The following articles came from the Electric Scotland website [www.electricscotland.com](http://www.electricscotland.com) and were for the most part seem to have been written in the 19th century hence give a romanticized view of the Scottish Clans, not necessarily one that is historically accurate!

IT is now well understood that the Celts originally came out of the east. Guest, in his Origines Celticoe describes the routes by which they streamed across Europe and along the north coast of Africa in a bygone century. The migration did not stop till it had reached the shores of the Atlantic. The Celtic flood was followed within the Christian era by the migrations of succeeding races- Huns, Goths, Vandals, Franks, these variously called themselves-and before the successive waves the Celts were driven against the western coast, like the fringe of foam driven up by wind and tide upon a beach. This process was seen in our own islands when the British inhabitants were driven westward by the oncoming waves of Saxons, Angles, and Danes in the fifth and following centuries. Thus driven against the western shores these Celts were known, down to the Norman Conquest, as the Britons or Welsh of Strathclyde, of Wales, and of West Wales or Cornwall.

In the north, beyond the Forth and among the mountain fastnesses, as well as in the south of Galloway, the Celtic race continued to hold its own. By the Roman chroniclers the tribes there were known as the Caledonians or Picts. Between the Forth and the Grampians were the Southern Picts, north of the Grampians were the Northern Picts, and in Galloway were the Niduarian Picts. To which branch of the Celtic race, British or Gaelic, or a separate branch by themselves, the Picts belonged, is not now known. From the fact that after the Roman legions were withdrawn they made fierce war upon the British tribes south of the Forth, it seems likely that they were not British. Dr. W. F. Skene, in his Highlanders of Scotland, took elaborate pains to prove that the Picts were Gaelic, an earlier wave of the same race as the Gaels or Scots who then peopled Ireland, at that time known as Scotia.

Exactly how these Scots came into the sister isle is not now known. According to their own tradition they derived their name from Scota, daughter of one of the Pharoahs, whom one of their leaders married as they passed westward through Egypt, and it is possible they may be identified with the division of the Celtic tribes which passed along the north coast of Africa. According to Gaelic tradition the Scots migrated from Spain to the south of Ireland. According to the same tradition they brought with them the flat brown stone, about nine inches thick, known as the Lia Fail, or Stone of Destiny, on which their kings were crowned, and which was said to have been Jacob”s pillow at Bethel on the plain of Luz. From Ireland they began to cross into Kintyre-the "Headland "-in the sixth century. Their three leaders were Fergus, Lorn, and Angus, Sons of Erc, and their progress was not always a matter of peaceful settlement. Fergus, for instance, made a landing in Ayrshire, and defeated and slew Coyle the British king of the district, whose tumulus is still to be seen at Coylesfield, and whose name is still commemorated as that of the region, Kyle, and in popular rhymes about "Old King Cole."

In Kintyre and the adjoining neighborhood the Invaders established the little Dalriadic kingdom, so called from their place of origin in the north-east of Ireland, Dal-Riada, the "Portion of Riada," conquered in the third century by Fergus”s ancestor, Cairbre-Riada, brother of Cormac, an Irish King. They had their first capital at Dun-add near the present Crinan Canal, and from their possession the district about Loch Awe took the name of Oire-Gaidheal, or Argyll, the "Land of the Gael."

These settlers were Christian, and the name of their patron saint, Kiaran, remains in Kilkiaran, the old name of Campbeltown, Kilkiaran in Islay, Kilkiaran in Lismore, and Kilkerran in Carrick, which last, curiously enough, is a possession of the Fergusons at the present hour. The invasion, however, received one of its strongest impulses from a later missionary. Columba crossed from Ireland and settled in Iona in the year 563, and very soon, with his followers, began a great campaign of Christian conversion among the Northern Picts. The Picts and early Britons, as is shown by their monuments and the folk-customs they have handed down to us, were worshippers of Baal and Ashtaroth. Columba”s conversion of Brud, king of the Northern Picts at his stronghold at Inverness, opened up the whole country to the Gaelic influence. By and by marriages took place between the Pictish and the Gaelic royal houses, and these led, in the ninth century, to disputes over the succession to the Pictish crown. In the struggle which followed, Alpin, king of the Scots, was beheaded by the Picts on Dundee Law, in sight of his own host. But the whole matter was finally decided by the victory of Alpin”s son, Kenneth II, over the last Pictish army, in the year 838, at the spot called Cambuskenneth after the event, on the bank of the Forth near Stirling. Six years later Kenneth succeeded to the Pictish throne.

The history of these early centuries is to be gathered from Adamnan”s Life of Columba, the Annals of Tighernac, the Annals of Ulster, the Albanach Duan, Bede”s Chronicle, and other works. By that time another warlike race had made its appearance on the western coasts. At their first coming, the Dalriads or Scots from Ireland had been known as Gallgael-Gaelic strangers. The new piratical visitors, who now appeared from the eastern shores of the North Sea, received the name of Fion-gall or "fair-haired strangers." Worshippers of Woden and Thor, they proved at first fierce and bitter enemies to the Christian Picts and Gaels, slaying the monks of Iona on their own altar, and even penetrating so far as to burn Dunbarton, the capital of the Britons of Strathclyde, in the year 780. In the face of this menace, Kenneth, in the year of his victory over the Picts, removed the Lia Fail from his own stronghold of Dunstaffnage on Loch Etive, to Scone on the Tay, transferred the bones of Columba from Iona to Dunkeld, and fixed his own royal seat at the ancient capital of the Southern Picts, Forteviot on the Earn. This remained the capital of the Scoto-Pictish kings for two centuries, till in 1057 Malcolm Canmore, son of the "gracious" Duncan and the miller”s daughter of Forteviot, overthrew Macbeth, and set up the capital of his new dynasty at Dunfermline.

Meanwhile the Norsemen overran not only the Western isles but much of the northern part of the country. For a time it was an even chance whether ancient Caledonia should become Norseland or Scotland. Under Malcolm Canmore and his sons, however, the Scots pushed their conquests south of the Forth, annexed Strathclyde, Northumberland, and Westmoreland, and became a formidable power in the land. David I. fortified his dynasty against attack by planting the country with Norman and English barons and introducing the feudal system; and the final issue with the Norsemen was fought out by the last of his race, the last of the Celtic line of kings, Alexander III, at the battle of Largs in 1263.

It is about this period that the traditional history of the Highland clans makes a beginning. It was long the custom to attribute the origin of all these clans to a Gaelic source. The late Dr. W. F. Skene wrote his book, The Highlanders of Scotland, to show that many of the clans, particularly in the more eastern and northern parts of the Highlands must have been of Pictish origin. Without going into the somewhat elaborate details of his evidence and argument, with later modifications in his Celtic Scotland, it may simply be said that the proposition appears reasonable. Nor would it appear less honorable to be descended from the ancient Pictish race of Caledonia than from the Scottish race which crossed the narrow seas from Ireland.

The record of the Picts includes their magnificent and victorious struggle against the Roman legions, their defeat of the British Arthur himself at Camelon in 537, and the overthrow of Egcfrith of Northumbria at Nectansmere in Fife in the year 835. But it must be remembered that the Norse race has also contributed to the origin of the clans. The names of the ancient MacLeod chiefs-Torquil, Tormod, and the like- would of themselves be enough to point this out; and it must be remembered that the wife of the mighty Somerled, from whom all the Macdonald and several other clans are descended, was sister of Godred the Norwegian King of Man. It is equally certain that several clans are of Anglian and Norman origin. The Murrays claim descent from Freskin the Fleming. The Gordons, whether Gordon or Seton, are Norman from the Scottish Border. And the Macfarlanes, cadets of the older Earls of Lennox, are of Northumbrian, or Anglian source. Nothing could be more interesting than the process by which families of such various origins, in the course of a few generations became so impregnated with the spirit of their surroundings as to be practically indistinguishable in instinct and characteristics. Sir Walter Scott had the Highlanders as a whole in view when he framed his famous and apt description of "Gentlemen of the north, men of the south, people of the west, and folk of Fife."

The clan system no doubt took its origin largely from the mountainous nature of the country in which the people found themselves, each family or tribe living in its own glen, separate from the rest of the world, and too remote from any capital to be interfered with by a central government. In these circumstances, as in similar circumstances elsewhere, Afghanistan and Arabia, for instance, the father of the family naturally became the ruler, and when the family grew into a tribe he became its chief. In later days, when great combinations of related clans were formed, the chief of the strongest branch might become captain of the confederacy, like the Captain of Clanranald and the Captain of Clan Chattan. The chiefship was inherited by the eldest legitimate son, but it must be remembered that in the Highlands the son of a "hand-fast" union was considered legitimate, whether his parents were afterwards married or not. Handfasting was a form of trial marriage lasting for a year and a day. If it proved unfruitful it could be terminated at the end of that time, but sometimes a chief might die or be slain before his handfast union could be regularized, and in this case his son was still recognized as his heir. The system arose from the urgent desirability of carrying on the direct line of. the chiefs.

