men there who will smile (but with a gulp in the throat) when their eyes light on the sad old drowning-song, Ailein Duinn o hi shiubhlainn leat. The picture of a little village in the isles will start up before them; at one end the ruins of a castle; on the shore below it an old boat turned upside down; a white-haired fisherman leaning against the boat, with a band of boys at his feet. The sea, the village, the castle, and possibly the boat, are still there, but it is years now since old Angus, the man from Barra, dreamed away at the parting of night and day to Tinnan-dg. Perhaps some of the boys are sitting at his feet there too, drinking in, as of yore, the talk to which the old song was always the preface:

Oh! yes, a beautiful song that, but sore to sing and seven times sorer to feel. I once knew a woman who both sang it and felt it-long, long ago. The sea, the sea, boys, she puts many a woman into the tears and the song, but for all that she is aye the mistress for old Angus. When I was a baby, it was the cronan of the waves that put me to sleep, and almost before I could walk I began to paddle about in the wee lochans on the sand. And when I grew up to be a big strong stump of a lad, I was never happy till my father (rest to his soul!) took me as a hand on his own smack. Maybe you will be thinking there was no fun in that at all, but eh! boys, I can tell you it needed navigation to be a hand on my father's smack. There was Ardnamurchan Point, and whiles there was Corrievreckan, and there was the wicked swell off Eigg, and there was the wide sea between Skye and Uist, and there were reefs and rocks forbye, reefs and rocks on which name had never been put, and reefs and rocks which never came up except when our smack was at sea. But did you say fear, boys? Fear on old Angus, or young Angus, as he was then? Never the fear, boys; my father believed there was One above who was Ruler of the waves, and my mother was aye praying to that One, and myself, though no very serious-minded, took off my bonnet every time I passed the chapel or saw others on their knees. Och! och! those were the happy days. Whiles we went to Tobermory for goods, and whiles we even went to Oban for dainties—and eh! boys, those towns were big then, bigger than Glasgow is now, and the shops were finer, and the lights were brighter. I would go ashore with a few bawbees in my pocket, as proud as a king, and come aboard again with white carvy and wee bits of ribbon for my mother, and trumps for the bairns, and goodies for the lassies on the Lord-day. Oh! yes, I liked fine to be civil to the lassies, and walk to the chapel with them, and maybe give them texts that were no' in the Book at all. And then there was the run home, boys, through old Caol Muile, past Ardtornish and Duart and Fiunary and Drimnin-eh! boys, is there no' the taste of honey on each name of them! Ardtornish and Duart and Fiunary and Drimnin! And it was there the fun would be, and more than fun, racing the Tyree smacks through the Kyles; and I am telling you, boys, they were the heroines at the sailing, those same Tyree smacks. And there was one among them, but she was a wee devil from Colonsay, and sure she must have had the siubhal-sithe, the fairy speed, whatever. Her steersman would ask you in the passing—when did you scrape her keel?—and before an impudent answer could leap from your heart to your mouth, my hero could not hear one word you said—no, never a word, though you should have a thunder on the tip of your tongue. Och! och! but yon wee devil from Colonsay! And at twilight maybe, or soon after, we would be at anchor in Canna Isle, and if there we were, sure enough it was the ceilidh for us all, that night. And that was the ceilidh you might call a ceilidh! There would be a crew from Eigg and a crew from Uist, and whiles a crew from Sōay, all kindly folk of our own isles; and after we had told them the news of the world, how the war was going on, and the price of lobsters in Oban, and when the salt-boat was expected in Tobermory, then the songs and the tales would begin, and it would be song for the song and tale for the tale till midnight, or maybe later if there was oil enough in the cruisie. But am not I the forgetful one! Midnight, did I say? I am telling you, boys, that if the tale-man from Eigg or the wee shaggy fiddler from Sōay was there, and it was there they loved to be, it was never midnight then nor cock-crow nor the going out of the cruisie that would see us a way, but the end of a tale that had no end or the snapping of fiddle-strings without others to replace them. Eh! boys, the ceilidh,* the ceilidh, and the cruisie, and the bonnie fire of peats, and the tales of Eigg, and the croons of Uist, and the music of Soay, and the soft singing Gaelic of Canna Isleeh! boys, the ceilidh, the ceilidh, the old beautiful ceilidh of the young days that were! And next day, if we didn't leave Canna early, and it was never early we left, we would see, sometime before midnight maybe, the white swell on Barra shore, and for certain a light in one little cottage; and my father would be thinking too he could see my mother (though, of course, he couldn't) standing in the door and waving her best apron at us. And when we got home we would find supper put down for us in the ben-room (but we knew fine we were no' to be expecting the same next morning); and we would find too that the bairns had fallen asleep with their wee handles lying wide open on the bedoover, ready at any moment to grip the goodles and the trumps—and eh! boys, they did look bonnie, bonnie in their sleep. And just as I would be nid-nodding into the same sleep myself, I would be hearing my father and my mother crooning side by side the old Night Blessing of the Isles:

A Dhe nan Dùl rinn iùl duinn thar a' chuan,
Thoir duinn a nis seamh-shuain fo sgèith do ghraidh.

Eh! boys, it was fine, fine while it lasted. But one night a woman in Barra sat at a cold fire-side, though it was no' for want of peats, and wept the widow's tears, and sang Ailein Dunn bh' shiubhlainn leat. Oh! yes, a beautiful song, but sore to sing, and seven times sorer to teel.

AILEAN DONN.

Traditional version collected and literally translated by Kenneth Macleod.