Another outcome of a state of society in which the rights and property of the tribe had constantly to be defended by the sword was the custom of tanistry. If the heir of a chief happened to be too young to rule the clan or lead it in battle the nearest able-bodied relative might succeed for the time to the chief ship. This individual was known as the tanist. A conspicuous example of the working of the law of tanistry was the succession of Macbeth to the crown of his uncle, King Duncan, notwithstanding the fact that Duncan left several sons, legitimate and illegitimate. By his right as tanist Macbeth ruled Scotland ably and justly for seventeen years.

By writers on the customs of the clans a good deal has been made of the so-called law of gavel. It is supposed that under this "law" the whole property of a chief was divided among his family at his death, and Browne, in his History of the Highlands, accounts by the action of this "law" for the impoverishment and loss of influence which overtook some of the clan chiefs. By this process, he says, the line of the chiefs gradually became impoverished while the senior cadet became the most powerful member of the clan and assumed command as captain. There seems, however, some misunderstanding here, for the law of gavel would apply equally to the possessions of the senior cadet. The "law" of gavel probably meant no more than this. A chief portioned out his lands to his sons as tenants. When his eldest son succeeded as chief, as these tenancies fell in he portioned out the lands in turn to his own sons in the same way. Thus the nearest relatives of the chief were always the men of highest rank and most influence in the clan, while the oldest cadets, unless they had secured their position in time by their own exertions, were apt to find their way to the ranks of the ordinary clansmen. As all, however, claimed descent from the house of the chief, all prided themselves upon the rank of gentlemen and behaved accordingly. To this fact are owed the high and chivalrous ideas of personal honor which have always characterised the Scottish Highlander. As an acknowledgment of his authority all the clansmen paid calpe or tribute to the chief, and when outsiders- sometimes inhabitants of a conquered district, or members of a "broken" clan, a clan without a head-attached themselves to a tribe, they usually came under a bond of manrent for offence and defence, and agreed to pay the calpe to their adopted chief. If a clansman occupied more than an eighth part of a davach of land, he also paid the chief a further duty, known as herezeld. The fundamental difference between the clan system of society and the feudal system which was destined to supersede it, was that the authority of the clan chief was based on personal and blood relationship, while that of the feudal superior is based upon tenure of land.

Of the origin of the Highland costume not much Is known. The kilt is one of the primitive garments of the world; it is one of the healthiest and probably the handsomest, and there can be no question that for the active pursuits of the mountaineer it is without a rival. In its original form, as the belted plaid, it afforded ample protection in all weathers, while leaving the limbs absolutely free for the most arduous exertions. The earliest authentic mention of the kilt appears to be that in the Norse history of Magnus Barefoot, with whom Malcolm Canmore made his famous treaty. According to that document, written about the year 1097, Magnus, on returning from his conquest of the Hebrides, adopted the dress in use there, and went about bare-legged, having a short tunic and also an upper garment,

"and so men called him Barefoot." Next, in the fifteenth century is the notice by John Major, the historian, who mentions that the Highland gentlemen of his day "wore no covering from the middle of the thigh to the foot, clothing themselves with a mantle instead of an upper garment, and a shirt dyed with saffron."

As for the tartan, in Miss Donaldson”s Wanderings in the Highlands and Islands, a proposition is made that the numbers of colors employed had a relation to the rank of the wearer-that eight colors were accorded to the service of the altar, seven to the king, and so on in diminishing number to the single dyed garment of the cumerlach or serf. In view, however, of the fact that all the members of a clan wear the same tartan, and that the tartans of some of the greatest clans contain but a small number of colors, such a theory obviously will not bear examination. The earliest costumes of the clansmen appear to have been not of tartan at all, but of plain color, preferably saffron. Certain early references, like that of Aldhelm, Bishop of Sherborne in 970, and that of Ossian when describing a Caledonian woman as appearing in robes "like the bow of the shower," are by no means conclusive as referring to tartan. As variety came to be desired, each clan would use the natural dyes most easily procured in its district, and the easiest pattern to weave was one of simple warp and woof. By and by a clansman would come to be identified by the local pattern he wore, and before long that pattern would come to be known as the tartan of his clan. Whether or not this describes the actual origin of the Highland tartans, there can be no question as to their suitability for the purposes of the hunter and the warrior, to whom it was important to be as little conspicuous as possible on a moor or mountain-side. It was also of value to the clansmen in battle, who required readily to distinguish between friend and foe. After the last great Highland conflict at Culloden, it is said, the dead were identified by their tartans, the clansmen being buried, each with his own tribe, in the long sad trenches among the heather. To the Highlander the garb of his forefathers has always justly counted for much. Sir Walter Scott gave immortal expression to the feeling when he made the Duke of Argyll and Greenwich exclaim to Jeanie Deans, "The heart of MacCailean More will be as cold as death can make it, when it does not warm to the tartan."

The term clan, now applied almost exclusively to the tribes into which the Scottish Highlanders were formerly, and still to some extent are divided, was also applied to those large and powerful septs into which the Irish people were at one time divided, as well as to the communities of freebooters that inhabited the Scottish borders, each of which, like the Highland clans, had a common surname. Indeed, in an Act of the Scottish Parliament for 1587, the Highlanders and Borderers are classed together as being alike "dependents on chieftains or captains of clans." The border clans, how ever, were at a comparatively early period broken up and weaned from their predatory and warlike habits, whereas the system of clanship in the Highlands continued to flourish in almost full vigor down to the middle of the 18th century. As there is so much of romance surrounding the system, especially in its later manifestations, and as it was the cause of much annoyance to Britain, it has become a subject of interest to antiquarians and students of mankind generally; and as it flourished so far into the historical period, curiosity can, to a great extent, be gratified as to its details and working. A good deal has been written on the subject in its various aspects, and among other authorities we must own our indebtedness for much of our information to Skene”s Highlanders of Scotland, Gregory”s Highlands and Isles, Robertson”s Scotland under her Early Kings, Stewart”s Sketches of the Highlanders, Logan”s Scottish Gael and Clans, and The Iona Club Transactions, besides the publications of the various other Scottish Clubs.

We learn from Tacitus and other historians, that at a very early period the inhabitants of Caledonia were divided into a number of tribes, each with a chief at its head. These tribes, from all we can learn, were independent of, and often at war with each other, and only united under a common elected leader when the necessity of resisting a common foe compelled them. In this the Caledonians only followed a custom which is common to all barbarous and semi-barbarous peoples; but what was the bond of union among the members of the various tribes it is now not easy to ascertain. We learn from the researches of Mr E. W. Robertson that the feeling of kindred was very strong among all the early Celtic and even Teutonic nations, and that it was on the principle of kin that land was allotted to the members of the various tribes. The property of the land appears to have been vested in the Cean-cinnetli, or head of the lineage for the good of his clan; it was "burdened with the support of his kindred and Amasack" (military followers), these being allotted parcels of land in proportion to the nearness of their relation to the chief of the clan. The word clan itself, from its etymology, points to the principle of kin, as the bond which united the members of the tribes among themselves, and bound them to their chiefs. As there are good grounds for believing that the original Caledonians, the progenitors of the present genuine Highlanders, belonged to the Celtic family of mankind, it is highly probable that when they first entered upon possession of Alban, whether peaceably or by conquest, they divided the land among their various tribes in accordance with their Celtic principle. The word clan, as we have said, signifies family, and a clan was a certain number of families of the same name, sprung, as was believed, from the same root, and governed by the lineal descendant of the parent family. This patriarchal form of society was probably common in the infancy of mankind, and seems to have prevailed in the days of Abraham; indeed, it was on a similar principle that Palestine was divided among the twelve tribes of Israel, the descendants of the twelve sons of Jacob.

As far back as we can trace, the Highlands appear to have been divided into a number of districts, latterly known as Mormaordoms, each under the jurisdiction of a Mormaor, to whom the several tribes in each district looked up as their common head. It is not improbable that Galgacas, the chosen leader mentioned by Tacitus, may have held a position similar to this, and that in course of time some powerful or popular chief, at first elected as a temporary leader, may have contrived to make his office permanent, and even to some extent hereditary. The title Mormaor, however, is first met with only after the various divisions of northern Scotland had been united into a kingdom. "In Scotland the royal official placed over the crown or fiscal lands, appears to have been originally known as the Maor, and latterly under the Teutonic appellation of Thane. . . . The original Thanage would appear to have been a district held of the Crown, the holder, Maor or Thane, being accountable for the collection of the royal dues, and for the appearance of the royal tenantry at the yearly “hosting,” and answering to the hereditary Toshach, or captain of a clan, for the king stood in the place of the Cean-cinneth, or chief. . . . When lands were strictly retained in the Crown, the Royal Thane, or Maor, was answerable directly to the King; but there was a still greater official among the Scots, known under the title of Mormaor, or Lord High Steward who was evidently a Maor placed over a province instead of a thanage—an earldom or county instead of a barony—a type of Harfager”s royal Jarl who often exercised as a royal deputy that authority which he had originally claimed as the independent lord of the district over which he presided." According to Mr Skene, it was only about the 16th century when the great power of these Mormaors was broken up, and their provinces converted into thanages or earldoms, many of which were held by Saxon nobles, who possessed them by marriage, that the clans first make their appearance in these districts and in independence. By this, we suppose, he does not mean that it was only when the above change took place that the system of clanship sprang into existence, but that then the various great divisions of the clans, losing their ceancinneth, or head of the kin, the individual clans becoming independent, sprang into greater prominence and assumed a stronger individuality.

Among the Highlanders themselves various traditions have existed as to the origin of the clans. Mr Skene mentions the three principal ones, and proves them to be entirely fanciful. The first of these is the Scottish or Irish system, by which the clans trace their origin or foundation to early Irish or Scoto-Irish kings. The second is what Mr Skene terms the heroic system, by which many of the Highland clans are deduced from the great heroes in the fabulous histories of Scotland and Ireland, by identifying one of these fabulous heroes with an ancestor of the clan of the same name. The third system did not spring up till the 17th century, when the fabulous history of Scotland first began to be doubted, when it was considered to be a principal merit in an antiquarian to display his skepticism as to all the old traditions of the country. Mr Skene terms it the Norwegian or Danish system, and it was the result of a furor for imputing everything and deriving everybody from the Danes. The idea, however, never obtained any great credit in the Highlands. The conclusion to which Mr Skene comes is, "that the Highland clans are not of different or foreign origin, but that they were a part of the original nation, who have inhabited the mountains of Scotland as far back as the memory of man, or the records of history can reach; that they were divided into several great tribes possessing their hereditary chiefs; and that it was only when the line of these chiefs became extinct, and Saxon nobles came into their place, that the Highland clans appeared in the peculiar situation and character in which they were afterwards found." Mr Skene thinks this conclusion strongly corroborated by the fact that there can be traced existing in the Highlands, even so late as the 16th century, a still older tradition than that of the Irish origin of the clans. This tradition is found in the often referred to letter of "John Elder, clerk, a Reddschanke," dated 1542, and addressed to King Henry VIII. This tradition, held by the Highlanders of the "more ancient stoke" in opposition to the "Papistical curside spiritualite of Scotland," was that they were the true descendants of the ancient Picts, then known as "Redd Schankes."

Whatever may be the value of Mr Skene”s conclusions as to the purity of descent of the present Highlanders, his researches, taken in conjunction with those of Mr E. W. Robertson, seem pretty clearly to prove, that from as far back as history goes the Highlanders were divided into tribes on the principle of kin, that the germ of the fully developed clan-system can be found among the earliest Celtic inhabitants of Scotland; that clanship, in short, is only a modern example, systematized, developed, and modified by time of the ancient principle on which the Celtic people formed their tribes and divided their lands. The clans were the fragments of the old Celtic tribes, whose mormaors had been destroyed, each tribe dividing into a number of clans. When, according to a recent writer, the old Celtic tribe was deprived of its chief, the bolder spirits among the minor chieftains would gather round them each a body of partisans, who would assume his name and obey his orders. It might even happen that, from certain favorable circumstances, a Saxon or a Norman stranger would thus be able to gain a circle of adherents out of a broken or chieftainless Celtic tribe, and so become the founder of a clan.

As might be expected, this primitive, patriarchal state of society would be liable to be abolished as the royal authority became extended and established, and the feudal system substituted in its stead. This we find was the case, for under David and his successors, during the 12th and 13th centuries, the old and almost independent mormaordoms were gradually abolished, and in their stead were substituted earldoms feudally dependent upon the Crown. In many instances these mormaordoms passed into the hands of lowland barons, favorites of the king; and thus the dependent tribes, losing their hereditary heads, separated, as we have said, into a number of small and independent clans, although even the new foreign barons themselves for a long time exercised an almost independent sway, and used the power which they had acquired by royal favor against the king himself.

As far as the tenure of lands and the heritable jurisdictions were concerned, the feudal system was easily introduced into the Highlands; but although the principal chiefs readily agreed, or were induced by circumstances to hold their lands of the Crown or of low country barons, yet the system of clanship remained in full force amongst the native Highlanders until a very recent period, and its spirit still to a certain extent survives in the affections, the prejudices, the opinions, and the habits of the people.

The nature of the Highlands of Scotland was peculiarly favorable to the clan system, and no doubt helped to a considerable extent to perpetuate it. The division of the country into so many straths, and valleys, and islands, separated from one another by mountains or arms of the sea, necessarily gave rise to various distinct societies. Their secluded situation necessarily rendered general intercourse difficult, whilst the impenetrable ramparts with which they were surrounded made defense easy. The whole race was thus broken into many individual masses, possessing a community of customs and character, but placed under different jurisdictions; every district became a sort of petty independent state; and the government of each community or clan assumed the patriarchal form, being a species of hereditary monarchy, founded on custom, and allowed by general consent, rather than regulated by positive laws.

The system of clanship in the Highlands although possessing an apparent resemblance to feudalism, was in principle very different indeed from that system as it existed in other parts of the country. In the former case, the people followed their chief as the head of their race, and the representative of the common ancestor of the clan; in the latter, they obeyed their leader as feudal proprietor of the lands to which they were attached, and to whom they owed military service for their respective portions of these lands. The Highland chief was the hereditary lord of all who belonged to his clan, wherever they dwelt or whatever lands they occupied; the feudal baron was entitled to the military service of all who held lands under him, to whatever race they might individually belong. The one dignity was personal, the other was territorial; the rights of the chief were inherent, those of the baron were accessory; the one might lose or forfeit his possessions, but could not thereby be divested of his hereditary character and privileges; the other, when divested of his fee, ceased to have any title or claim to the service of those who occupied the lands. Yet these two systems, so different in principle, were in effect nearly identical. Both exhibited the spectacle of a subject possessed of unlimited power within his own territories, and exacting unqualified obedience from a numerous train of followers, to whom he stood in the several relations of landlord, military leader, and judge, with all the powers and prerogatives belonging to each of those characters. Both were equally calculated to aggrandize turbulent chiefs and nobles, at the expense of the royal authority, which they frequently defied, generally resisted, and but seldom obeyed; although for the most part, the chief was less disloyal than the baron, probably because he was farther removed from the seat of government, and less sensible of its interference with his own jurisdiction. The one system was adapted to a people in a pastoral state of society, and inhabiting a country, like the Highlands of Scotland, which from its peculiar nature and conformation, not only prevented the adoption of any other mode of life, but at the same time prescribed the division of the people into separate families or clans. The other system, being of a defensive character, was necessary to a population occupying a fertile but open country, possessing only a rude notion of agriculture, and exposed on all sides to aggressions on the part of neighbors or enemies. But the common tendency of both was to obstruct the administration of justice, nurse habits of lawless violence, exclude the cultivation of the arts of peace, and generally to impede the progress of improvement; and hence neither was compatible with the prosperity of a civilized nation, where the liberty of the subject required protection, and the security of property demanded an equal administration of justice.

The peculiarities of clanship are nowhere better described than in Burt”s "Letters from an Officer of Engineers to his Friend in London" " The Highlanders," he says, are divided into tribes or clans, under chiefs or chieftains, and each clan is again divided into branches from the main stock, who have chieftains over them. These are subdivided into smaller branches of fifty or sixty men, who deduce their original from their particular chieftains, and rely upon them as their more immediate protectors and defenders. The ordinary Highlanders esteem it the most sublime degree of virtue to love their chief and pay him a blind obedience, although it be in opposition to the government. Next to this love of their chief is that of the particular branch whence they sprang; and, in a third degree, to those of the whole clan or name, whom they will assist, right or wrong, against those of any other tribe with which they are at variance. They likewise owe good-will to such clans as they esteem to be their particular well-wishers. And, lastly, they have an adherence to one another as Highlanders in opposition to the people of the low country, whom they despise as inferior to them in courage, and believe they have a right to plunder them whenever it is in their power. This last arises from a tradition that the Lowlands, in old times, were the possessions of their ancestors.