Gura mise tha fo éislean Moch 's a' mhaduinn is mi 'g eirigh; O hì etc.

Cha'n e bàs a' chruidh 's a' chéitein Ach a fhlichead 's tha do leine. O hì etc.

Ged bu leam-sa buaile spréidhe 'S ann an diugh bu bheag mo spéis dith.

Ailein duinn a laoigh mo chéille, An deach thu air tir an Eirinn?

Cha b'e sid mo rogha céin-thir Ach an t-àit' an ruigeadh m' éigh thu.

Ailein duinn mo ghis 's mo ghàire, 'S truagh, a Righ, nach mi bha làmh riut.

Ge b'e eilb no òb an tràigh thu, Ge b'e tiurr am fàg an làn thu.

Dh' òlainn deoch ge b' oil le càch e,* Cha b' ann a dh' fhion dearg na Spàinne.

Fuil do chuim, a ghraidh, a b' fhearr leam, An fhuil tha nuas o lag do bhràghad.

O gu'n drùchdadh Dia air t' anam Na fhuair mi de d' bhrìodal tairis.

Na fhuair mi de d' chòmhradh falaich, Na fhuair mi de d' phògan meala.

M'achan-sa, a Rìgh na Cathrach, Gun mi dhol an ùir no 'n anart,

An talamh-toll no 'n àite-falaich Ach 's an roc an deachaidh Ailean. I am the one under sorrow In the early morn and I arising —

'Tis not the death of the kine in May-month But the wetness of thy winding-sheet.

Though mine were a fold of cattle, Sure, little my care for them to-day.

Ailein Duinn, calf of my heart, Art thou adrift on Erin's shore?

That not my choice of a stranger-land, But a place where my cry would reach thee.

Ailein Duinn, my spell and my laughter, Would, O King, that I were near thee,

On whatso bank or creek thou art stranded, On whatso beach the tide has left thee.

I would drink a drink, gainsay it who might, But not of the glowing wine of Spain_

*The blood of thy body, O love, I would rather,
The blood that comes from thy throat-hollow.

O may God bedew thy soul
With what I got of thy sweet caresses,

With what I got of thy secret-speech, With what I got of thy honey-kisses.

My prayer to thee, O King of the Throne, That I go not in earth nor in linen,

That I go not in hole-ground nor hidden-place But in the tangle where lies my Allan.

Alexander Carmichael in his "Carmina Gadelica" Vol II p 282 alludes to this song, saying "Anne Campbell, daughter of Donald Campbell, the entertainer of Prince Charlie at Scalpay, Harris, was exceptionally handsome. She was about to be married to Captain Allan Morrison, Crosbost, Lews. He was drowned on the way to his marriage. Anne Campbell composed a beautiful lament for her lover."

^{*} The old Celts drank a friend's blood as a mark of affection. In the early years of the 19th Century. Beathag Mhòr, "Big Bethia" (Macdonald?) a poetess of Trotternish, Skye, drank a mild intoxicating drink of the blood" of Martin, the tacksman of Duntulm, and gave she thanks to Providence that she would have that much of her lover at anyrate." Alexander Carmichael has pointed out that both Shakespeare and Spenser refer to this custom.

HARRIS LOVE LAMENT.



Ailein duinn = 0 brown-haired Allan. | Pronounced too-een; or "donn" pronounced like English "down" Copyright 1909 by M. Kennedy-Fraser.



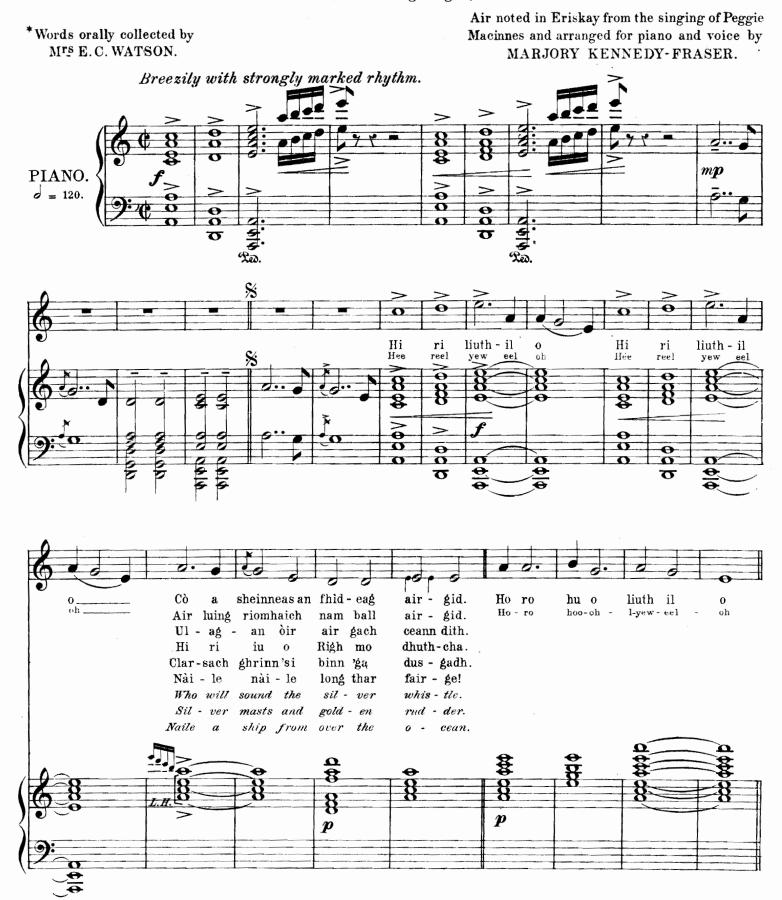


Harris Love Lament.