"The chief exercises an arbitrary authority over his vassals, determines all differences and disputes that happen among them, and levies taxes upon extraordinary occasions, such as the marriage of a daughter, building a house, or some pretence for his support or the honor of his name; and if any one should refuse to contribute to the best of his ability, he is sure of severe treatment, and, if he persists in his obstinacy, he would be cast out of his tribe by general consent. This power of the chief is not supported by interest, as they are landlords, but by consanguinity, as lineally descended from the old patriarchs or fathers of the families, for they hold the same authority when they have lost their estates, as may appear from several instances, and particularly that of one (Lord Lovat) who commands his clan, though at the same time they maintain him, having nothing left of his own. On the other hand, the chief, even against the laws, is bound to protect his followers, as they are sometimes called, be they never so criminal. He is their leader in clan quarrels, must free the necessitous from their arrears of rent, and maintain such who by accidents are fallen to total decay. Some of the chiefs have not only personal dislikes and enmity to each other, but there are also hereditary feuds between clan and clan, which have been handed down from one generation to another for several ages. These quarrels descend to the meanest vassals, and thus sometimes an innocent person suffers for crimes committed by his tribe at a vast distance of time before his being began."

This clear and concise description will serve to convey an idea of clanship as it existed in the Highlands, about the beginning of the eighteenth century, when the system was in full force and vigor. It presented a singular mixture of patriarchal and feudal government and everything connected with the habits, manners, customs, and feelings of the people tended to maintain it unimpaired, amidst all the changes which were gradually taking place in other parts of the country, from the diffusion of knowledge, and the progress of improvement. There was, indeed, something almost oriental in the character of immutability which seemed to belong to this primitive institution, endeared as it was to the affections, and singularly adapted to the condition of the people amongst whom it prevailed. Under its influence all their habits had been formed; with it all their feelings and associations were indissolubly blended. When the kindred and the followers of a chief saw him surrounded by a body of adherents, numerous, faithful, and brave, devoted to his interests, and ready at all times to sacrifice their lives in his service, they could conceive no power superior to his; and, when they looked back into the past history of their tribe, they found that his progenitors had, from time immemorial, been at their head. Their tales, their traditions, their songs, constantly referred to the exploits or the transactions of the same tribe or fraternity living under the same line of chiefs; and the transmission of command and obedience, of protection and attachment, from one generation to another, became in consequence as natural, in the eye of a Highlander, as the transmission of blood or the regular laws of descent. This order of things appeared to him as fixed and as inviolable as the constitution of nature or the revolutions of the seasons. Hence nothing could shake his fidelity to his chief, or induce him to compromise what he believed to be for the honor and interest of his clan. He was not without his feelings of independence, and he would not have brooked oppression where he looked for kindness and protection. But the long unbroken line of chiefs is of itself a strong presumptive proof of the general mildness of their sway. The individuals might change, but the ties which bound one generation were drawn more closely, although by insensible degrees, around the succeeding one; and thus each family, in all its various successions, retained something like the same sort of relation to the parent stem, which the renewed leaves of a tree in spring preserve, in point of form and position, to those which had dropped off in the preceding autumn.

Many important consequences, affecting the character of the Highlanders, resulted from this division of the people into small tribes, each governed in the patriarchal manner already described. The authority of the sovereign, if nominally recognized, was nearly altogether unfelt and inoperative. His mandates could neither arrest the mutual depredations of the clans, nor allay their hereditary hostilities. Delinquents could not be pursued into the bosom of the clan which protected them, nor could the judges administer the laws, in opposition to the will or the interests of the chiefs. Sometimes the sovereign attempted to strengthen his hands by fomenting divisions between the different clans, and entering occasionally into the interests of one, in the hope of weakening another; he threw his weight into one scale that the other might kick the beam, and he withdrew it again, that, by the violence of the reaction, both parties might be equally damaged and enfeebled. Many instances of this artful policy occur in Scottish history, which, for a long period, was little else than a record of internal disturbances. The general government, wanting the power to repress disorder, sought to destroy its elements by mutual collision; and the immediate consequence of its inefficiency was an almost perpetual system of aggression, warfare, depredation, and contention. Besides, the little principalities into which the Highlands were divided touched at so many points, yet they were so independent of one another; they approached so nearly in many respects, yet, in some others, were so completely separated; there were so many opportunities of encroachment on the one hand, and so little disposition to submit to it on the other; and the quarrel or dispute of one individual of the tribe so naturally involved the interest, the sympathies, and the hereditary feelings or animosities of the rest, that profound peace or perfect cordiality scarcely ever existed amongst them, and their ordinary condition was either a chronic or an active state of internal warfare. From opposing interests or wounded pride, deadly feuds frequently arose amongst the chiefs, and being warmly espoused by the clans, were often transmitted, with aggravated animosity, from one generation to another.

If it were profitable, it might be curious to trace the negotiations, treaties, and bonds of amity, or rnanrent as they were called, by which opposing clans strengthened themselves against the attacks and encroachments of their enemies or rivals, or to preserve what may be called the balance of power. Amongst the rudest communities of mankind may be discovered the elements of that science which has been applied to the government and diplomacy of the most civilized nations. By such bonds they came under an obligation to assist one another; and, in their treaties of mutual support and protection, smaller clans, unable to defend themselves, and those families or septs which had lost their chieftains, were also included. When such confederacies were formed, the smaller clans followed the fortunes, engaged in the quarrels, and fought under the chiefs, of the greater. Thus the MacRaes followed the Earl of Seaforth, the MacCoils the Stewarts of Appin, and the MacGillivrays and MacBeans the Laird of Mackintosh; but, nevertheless, their ranks were separately marshaled, and were led by their own subordinate chieftains and lairds, who owned submission only when necessary for the success of combined operations. The union had for its object aggression or revenge, and extended no further than the occasion for which it had been formed; yet it served to prevent the smaller clans from being swallowed up by the greater, and at the same time nursed the turbulent and warlike spirit which formed the common distinction of all. From these and other causes, the Highlands were for ages as constant a theatre of petty conflicts as Europe has been of great and important struggles; in the former were enacted, in miniature, scenes bearing a striking and amusing analogy to those which took place upon a grand scale in the latter. The spirit of opposition and rivalry between the clans perpetuated a system of hostility; it encouraged the cultivation of the military at the expense of the social virtues, and it perverted their ideas both of law and morality. Revenge was accounted a duty, the destruction of a neighbor a meritorious exploit, and rapine an honorable employment. Wherever danger was to be encountered, or bravery displayed, there they conceived that distinction was to be obtained; the perverted sentiment of honor rendered their feuds more implacable, their inroads more savage and destructive; and superstition added its influence in exasperating animosities, by teaching that to revenge the death of a kinsman or friend was an act agreeable to his manes; thus engaging on the side of the most implacable hatred and the darkest vengeance, the most amiable and domestic of all human feelings, namely, reverence for the memory of the dead, and affection for the virtues of the living.

Another custom, which once prevailed, contributed to perpetuate this spirit of lawless revenge. "Every heir or young chieftain of a tribe," says Martin, who had studied the character and manners of the Highlanders, and understood them well, "was obliged to give a specimen of his valor before he was owned and declared governor or leader of his people, who obeyed and followed him on all occasions. This chieftain was usually attended with a retinue of young men, who had not before given any proof of their valor, and were ambitious of such an opportunity to signalize themselves. It was usual for the chief to make a desperate incursion upon some neighbor or other that they were in feud with, and they were obliged to bring, by open force, the cattle they found in the land they attacked, or to die in the attempt. After the performance of this achievement, the young chieftain was ever after reputed valiant, and worthy of government, and such as were of his retinue acquired the like reputation. This custom being reciprocally used among them, was not reputed robbery; for the damage which one tribe sustained by the inauguration of the chieftain of another, was repaired when their chieftain came in his turn to make his specimen." But the practice seems to have died out about half a century before the time at which Martin”s work appeared, and its disuse removed one fertile source of feuds and disorders. Of the nature of the depredations in which the Highlanders commonly engaged, the sentiments with which they were regarded, the manner in which they were conducted, and the effects which they produced on the character, habits, and manners of the people, an ample and interesting account will be found in the first volume of General Stewart”s valuable work on the Highlands.