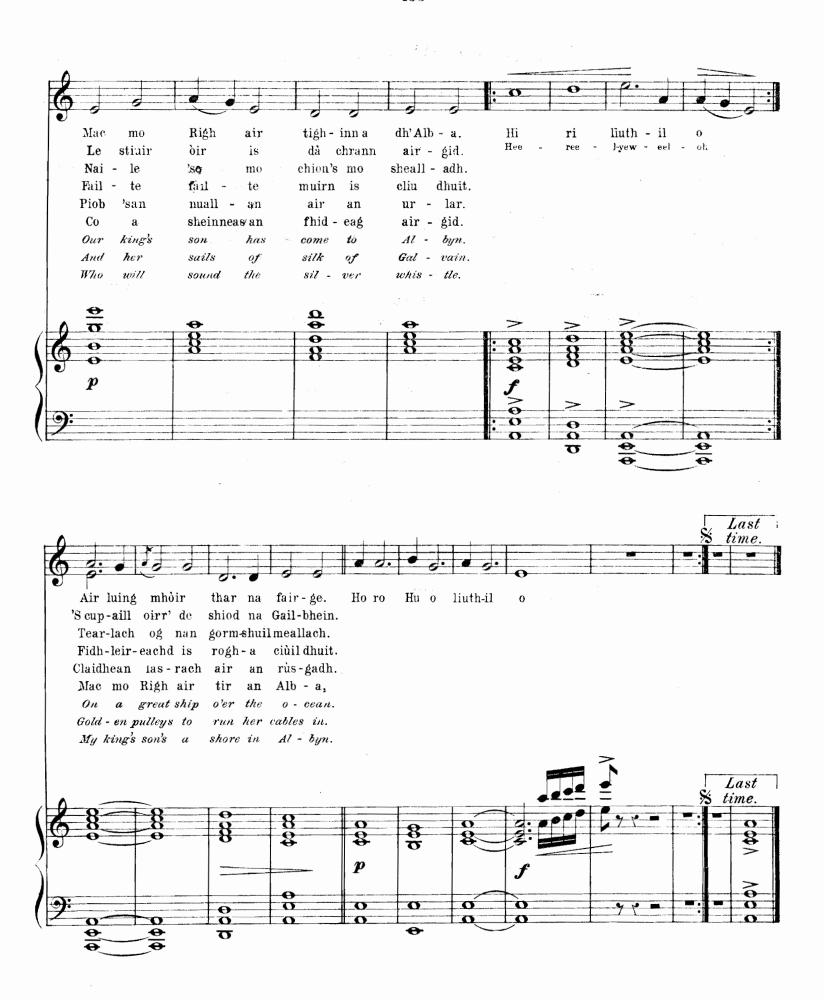


AN ISLAND JACOBITE SONG.

The Silver Whistle.
(An Fhideag Airgid.)



^{*}The last few lines of Mrs Watson's version (Celtic Review Vol. I.) have been omitted, and other lines from a Skye version substituted.



LOCHBROOM LOVE SONG.

(MÀIRI LAGHACH.)

Gaelic Words by J. MACDONALD. Old Celtic Air. Free translation and Pianoforte arrangement by MARJORY KENNEDY-FRASER.



^{*}Literally= Ho, my Mary kind, Thou'rt my Mary sweet, Lovely Mary, born in the glen.

^{**} A vewel somewhat like that in the English word,"lurk?'

[†] The "T" in "Tu" softer than the English "T," somewhat like "D."







^{*} Machair = Gaelic word meaning Sandy shore.

[†] Oran = Gaelic word meaning Song, pronounced orn.



THE BENS OF JURA.

An t-Iarla Diùrach.

As collected and literally translated by Kenneth Macleod.

- Ma's ann 'gam mhealladh, a ghaoil, a bha thu, Ma's ann 'gam mhealladh as deigh do gheallaidh, 'Se luaidh do mholaidh ni mi gu bràth. Ma's ann 'gam mhealladh, a ghaoil, a bha thu.
- Righ! gur mise tha gu tursach,
 Gaol an iarla 'ga mo chiurradh,
 Tha na dèoir a' sior-ruith o m' shùiléan
 'S mo chridhe brùite le guin do ghràidh.
- 3. Bha mi raoir leat 'na mo bhruadar Thall an Diùra nam beann fuara, Bha do phògan mar bhiolair uaine ___ Ach dh'fhalbh am bruadar is dh'fhan an cràdh.
- 4. Siubhlaidh gealach anns an iarmailt, Anns a' mhadainn eiridh grian oirnn, 'S coma leam-sa sear no siar iad Is gaol an iarla 'na thuaineal-bàis.
- 5. Thig, a ghaoil, agus dùin mo shùilean 'S a' chiste-chaoil far nach dean mi dùsgadh, Cuir a sios mi an duslach Diùrach, Oir 's ann 's an ùir a ni mise tàmh.
- 1. If deceiving me, o love, thou wert;
 If deceiving me despite thy vow;
 Yet chant thy praise I ever will,
 Tho' deceiving me, o love, thou wert.
- 2. O King! I am the sorrowful one, And the love of the Earl a-hurting me; The tears are ever running from mine eyes, And my heart is bruised with the sting of thy love.
- 3. Last night I was with thee in my dream,
 Across in Jura of the cold bens;
 Thy kisses were like the green water-cresses
 -Fled the dream-remained the pain.
- 4. In the heavens will glide the moon,
 And in the morning the sun will arise over us;
 What care I whether East or West they go,
 And the love of the Earl like the torpor of death.
- 5. Come, o love, and close my eyes
 In the narrow kist where I shall never awake;
 Lay me down under earth from Jura—
 In the grave alone is there rest for me.