It has been commonly alleged, that ideas of succession were so loose in the Highlands, that brothers were often preferred to grandsons and even to sons. But this assertion proceeds on a most erroneous assumption, inasmuch as election was never in any degree admitted, and a system of hereditary succession prevailed, which, though different from that which has been instituted by the feudal law, allowed of no such deviations or anomalies as some have imagined. The Highland law of succession as Mr Skene observes, requires to be considered in reference, first, to the chiefship and the superiority of the lands belonging to the clan; and secondly, in respect to the property or the land itself. The succession to the chiefship and its usual prerogatives was termed the law of taniatry; that to the property or the land itself, gavd. But when the feudal system was introduced, the law of tanistry became the law of succession to the property as well as the chiefship; whilst that of gavel was too directly opposed to feudal principles to be suffered to exist at all, even in a modified form. It appears, indeed, that the Highlanders adhered strictly to succession in the male line, and that the great peculiarity which distinguished their law of succession from that established by the feudal system, consisted in the circumstance that, according to it, brothers invariably succeeded before sons. In the feudal system property was alone considered, and the nearest relation to the last proprietor was naturally accounted the heir. But, in the Highland system, the governing principle of succession was not property, but the right of chiefship, derived from being the lineal descendant of the founder or patriarch of the tribe; it was the relation to the common ancestor, to whom the brother was considered as one degree nearer than the son, and through whom the right was derived, and not to the last chief, which regulated the succession. Thus, the brothers of the chief invariably succeeded before the sons, not by election, but as a matter of right, and according to a fixed rule which formed the law or principle of succession, instead of being, as some have supposed, a departure from it, occasioned by views of temporary expediency, by usurpation, or otherwise. In a word, the law of tanistry, however much opposed to the feudal notions of later times, flowed naturally from the patriarchal constitution of society in the Highlands, and was peculiarly adapted to the circumstances of a people such as we have described, whose warlike habits and love of military enterprise, or armed predatory expeditions, made it necessary to have at all times a chief competent to act as their leader or commander.

But if the law of tanistry was opposed to the principles of the feudal system, that of gavel or the succession to property amongst the Highlanders was still more adverse. By the feudal law the eldest son, when the succession opened, not only acquired the superiority over the rest of the family, but he also succeeded to the whole of the property, whilst the younger branches were obliged to push their fortune by following other pursuits. But in the Highlands the case was altogether different. By the law of gavel, the property of the clan was divided in certain proportions amongst all the male branches of the family, to the exclusion of females, who, by this extraordinary Salic anomaly, could no more succeed to the property than to the chiefship itself. The law of gavel in the Highlands, therefore, differed from the English custom of gavel-kind in being exclusively confined to the male branches of a family. In what proportions the property was divided, or whether these proportions varied according to circumstances, or the will of the chief, it is impossible to ascertain. But it would appear that the principal seat of the family, with the lands immediately surrounding it, always remained the property of the chief; and besides this, the latter retained a sort of superiority over the whole possessions of the clan, in virtue of which he received from each dependent branch a portion of the produce of the land as an acknowledgement of his chiefship, and also to enable him to support the dignity of his station by the exercise of a commensurate hospitality. Such was the law of gavel, which, though adverse to feudal principles, was adapted to the state of society amongst the Highlands, out of which indeed it originally sprang; because, where there were no other pursuits open to the younger branches of families except rearing flocks and herds during peace, and following the chief in war; and where it was the interest as well as the ambition of the latter to multiply the connections of his family, and take every means to strengthen the power as well as to secure the obedience of his clan, the division of property, or the law of gavel, resulted as naturally from such an order of things, as that of hereditary succession to the patriarchal government and chiefship of the clan. Hence, the chief stood to the cadets of his family in a relation somewhat analogous to that in which the feudal sovereign stood to the barons who held their fiefs of the crown, and although there was no formal investiture, yet the tenure was in effect pretty nearly the same. In both cases the principle of the system was essentially military, though it apparently led to opposite results; and, in the Highlands, the law under consideration was so peculiarly adapted to the constitution of society, that it was only abandoned after a long struggle, and even at a comparatively recent period traces of its existence and operation may be observed amongst the people of that country.

Similar misconceptions have prevailed regarding Highland marriage-customs. This was, perhaps, to be expected. In a country where a bastard son was often found in undisturbed possession of the chiefship or property of a clan, and where such bastard generally received the support of the clansmen against the claims of the feudal heir, it was natural to suppose that very loose notions of succession were entertained by the people; that legitimacy conferred no exclusive rights; and that the title founded on birth alone might be set aside in favor of one having no other claim than that of election. But this, although a plausible, would nevertheless be an erroneous supposition. The person here considered as a bastard, and described as such, was by no means viewed in the same light by the Highlanders, because, according to their law of marriage, which was originally very different from the feudal system in this matter, his claim to legitimacy was as undoubted as that of the feudal heir afterwards became. It is well known that the notions of the Highlanders were peculiarly strict in regard to matters of hereditary succession, and that no people on earth was less likely to sanction any flagrant deviation from what they believed to be the right and true line of descent. All their peculiar habits, feelings, and prejudices were in direct opposition to a practice, which, had it been really acted upon, must have introduced endless disorder and confusion; and hence the natural explanation of this apparent anomaly seems to be, what Mr Skene has stated, namely, that a person who was feudally a bastard might in their view be considered as legitimate, and therefore entitled to be supported in accordance with their strict ideas of hereditary right, and their habitual tenacity of whatever belonged to their ancient usages. Nor is this mere conjecture or hypothesis. A singular custom regarding marriage, retained till a late period amongst the Highlanders, and clearly indicating that their law of marriage originally differed in some essential points from that established under the feudal system, seems to afford a simple and natural explanation of the difficulty by which genealogists have been so much puzzled.

"This custom was termed hand-fasting, and consisted in a species of contract between two chiefs, by which it was agreed that the heir of one should live with the daughter of the other as her husband for twelve months and a day. If in that time the lady became a mother, or proved to be with child, the marriage became good in law, even although no priest had performed the marriage ceremony in due form; but should there not have occurred any appearance of issue, the contract was considered at an end, and each party was at liberty to marry or hand-fast with any other. It is manifest that the practice of so peculiar a species of marriage must have been in terms of the original law among the Highlanders, otherwise it would be difficult to conceive how such a custom could have originated; and it is in fact one which seems naturally to have arisen from the form of their society, which rendered it a matter of such vital importance to secure the lineal succession of their chiefs. It is perhaps not improbable that it was this peculiar custom which gave rise to the report handed down by the Roman and other historians, that the ancient inhabitants of Great Britain had their wives in common, or that it was the foundation of that law of Scotland by which natural children became legitimized by subsequent marriage; and as this custom remained in the Highlands until a very late period, the sanction of the ancient custom was sufficient to induce them to persist in regarding the offspring of such marriages as legitimate."

It appears, indeed, that, as late as the sixteenth century, the issue of a hand-fast marriage claimed the earldom of Sutherland. The claimant, according to Sir Robert Gordon, described himself as one lawfully descended from his father, John, the third earl, because, as he alleged, "his mother was hand-fasted and affianced to his father;" and his claim was bought off (which shows that it was not considered as altogether incapable of being maintained) by Sir Adam Gordon, who had married the heiress of Earl John. Such, then, was the nature of the peculiar and temporary connection, which gave rise to the apparent anomalies which we have been considering. It was a custom which had for its object, not to interrupt, but to preserve the lineal succession of the chiefs, and to obviate the very evil of which it is conceived to afford a glaring example. But after the introduction of the feudal law, which, in this respect, was directly opposed to the ancient Highland law, the lineal and legitimate heir, according to Highland principles, came to be regarded as a bastard by the government, which accordingly considered him as thereby incapacitated for succeeding to the honors and property of his race; and hence originated many of those disputes concerning succession and chiefship, which embroiled families with one another as well as with the government, and were productive of incredible disorder, mischief, and bloodshed. No allowance was made for the ancient usages of the people, which were probably but ill understood; and the rights of rival claimants were decided according to the principles of a foreign system of law, which was long resisted, and never admitted except from necessity. It is to be observed, however, that the Highlanders themselves drew a broad distinction between bastard sons and the issue of the hand-fast anions above described. The former were rigorously excluded from every sort of succession, hut the latter were considered as legitimate as the offspring of the most regularly solemnized marriage.

Having said thus much respecting the laws of succession and marriage, we proceed next to consider the gradation of ranks which appears to have existed amongst the Highlanders, whether in relation to the lands of which they were proprietors, or the clans of which they were members. And here it maybe observed that the classification of society in the Highlands seems to have borne a close resemblance to that which prevailed in Wales and in Ireland amongst cognate branches of the same general race. In the former country there were three different tenures of land, and nine degrees of rank. Of these tenures, the first was termed Maerdir, signifying a person who has jurisdiction, and included three ranks; the second was called Uchiordir, or property, and likewise consisted of three ranks; and the third, denominated Priodordir, or native, included that portion of the population whom we would now call tenants, divided into the degrees of yeomen, laborers, and serfs. A similar order of things appears to have prevailed in Ireland, where, in the classification of the people, we recognize the several degrees of Fuidir, Biadhtach, and Mogh. In the Highlands, the first tenure included the three degrees of .Ard Righ, Righ, and Mormaor; the Tighern or Thane, the Arrnin and the Squire, were analogous to the three Welsh degrees included in the Uchilordir; and a class of persons, termed native men, were evidently the same in circumstances and condition with the Priodordir of Wales. These native men were obviously the tenants or farmers on the property, who made a peculiar acknowledgement, termed calpe, to the chief or head of their clan. For this we have the authority of Martin, who informs us that one of the duties payable by all the tenants to their chiefs, though they did not live upon his lands," was called "calpich," and that "there was a standing law for it," denominated "calpich law." The other duty paid by the tenants was that of herezeld, as it was termed, which, along with calpe, was exigible if the tenant happened to occupy more than the eighth part of a davoch of land. That such was the peculiar acknowledgement of chiefship incumbent on the native men, or, in other words, the clan tribute payable by them in acknowledgement of the power and in support of the dignity of the chief, appears from the bonds of amity or manrent, in which we find them obliging themselves to pay "calpis as native men ought and should do to their chief."