Composed, it is said, by one of the young lady-lords of Lochbuie (Maclaine), who had fallen in love with Campbell of Jura. In the songs the title earl or lord is given freely to chiefs and to chieftains.

THE BENS OF JURA.

An t-Iarla Diùrach.



The phrasing indicated applies to the English words only.

Sing with characteristic Celtic leaning on the assonance on "e" in "cress," "fresh," "i" in "streams," "dear," and contrast strongly the two vowels "u" and "i" in "cool streams."



FLORA MACDONALD.

O one will be surpised to find Flora Macdonald among the singers of the isles. Her whole life was a song which lives and will live in the heart and on the lips of the folk. In making a love-lilt to her sweetheart (Allan Macdonald of Kingsburgh) she was but following the beautiful custom of her country. Now and again, when some of the old western homes are broken up, one sees in a box of odds and ends a framed piece of sampler-work, with various family names embroidered upon it. In Flora Macdonald's days, and for many years after, the Hebridean maiden spent her evenings making her one song and stitching her sampler, for these, rather than trinkets of gold and silver, were to be her offering to her lover. The sampler became in due time the family record, telling of life and death, joy and sorrow; but the song wandered furth of the home and was sung by the folk as a bit of sampler-work done by a girl in love.

Flora Macdonald stands high in history, but she stands still higher in the lore of the Hebrides. The folk have not, indeed, composed many songs in her praise, but they have done better; what is done to the great only—they have taken the finest ballads of an older world, and made her their heroine. It would be difficult, for instance, to mention a more passionate poem than "Seathan, Son of the King of Erin," the lament of a maid of ancient times for her slain lover, and there are those in the isles who find in it the life of Flora Macdonald, and her loyalty to her king. The folk seldom err in their reading of character, and in the case of Prince Charlie and Flora Macdonald, they have probably judged aright both the man and the woman. The man has impressed them, not so much by his strength as by his misfortunes and the charm of his person and cause. The woman, on the other hand, has always been regarded as the latter-day embodiment of an older and stronger heroism. The former feeling created, of necessity, a new literature, tender, glowing, spirited; the latter found itself already voiced in the ballads of the ancient past.

Numerous anecdotes of Flora Macdonald and the Prince, some of them pathetic, some playful, are still floating through the isles, and may be picked up easily by the sympathetic hand. In Kilmuir, Skye, some of the women were greatly distressed that a gentlewoman like Fionnaghal Airidh-mhuileann should be so extremely deferential to "a long-legged hussy of a servant, and she not of our own country at all." "Tell them," said Flora Macdonald, "that Betty Burke is Irish, and, sure, might she not put the knife into me, if I weren't civil to her!" The explanation quite satisfied Protestant Skye, which then, as now, had grave doubts about Catholic Erin. It was on a somewhat similar occasion that Flora Macdonald remarked, partly in jest and very much in earnest: "Here is one would give her share of the world, and herself along with it, to get that same Irish girl out of the country." It is worth recording that in Skye Betty Burke had the reputation of being a beautiful Gaelic speaker; "But it is not the same as our Gaelic," said the folk; "we can understand every word she says, but we cannot understand what the words mean." Evidently Prince Charlie's dialect was a judicious mixture of Gaelic and French, which probably made better sound than sense. When in the course of time it leaked out who Betty Burke really was, the folk had difficulty in finding even Gaelic words strong enough to express their feelings. "But it is not a wonderful thing at all," said an old man at the ceilidh. "Does not the lark say in her song, "Gur minig, minig, minig a theid Criosd an riochd a' choigrich, that often, often, often goes the Christ in the stranger's guise!" Loyalty could hardly go further. And according to all accounts, the few, and they were not really few, who had been in the secret, went all their days the more softly and the more stately because of what had been, and, in the telling, ever added to the glamour of the tale. "Lady of Kingsburgh," said a cleric who was equally devoted to the Hanoverian dynasty and to Pauline theology,

¹ This beautiful ballad will appear, we understand, in the new volumes of Carmina Gadelica. Seathan (Shayan)=John.

² For the anecdotes given here, the writer is mainly indebted to Marion Macleod, who had them from her aunt, Janet Macleod, so often mentioned in this book.

³ Flora of Arrie-voolin. She was of the family of Airidh-Mhuileann (Anglicised into Milton), South Uist.

⁴ The words occur in a rune, well known in Eigg and Skye as the "Rune of Hospitality"

⁵ Fhionnaghal, Fhionnaghal, cha'n ioghnadh ged a bhiodh do shùil glan 's do làmh geal; chunnaic an t sùil, is sheòl an làmh, mo Righ. Malcolm Macleod was bard and courtier as well as fighter. See Boswell's fournal of a Tour to the Hebrides, I. 164, 168.

FLORA MACDONALD'S LOVE SONG.





Flora Macdonald's Love Song.



Flora Macdonald's Love Song.

THE DEATH FAREWELL.

(O cha tu cha tu thilleas.)