But the native men of Highland properties must be carefully distinguished from the cumerlacli, who, like the kaeth of the Welsh, were merely a species of serfs, or adscipti gleboe. The former could not be removed from the land at the will of their lord, but there was no restriction laid on their personal liberty; the latter might be removed at the pleasure of their lord, but their personal liberty was restrained, or rather abrogated. The native man was the tenant who cultivated the soil, and as such possessed a recognized estate in the land which he occupied. As long as he performed the requisite services he could not be removed, nor could a greater proportion of labor or produce be exacted from him than custom or usage had fixed. It appears, therefore, that these possessed their farms, or holdings, by a sort of hereditary right, which was not derived from their lord, and of which, springing as it did from immemorial usage, and the very constitution of clanship, it was not in his power to deprive them. The cumerlack were the cottars and actual laborers of the soil, who, possessing no legal rights either of station or property, were in reality absolute serfs. The changes of succession, however, occasionally produced important results, illustrative of the peculiarities above described. "When a Norman baron," says Mr Skene, "obtained by succession, or otherwise, a Highland property, the Gaelic nativi remained in actual possession of the soil under him, but at the same time paid their calpes to the natural chief of their clan, and followed him in war. When a Highland chief, however, acquired by the operation of the feudal succession, an additional property which had not been previously in the possession of his clan, he found it possessed by the nativi of another race. If these nativi belonged to another clan which still existed in independence, and if they chose to remain on the property, they did so at the risk of being placed in a perilous situation, should a feud arise between the two clans. But if they belonged to no other independent clan, and the stranger chief had acquired the whole possessions of their race, the custom seems to have been for them to give a bond of manrent to their new lord, by which they bound themselves to follow him as their chief, and make him the customary acknowledgement of the calpe. They thus became a dependent sept upon a clan of a different race, while they were not considered as forming a part of that clan." The gradation of ranks considered in reference to the clan or tribe may be briefly described. The highest dignitary was the righ or king, who in point of birth and station was originally on a footing of equality with the other chiefs, and only derived some additional dignity during his life from a sort of regal preeminence. "Among the ancient Celts the prince or king had nothing actually his own, but everything belonging to his followers was freely at his service;" of their own accord they gave their prince so many cattle, or a certain portion of grain. It seems probable that the Celtic chief held the public lands in trust for his people, and was on his succession invested with those possessions which he afterwards apportioned among his retainers. Those only, we are told by Caesar, had lands, "magistrates and princes, and they give to their followers as they think proper, removing them at the year”s end." The Celtic nations, according to Dr Macpherson, limited the regal authority to very narrow bounds. The old monarchs of North Britain and Ireland were too weak either to control the pride and insolence of the great, or to restrain the licentiousness of the populace. Many of those princes, if we credit history, were dethroned, and some of them even put to death by their subjects, which is a demonstration that their power was not unlimited.

Next to the king was the Mormaor, who seems to have been identical with the Tigliern and the later Thiane. As we have already indicated, the persons invested with this distinction were the patriarchal chiefs or heads of the great tribes into which the Highlanders were formerly divided. But when the line of the ancient mormaors gradually sank under the ascendant influence of the feudal system, the clans forming the great tribes became independent, and their leaders or chiefs were held to represent each the common ancestor or founder of his clan, and derived all their dignity and power from the belief in such representation. The chief possessed his office by right of blood alone, as that right was understood in the Highlands; neither election nor marriage could constitute any title to this distinction; it was, as we have already stated, purely hereditary, nor could it descend to any person except him who, according to the Highland rule of succession, was the nearest male heir to the dignity.

Next to the chief stood the tanist or person who, by the laws of tanistry, was entitled to succeed to the chiefship; he possessed this title during the lifetime of the chief, and, in virtue of his apparent honors, was considered as a man of mark and consequence. "In the settlement of succession, the law of tanistry prevailed in Ireland from the earliest accounts of time. According to that law," says Sir James Ware, "the hereditary right of succession was not maintained among the princes or the rulers of countries; but the strongest, or he who had the most followers, very often the eldest and most worthy of the deceased king”s blood and name, succeeded him. This person, by the common suffrage of the people, and in the lifetime of his predecessor, was appointed to succeed, and was called Tanist, that is to say, the second in dignity. Whoever received this dignity maintained himself and followers, partly out of certain lands set apart for that purpose, but chiefly out of tributary impositions, which he exacted in an arbitrary maimer; impositions from which the lands of the church only, and those of persons vested with particular immunities, were exempted. The same custom was a fundamental law in Scotland for many ages. Upon the death of a king, the throne was not generally filled by his son, or daughter, failing of male issue, but by his brother, uncle, cousin-german, or near relation of the same blood. The personal merit of the successor, the regard paid to the memory of his immediate ancestors, or his address in gaining a majority of the leading men, frequently advanced him to the crown, notwithstanding the precautions taken by his predecessor." According to Mr E. W. Robertson the Tanist, or heir-apparent, appears to have been nominated at the same time as the monarch or chief, and in pursuance of what he considers a true Celtic principle, that of a "divided authority;" the office being immediately filled up in case of the premature death of the Tanist, the same rule being as applicable to the chieftain of the smallest territory as to the chosen leader of the nation. According to Dr Macpherson, it appears that at first the Tanist or successor to the monarchy, or chiefship, was elected, but at a very early period the office seems to have become hereditary, although not in the feudal sense of that term. Mr Skene has shown that the succession was strictly limited to heirs male, and that the great peculiarity of the Highland system was that brothers in variably were preferred to sons. This perhaps arose partly from an anxiety to avoid minorities "in a nation dependent upon a competent leader in war." This principle was frequently exemplified in the succession to the mormaordoms, and even to the kingly power itself; it formed one of the pleas put forward by Bruce in his competition for the crown with Baliol.

After the family of the chief came the ceantighes, or heads of the subordinate houses into which the clan was divided, the most powerful of whom was the toisick, or toshach, who was generally the oldest cadet. This was a natural consequence of the law of gavel, which, producing a constant subdivision of the chief”s estate, until in actual extent of property he sometimes came to possess less than any of the other branches of the family, served in nearly the same proportion to aggrandize the latter, and hence that branch which had been longest separated from the original became relatively the most powerful. The toshach, military leader, or captain of the clan, certainly appears to have been at first elected to his office among the Celtic nations, as indeed were all the dignitaries who at a later period among the Highlanders succeeded to their positions according to fixed laws. As war was the principal occupation of all the early Celtic nations, the office of toshach, or "warking," as Mr Robertson calls him, was one of supreme importance, and gave the holder of it many opportunities of converting it into one of permanent kingship although the Celts carefully guarded against this by enforcing the principle of divided authority among their chiefs, and thus maintaining the "balance of power." The toshach”a duties were strictly military, he having nothing to do with the internal affairs of the tribe or nation, these being regulated by a magistrate, judge, or vergolreith, elected annually, and invested with regal authority and the power of life and death. It would appear that the duties of toskack sometimes devolved on the tanist, though this appears to have seldom been the case among the Highlanders From a very early time the oldest cadet held the highest rank in the clan, next to the chief; and when the clan took the field he occupied, as a matter of right, the principal post of honor. On the march he headed the van, and in battle took his station on the right; he was, in fact, the lieutenant-general of the chief, and when the latter was absent he cornmended the whole clan. ("Toisieh," says Dr Macpherson "was another title of honor which obtained among the Seats of the middle ages. Spelman imagined that this dignity was the same with that of Thane. But the Highlanders, among whose predecessors the word was once common, distinguished carefully in their language the toisich. from the tanistais or the tiersea. When they enumerate the different classes of their great men, agreeably to the language of former times, they make use of these three titles, in the same sentence, with a disjunctive particle between them." "In Gaelic," he adds, "tug, tos, and tosicls signify the beginning or first part of anything, and sometimes the front of an army or battle." Hence perhaps the name toisichs, implying the post of honor which the oldest cadet always occupied as his peculiar privilege and distinction. Mr Robertson, however, thinks tosiads is derived from the same root as the Latin due. (Early, Kings, i. 26.)) Another function exercised by the oldest cadet was that of mao; or steward, the principal business of which officer was to collect the revenues of the chief; but, after the feudal customs were introduced, this duty devolved upon the baron-baffle, and the maor consequently discontinued his fiscal labors.