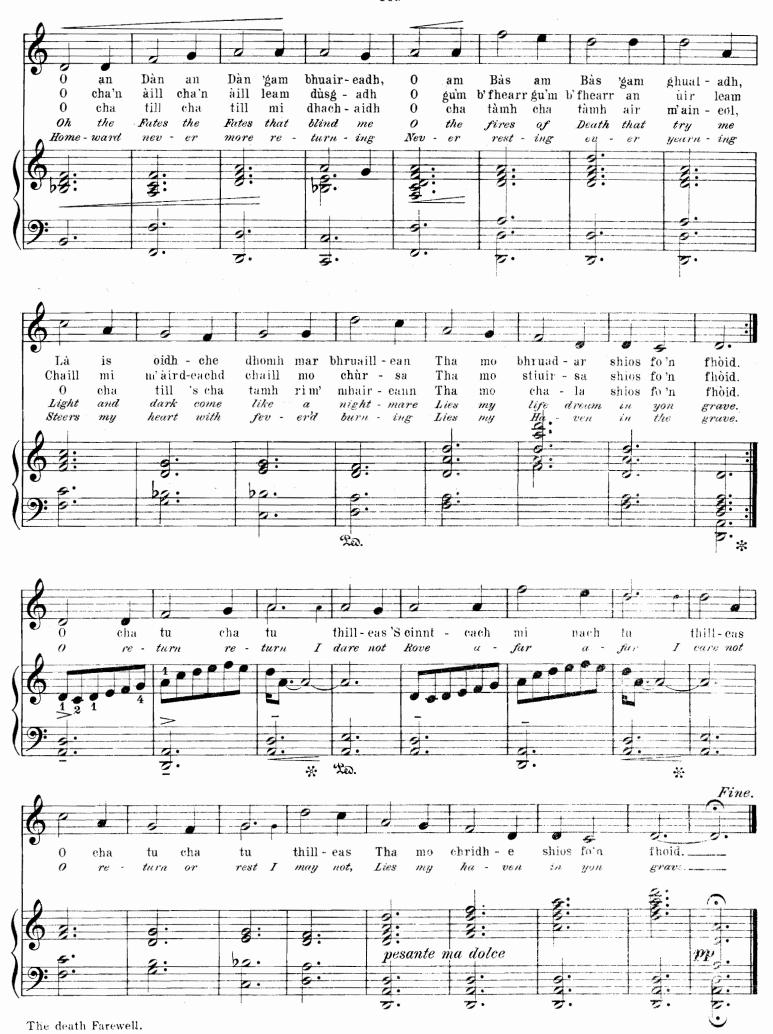
Air noted from the singing of Joan Stuart, Lewis. Old Gaelic words adapted by Kenneth Macleod.

Arranged for voice and Pianoforte by MARJORY KENNEDY FRASER.

*

Old Gaelic words adapted by Kenneth Macleod. With a dirge like rhythm. PIANO. pesante e dolente cha tu chatu. thill - eas cha tucha tu thill-eas heel - yas (Oh * eha cha heel - yas thou'lt nev - er turn turn thou'lt nev - er * ġ. La. wil. 'S tha 'S cinnt-each fhòid. thill - eas chridh - e shios fo'n mi nach tu mo heel - yas otch.) Ha Skeen tyach chree heeas fohn me nach tο mo heart deep Sureamturn thou'lt nev - er Liesmy inyon grave. Led.

^{*}The German"ch" Othe English terminal "tch": "tu" like English "to" or "too!"



THE MERMAID'S CROON.

Cronan na Maighdinn-Mhara.



^{*} The Mermaid was married to a "mortal."







The Swan is "the daughter of the twelve moons" (Nighean an daluan deug) the Seals are "the children of the King of Lochlann under spells" (Clann Righ Lochlann fo gheasa) and the Mallard is under the Virgin's protection; hence all three are "sacred," and not even the reivers would meddle with the "tenderling" left under such protection.

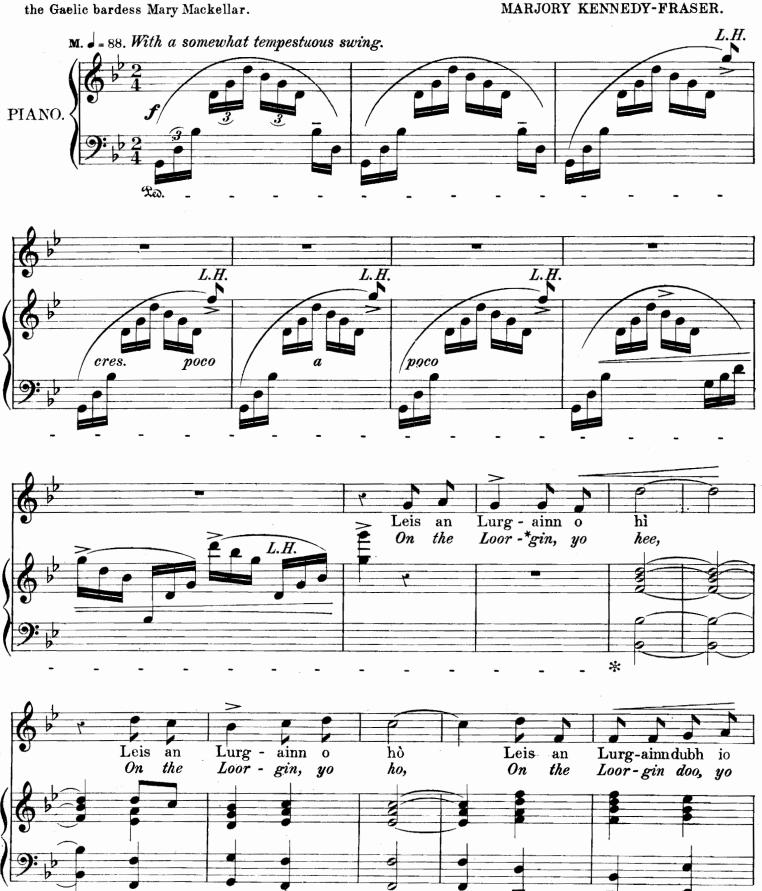
The Mermaids croon.