The peculiar position of the toshach, with the power and consequence attached to it, naturally pointed him out as the person to whom recourse would be had in circumstances of difficulty; and hence arose an apparent anomaly which has led to no little misconception arid confusion. The difficulty, however, may easily be cleared by a short explanation. When, through misfortune or otherwise, the family of the chief had become so reduced that he could no longer afford to his clan the protection required, and which formed the correlative obligation on his part to that of fealty and obedience on theirs, then the clansmen followed the oldest cadet as the head of the most powerful sept or branch of the clan; and he thus enjoyed, sometimes for a considerable period, all the dignity, consequence, and privileges of a chief, without, of course, either possessing a right, jure san guinis, to that station, or even acquiring the title of the office which he, de facto, exercised. He was merely a sort of patriarchal regent, who exercised the supreme power, and enjoyed prerogatives of royalty without the name. While the system of clanship remained in its original purity, no such regency, or interregnum, could ever take place. But, in process of time, many circumstances occurred to render it both expedient and necessary. In fact, clanship, in its ancient purity, could scarcely co-exist with the feudal system, which introduced changes so adverse to its true spirit; and hence, when the territory had passed, by descent, into the hands of a Lowland baron, or when, by some unsuccessful opposition to the government, the chief had brought ruin upon himself and his house, and was no longer in a condition to maintain his station and afford protection to his clan, the latter naturally placed themselves under the only head capable of occupying the position of their chief, and with authority sufficient to command or enforce obedience. In other words, they sought protection at the hands of the oldest cadet; and he, on his part, was known by the name, not of chief, which would have been considered a gross usurpation, but of captain, or leader of the clan. It is clear, therefore, that this dignity was one which owed its origin to circumstances, and formed no part of the original system, as has been generally but erroneously supposed. If an anomaly, it was one imposed by necessity, and the deviation was confined, as we have seen, within the narrowest possible limits. It was altogether unknown until a recent period in the history of the Highlands, and, when it did come into use, it was principally confined to three clans, namely, Clan Chattan, Clan Cameron, and Clan Ranald; an undoubted proof that it was not a regular but an exceptional dignity, that it was a temporary expedient, not part of a system; and that a captain differed as essentially from a chief as a regent differs from an hereditary sovereign. "It is evident," says Mr Skene, who has the merit of being the first to trace out this distinction clearly, "that a title, which was not universal among the Highlanders, must have arisen from peculiar circumstances connected with those clans in which it is first found; and when we examine the history of these clans, there can he little doubt that it was simply a person who had, from various causes, become de facto head of the clan, while the person possessing the hereditary right to that dignity remained either in a subordinate situation, or else for the time disunited from the rest of the clan." (Skene”s Highlanders, vol. ii. pp. 177, 178. That die captains of clans were originally the oldest cadets, placed beyond all doubt by an instance which Mr Skene has mentioned in the part of his work here referred to. "The title of captain occurs but once in the family of the Macdonalds of Slate, and the single occurrence of this peculiar title is when the clan Houston was led by the uncle of their chief, then in minority. In 1545, we find Archibald Maconnill, captain of the clan Houston; and thus, on the only occasion when this clan followed as a chief a person who had not the right of blood to that station, he styles himself captain of the clan.") Another title known among the ancient Highlanders was that of ogtiern, or lesser tighern, or Thane, and was applied either to the son of a tighern, or to those members of the clan whose kinship to the chief was beyond a certain degree. They appear to have to a large extent formed the class of duinewassels, or gentry of the clan, intermediate between the chief and the body of the clan, and known in later times as tacks-men or goodmen. "These, again, had a circle of relations, who considered them as their immediate leaders, and who in battle were placed under their immediate command. Over them in peace, these chieftains exercised a certain authority, but were themselves dependent on the chief, to whose service all the members of the clan were submissively devoted. As the dwiriewassels received their lands from the bounty of the chief, for the purpose of supporting their station in the tribe, so these lands were occasionally resumed or reduced to provide for those who were more immediately related to the laird; hence many of this class necessarily sank into commoners. This transition strengthened the feeling which was possessed by the very lowest of the community, that they were related to the chief, from whom they never forgot they originally sprang."“ The duinewassels were all cadets of the house of the chief, and each had a pedigree of his own as long, and perchance as complicated as that of his chief. They were, as might be expected, the bravest portion of the clan ; the first in the onset, and the last to quit the strife, even when the tide of battle pressed hardest against them. They cherished a high and chivalrous sense of honor, ever keenly alive to insult or reproach; and they were at all times ready to devote themselves to the service of their chief when a wrong was to be avenged, an inroad repressed or punished, or glory reaped by deeds of daring in arms.

Another office which existed among the old Gaelic inhabitants of Scotland was that of Brehon, deemster, or judge, the representative of the vergobreith previously referred to, Among the continental Celts this office was elective, but among the Highlanders it appears to have been hereditary, and by no means held so important, latterly at least, as it was on the continent. As we referred to this office in the former part of this work, we shall say nothing farther of it in this place.

To this general view of the constitution of society in the Highlands, little remains to be added. The chief, as we have seen, was a sort of regulus, or petty prince, invested with an authority which was in its nature arbitrary, but which, in its practical exercise, seems generally to have been comparatively mild and paternal, lie was subjected to no theoretical or constitutional limitations, yet, if ferocious in disposition, or weak in understanding, he was restrained or directed by the elders of the tribe, who were his standing counselors, and without whose advice no measure of importance could be decided on. Inviolable custom supplied the deficiency of law. As his distinction and power consisted chiefly in the number of his followers, his pride as well as his ambition became a guarantee for the mildness of his sway; he had a direct and immediate interest to secure the attachment and devotion of his clan; and his condescension. while it raised the clansman in his own estimation, served also to draw closer the ties which bound the latter to his superior, without tempting him to transgress the limits of propriety. The Highlander was thus taught to respect himself in the homage which he paid to his chief. Instead of complaining of the difference of station and fortune, or considering prompt obedience as slavish degradation, he felt convinced that he was supporting his own honor in showing respect to the head of his family, and in yielding a ready compliance to his will. Hence it was that the Highlanders carried in their demeanor the politeness of courts without the vices by which these are too frequently dishonored, and cherished in their bosoms a sense of honor without any of its follies or extravagances. This mutual interchange of condescension and respect served to elevate the tone of moral feeling amongst the people, and no doubt contributed to generate that principle of incorruptible fidelity of which there are on record so many striking and even affecting examples. The sentiment of honor, and the firmness sufficient to withstand temptation, may in general be expected in the higher classes of society; but the voluntary sacrifice of life and fortune is a species of self-devotion seldom displayed in any community, and never perhaps exemplified to the same extent in any country as in the Highlands of Scotland. The punishment of treachery was a kind of conventional outlawry or banishment from society, a sort of aqiue et ignis interdictio even more terrible than the punishment inflicted under that denomination, during the prevalence of the Roman law. It was the judgment of all against one, the condemnation of society, not that of a tribunal; and the execution of the sentence was as complete as its ratification was universal. Persons thus intercommuned were for ever cut off from the society to which they belonged; they incurred civil death in its most appalling form, and their names descended with infamy to posterity. What higher proof could possibly be produced of the noble sentiments of honor and fidelity cherished by the people, than the simple fact that the breach of these was visited with such a fearful retribution

On the other hand, when chiefs proved worthless or oppressive, they were occasionally deposed, and when they took a side which was disapproved by the clan, they were abandoned by their people. Of the former, there are several well authenticated examples, and General Stewart has mentioned a remarkable instance of the latter. "In the reign of King William, immediately after the Revolution, Lord Tullibardine, eldest son of the Marquis of Athole, collected a numerous body of Athole Highlanders, together with three hundred Frasers, under the command of Hugh, Lord Lovat, who had married a daughter of the Marquis. These men believed that they were destined to support the abdicated king, but were in reality assembled to serve the government of William. When in front of Blair Castle, their real destination was disclosed to them by Lord Tullibardine. Instantly they rushed from their ranks, ran to the adjoining stream of Banovy, and filling their bonnets with water, drank to the health of King James; then with colors flying and pipes playing, fifteen hundred of the men of Athole put themselves under the command of the Laird of Ballechin, and marched off to join Lord Dundee, whose chivalrous bravery and heroic exploits had excited their admiration more than those of any other warrior since the days of Montrose."

The number of Highland clans has been variously estimated, but it is probable that when they were in their most flourishing condition it amounted to about forty. Latterly, by including many undoubtedly Lowland houses, the number has been increased to about a hundred, the additions being made chiefly by tartan manufacturers. Mr Skene has found that the various purely Highland clans can be clearly classified and traced up as having belonged to one or other of the great mormaordoms into which the north of Scotland was at one time divided. In his history of the individual clans, however, this is not the classification which he adopts, but one in accordance with that which he finds in the manuscript genealogies. According to these, the people were originally divided into several great tribes, the clans forming each of these separate tribes being deduced from a common ancestor. A marked line of distinction may be drawn between the different tribes, in each of which indications may be traced serving more or less, according to Mr Skene, to identify them with the ancient mormaorships or earldoms.