A HEBRIDEAN SEAFARING SONG.

The Black Loorgin.

AN LURGAINN DUBH.

Old Hebridean Air and Words as sung by the Gaelic bardess Mary Mackellar. English Words and Pianoforte arrangement by MARJORY KENNEDY-FRASER.



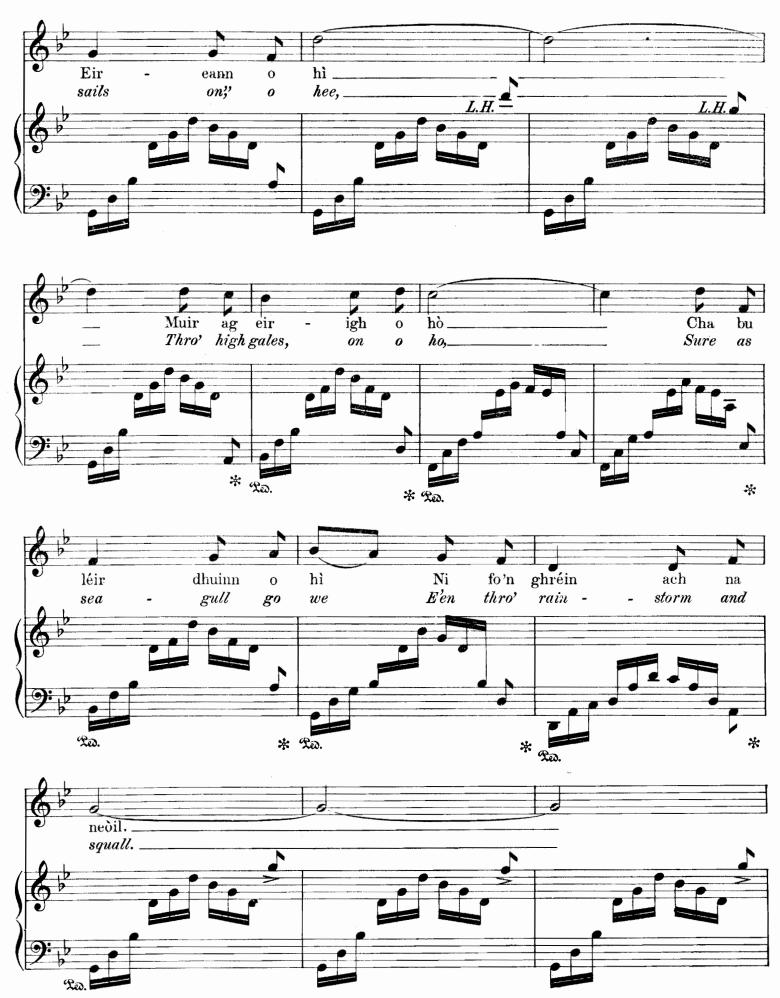
*gin pronounced with hard "g" as in the English word be-gin, and yet somewhat like "k" in "kin".





A Hebridean Seafaring Song.

*From the translation by Malcolm Macfarlane.



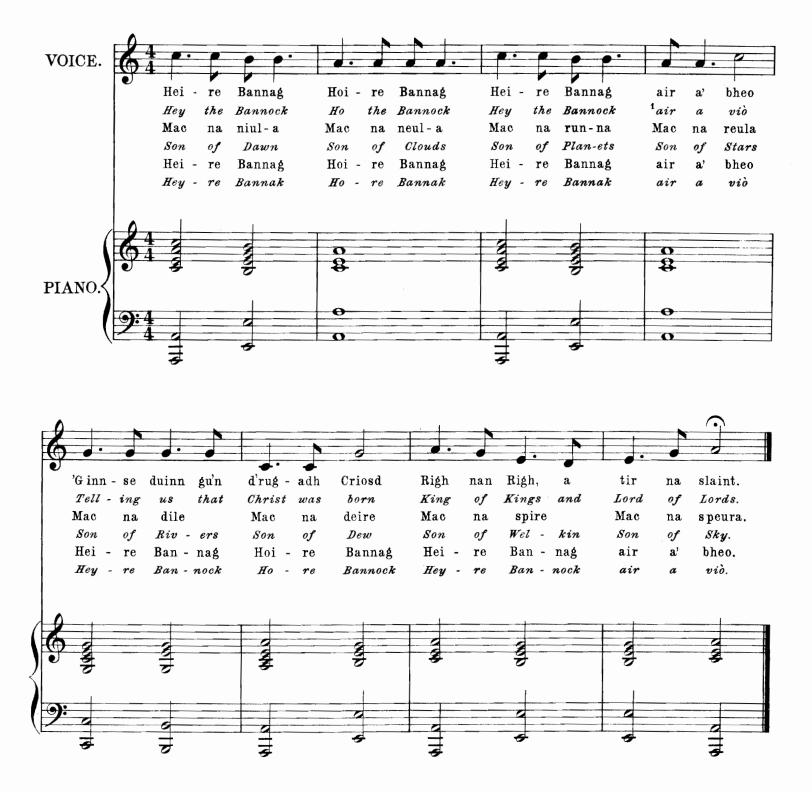
A Hebridean Seafaring Song.



CHRISTMAS DUANAG.

DUAN NOLLAIG.

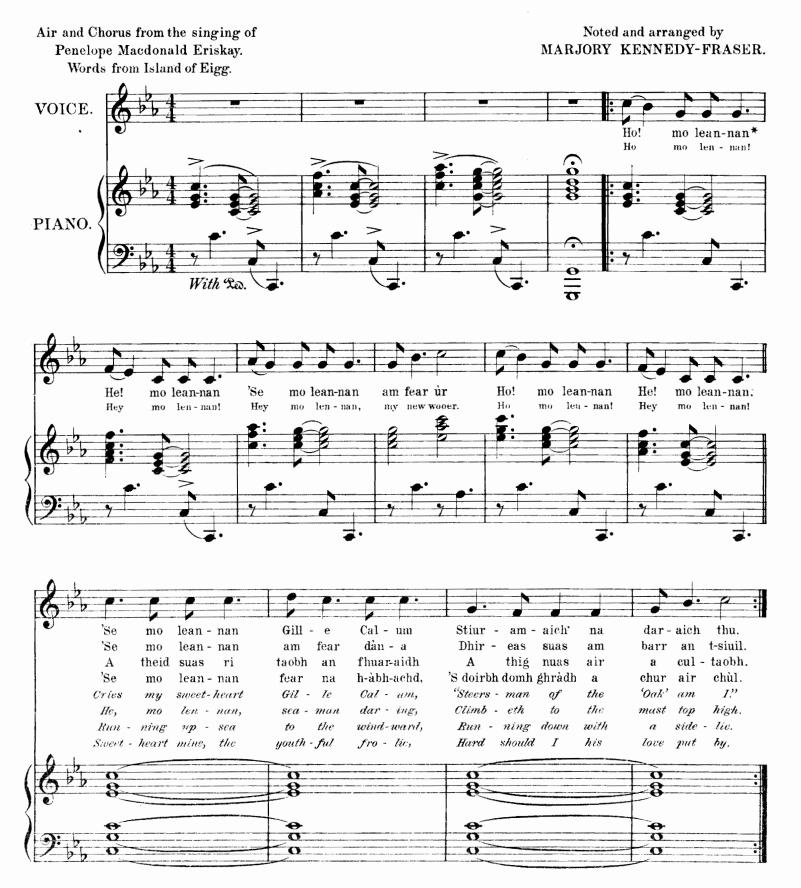
Method of Chanting Christmas Carols etc. From the Chanting of Duncan Macinnes, Eriskay.



1 On the living. The words are from the first volume of "Carmina Gadelica".

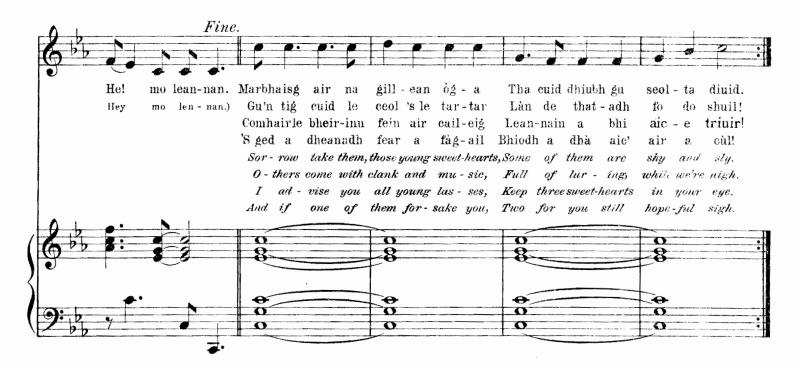
HEBRIDEAN WAULKING SONG.

Ho! mo leannan.



^{*}leannan : sweetheart





Waulking songs of various types are used in the course of shrinking one and the same web of cloth. Beginning with a moderately slow tempo they become ever more fast and furious. When the shrinking process is complete, the web is rolled up and clapped to a lively song. The quaint specimen here given was phonographed from the singing of Mary Johnstone, The Glen, Barra.



ALISTER, SON OF COLL THE SPLENDID.

Alasdair Mhic o-hó Cholla ghasda, o-hó As do laimh gu'n o-hó Earbainn tapadh trom eile. Mharbhadh Tighearn

Ach-nam-Breac leat.

Thiodhlaigeadh an Oir an loch e.

'S ge beag mi fein *Bhuail mi ploc air.

Chuir sid gruaim air Niall a' Chaisteil.

Dh' fhag e lionn-dubh Air a mhacaibh.

'S bha Ni' Lachlainn Fhein 'ga bhasail.†

'S bha Nic-Cònail! 'N deigh a creachadh.

beag ioghnadh dhith B' fhiach a mac e.

Probably helped to put green turf on his grave.

In some districts means to dress a corpse; in others, to wring one's hands in sorrow.

† In some districts ‡ Nic-Dhomhnaill.

HE above fragment evidently refers to the Battle of Inverlochy, fought in 1645 between the Covenanters (led, in the absence of Argyll, by Campbell of Auchinbreck) and the Royalists under the Marquess of Montrose. The hero of the song is the "Colkitto" of English writers, Alasdair Macdonald (son of Colla Ciotach. "Coll the left-handed"). Montrose's chief lieutenant in his short but splendid campaign on behalf of King Charles I.

As might be expected, heroic verse bulks largely in Gaelic poetry, and the fame of a clan depended, and still depends perhaps, as much on luck with the song as on luck with the sword. What the bards sang long ago, the folk now believe, and the unpopularity of more than one clan may be traced to the hostility of song. A really good bard made a most dangerous enemy; he generally took a one-sided view of things, the view of his own clan or district, but the song survived and ultimately came to form the ideas of a much wider area than the one to which it had originally appealed. But if the bard was strong in abuse, he was even stronger in praise -fortunately for several of the western clans and families! In a moment of inspiration, some old Macdonald bard sang of the Lord of the Isles as Buachaille nan Eilean, "the Shepherd of the Isles," and for centuries after the downfall of the Island Kingdom, the thought could touch the hearts of men whose heads were proof against an Argyll's subtlest diplomacy. The Macdonalds of Clanranald and the Macleods of Dunvegan were doubtless "bonnie fighters," but it is no reproach to them to say that they owe a good deal of their traditional glory to song and music.

This is the Clanranald of the bards:

M'eudail m' eudail Mac 'ic Ailein, Cabrach a measg fhiadh nam beann thu, Bradan a measg bhreac nan allt thu, Ailleagan a measg nan eala, An long as àirde thig gu eala.

And this is Macleod:

Mac-Leoid a Dunbheagain Nam pioban 's nam feadan, 'S mi gu'n deanadh do fhreagairt Le fead chinn a' mheòir.

Siubhal fad aig mo ghràdh-sa Le ghillean 's le bhata, An doineann do thàladh S a' bhàirlinn do cheol.

My treasure, my treasure, Clanranald, Stag among the deer of the bens, Salmon among the trout of the streams, Loveliest among the swans, Loftiest ship that makes the harbour.

> Macleod from Dunvegan Of the pipes and the chanters, Blythe would I thee answer With the finger-end trill.

A far-rover my love is With his lads and his long-boat, The tempest thy lull-song, Thy music the waves.

Unfortunately, the old clan-songs are fast dying out, even in the Hebrides, and the fragments which remain are in many cases so mutilated as to be of little value either as tradition or as poetry, though they are always worth rescuing for the sake of the airs to which they are sung.

KENNETH MACLEOD.

ALISTER, SON OF COLL THE SPLENDID.

(Alasdair Mac Colla.)



THE CELTIC GLOOM.

EBRIDEAN folk-song, with its sadness and its longing, will probably be brought forward as another proof of what is called the Celtic Gloom. It would be a mistake, however, to think that the word gloom covers the whole or anything like the whole of western life and character. The Celt is a creature of extremes; his sadness is despair, his joy is rapture; and owing to quite explainable causes, the extreme of sadness makes the greater impression both on himself and on the outside world. "The sigh goes further than the shout," as the Gaelic proverb puts it; a whole day's rapture is soon forgotten, but a sigh in the night lingers long in the ear and heart. A stranger once attended a deireadh-buana, a harvest festival, in one of the isles; the music of pipe and fiddle, the mouth-tunes, the dancing, the merriment, all were equally glorious and uproarious; in the midst of it all, a woman chanted a croon of longing and pathos; ever after, the Hebrides meant to the stranger a tired woman and a yearning in the night. Just as in a man's own life one week of real pain makes a greater impression than a whole year of gladness, so in judging others, whether individually or as a race, he is less affected by the frequent laughter than by the occasional sigh. In the Hebrides one's judgment is further affected by the weirdness of the physical features—the sea and the land ever meeting in strange ways and forms and with strange sounds—and in some cases at any rate, the gloom is in the observer himself, whether Celt or non-Celt, rather than in the people observed. Some years ago two Gaels sat in the chapel-house of Eriskay and for hours recited to each other humorous Gaelic songs and stories, the one those of South Uist, the other those of Eigg and Skye. In both cases the audience, though small, was appreciative and laughed as heartily as the soft light of a peat fire in twilight would allow; then, all of a sudden, the humour and the laughter ceased. The Western Sea breaking on the shores of Uist had taken advantage of a momentary lull in the conversation to make itself heard, and almost unconsciously the talk became a paraphrase of the Morvern bard's wistful lines:

'S mi air m'uilinn air an t-sliabh 'S mi ri iargain na bheil uam, 'S tric mo shùil a' sireadh siar Far an laigh a' ghrian's a' chuan. On the hillside I recline, Ever yearning for the lost, Ever looking to the west, Where the sun sets in the sea.

Later on the two men, still full of the Celtic Gloom, strolled through the mystic treeless island, and in the faint moonlight everything they saw and heard became steeped in sadness. though boisterous reels were being danced in one cottage, and light airy iorrams, boat-songs, were being sung in another, yet the very joy-sounds seemed to die away in a yearning and a So ever meet the two extremes in the Celtic character; the rapture needs little excuse to rush into dance and frolic or, in its more restrained mood, into humour and laughter, but the sound of a distant wave may at any moment turn it into the depths of sadness. And this reminds one of another element in the case which ought not to be forgotten. The Celtic rapture finds its natural outlet in shout and dance and physical exertion, things which do not last; the Celtic Gloom, on the other hand, relieves itself in song and music, things which last and can be handed down from generation to generation. And there is the further difference that such songs of rapture as do exist are sung mostly by men in the prime of life, and are oftenest heard in the village tap-room or on the way home from market, while the songs of gloom are crooned by the old men and by the women, old and young, at the fireside, with the children sitting at their feet. This partly explains the remarkable fact that, while the sweetest songs of gloom are on the lips of the folk, the best specimens of the songs of rapture are to be found in the published works of the known bards.

* * * * * * * * *

The Western Sea, as every islesman knows, can, even on a quiet evening, laugh like a youth whose love-tale is running smoothly, and moan like an aged man bewailing the sins of the past; both the laugh and the moan, however, are the children of the atmosphere rather than of the sea itself.