In the old genealogies each tribe is invariably traced to a common ancestor, from whom all the different branches or clans are supposed to have descended. Thus we have—

l. Descendants of Conn of the Hundred Battles, including the Lords of the Isles, or Macdonalds, the Macdougals, the Macneills, the Maclachlans, the Macewens, the Maclaisrichs, and the Maceacherns;

2. Descendants of Fearchar Fada Mac Feradaig, comprehending the old mormaors of Moray, the Mackintoshes, the Macphersons, and the Macnauchtans;

3. Descendants of Cormac Mac Oirbertaig, namely, the old Earls of Ross, the Mackenzies, the Mathiesons, the Macgregors, the Mackinnons, the Macquarries, the Macnabs, and the Macduffies;

4. Descendants of Fergus Leith Dearg, the Macleods and the Campbells;

5. Descendants of Krycul, the Macnicols.

Whatever may be the merits or defects of this distribution, it is convenient for the purpose of classification. It affords the means of referring the different clans to their respective tribes, and thus avoiding an arbitrary arrangement; and it is further in accordance with the general views which have already been submitted to the reader respecting the original constitution of clanship. We shall not, however, adhere strictly to Mr Skene”s arrangement.

The clans that come first in Mr. Skene”s classification are those whose progenitor is said by the genealogists to have been the fabulous Irish King Conn "of the hundred battles". They are mostly all located in the Western Islands and Highlands, and are said by Mr. Skene to have been descended from the Gall Gael, or Gaelic pirates or rovers, who are said to have been so called to distinguish them from the Norwegian and Danish Fingall and Dugall, or white and black strangers or rovers. Mr. Skene advocates strongly the unmixed Gaelic descent of these clans, as indeed he does of almost all the other clans. He endeavors to maintain that the whole of these western clans are of purely Pictish descent, not being mixed with even that of the Dalriadic Scots. We are inclined, however, to agree with Mr. Smibert in thinking that the founders of these clans were to a large extent of Irish extraction, though clearly distinguishable from the primitive or Dalriadic Scots, and that from the time of the Scottish conquest they formed intimate relationships with the Northern Picts. "From whatever race", to quote the judicious remarks of Mr. Gregory, "whether Pictish or Scottish, the inhabitants of the Isles, in the reign of Kenneth MacAlpine, were derived, it is clear that the settlements and wars of the Scandinavians in the Hebrides, from the time of Olave the Red, a period of upwards of two centuries, must have produced a very considerable change in the population. As in all cases of conquest, this change must have been most perceptible in the higher ranks, owing to the natural tendency of invaders to secure their new possessions, where practicable, by matrimonial alliances with the natives. That in the Hebrides a mixture of the Celtic and Scandinavian blood was thus effected at an early period seems highly probable, and by no means inconsistent with the ultimate prevalence of the Celtic language in the mixed race, as all history sufficiently demonstrates. These remarks regarding the population of the Isles apply equally to that of the adjacent mainland districts, which, being so accessible by numerous arms of the sea, could hardly be expected to preserve the blood of their inhabitants unmixed. The extent to which this mixture was carried is a more difficult question and one which must be left in a great measure to conjecture; but, on the whole, the Celtic race appears to have predominated.

It is of more importance to know which of the Scandinavian tribes it was that infused the greatest portion of northern blood into the population of the Isles. The Irish annalists divide the piratical bands, which, in the ninth and following centuries infested Ireland, into two great tribes, styled by these writers Fiongall, or white foreigners, and Dubhgall, or black foreigners. These are believed to represent, the former the Norwegians, the latter the Danes; and the distinction in the names is supposed to have arisen from a diversity, either in their clothing or in the sails of their vessels. These tribes had generally separate leaders; but they were occasionally united under one king; and although both bent first on ravaging the Irish shores, and afterwards on seizing portions of the Irish territories, they frequently turned their arms against each other. The Gaelic title of Righ Fhiongall, or King of the Fiongall, so frequently applied to the Lords of the Isles, seem to prove that Olave the Red, from whom they were descended in the female line, was so styled, and that, consequently, his subjects in the Isles, in so far as they were not Celtic, were Fiongall or Norwegians. It has been remarked by one writer, whose opinion is entitled to weight, that the names of places in the exterior Hebrides, or the Long Island, derived from the Scandinavian tongue, resemble the names of places in Orkney, Shetland, and Caithness. On the other hand, the corresponding names in the interior Hebrides are in a different dialect, resembling that of which the traces are to be found in the topography of Sutherland; and appear to have been imposed at a later period than the first mentioned names. The probability is, however, that the difference alluded to is not greater than might be expected in the language of two branches of the same race, after a certain interval; and that the Scandinavian population of the Hebrides was, therefore, derived from two successive Norwegian colonies. This view is further confirmed by the fact that the Hebrides, although long subject to Norway, do not appear to have ever formed part of the possessions of the Danes.

As by far the most important, and at one time most extensive and powerful, of these western clans, is that of the MacDonalds, and as this, as well as many other clans, according to some authorities, can clearly trace their ancestry back to Somerled, the progenitor of the once powerful Lords of the Isles, it may not be out of place to give here a short summary of the history of these magnates.

The origin of Somerled, the undoubted founder of the noble race of the Island Lords, is, according to Mr. Gregory, involved in considerable obscurity. Assuming that the clan governed by Somerled formed part of the great tribe of Gall Gael, it follows that the independent kings of the latter must in all probability have been his ancestors, and should therefore be found in the old genealogies of his family. But this scarcely appears to be the case. The last

king of the Gall Gael, was Suibne, the son of Kenneth, who died in the year 1034; and according to the manuscript of 1450, an ancestor of Somerled, contemporary with this petty monarch, bore the same name, from which it may be presumed that the person referred to in the genealogy and the manuscript is one and the same individual. The latter, however, calls Suibne”s father Nialgusa; and in the genealogy there is no mention whatever of a Kenneth. But from the old Scottish writers we learn that at this time there was a Kenneth, whom they called Thane of the Isles, and that one of the northern mormaors also bore the same name, although it is not very easy to say what precise claim either had to be considered as the father of Suibne. There is also a further discrepancy observable in the earlier part of the Macdonald genealogies, as compared with the manuscript; and besides, the latter, without making any mention of these supposed kings, deviates into the misty region of Irish heroic fable and romance. At this point, indeed, there is a complete divergence, if not contrariety, between the history as contained in the Irish Annals, and the genealogy developed in the manuscript; for, whilst the latter mentions the Gall Gael under their leaders as far back as the year 856, the former connect Suibne, by a different genealogy, with the kings of Ireland. The fables of the Highland and Irish Sennachies now become connected with the genuine history. The real descent of the chiefs was obscured or perplexed by the Irish Genealogies, and previously to the eleventh century neither these genealogies nor even that of the manuscript of 1450 can be considered as of any authority whatsoever. It seems somewhat rash, however, to conclude, as Mr. Skene has done, that the Siol-Cuinn, or descendants of Conn, were of native origin. This exceeds the warrant of the premises, which merely carry the difficulty a few removes backwards into the obscurity of time, and there leave the question in greater darkness than ever.

From the death of Suibne till the accession of Gillebride Mac Gille Adomnan, the father of Somerled, nothing whatever is known of the history of the clan. The latter, having been expelled from his possessions by the Lochlans and the Fingalls, took refuge in Ireland, where he persuaded the descendants of Colla to espouse his quarrel and assist him in an attempt to recover his possessions. Accordingly, four or five hundred persons put themselves under his command, and at their head he returned to Alban, where he effected a landing; but the expedition, it would seem, proved unsuccessful. Somerled, the son of Gillebride, was, however, a man of a very different stamp. At first he lived retired, musing in solitude upon the ruined fortunes of his house. But when the time came for action arrived, he boldly put himself at the head of the inhabitants of Morven; attacked the Norwegians, whom, after considerable struggle, he expelled; made himself master of the whole of Morven, Lochaber, and northern Argyle; and not long afterwards added to his other possessions the southern districts of that country. In the year 1135, when David I expelled the Norwegians from Man, Arran, and Bute, Somerled appears to have obtained a grant of those Islands from the king. But finding himself still unable to contend with the Norwegians of the Isles, whose power remained unbroken, he resolved to recover by policy what he despaired of acquiring by force of arms; and, with this view, he succeeded in obtaining (about 1140) the hand of Ragnhildis, the daughter of Olaf, surnamed the Red, who was then the Norwegian king of the Isles. This lady brought him three sons, namely Dugall, Reginald, and Angus; and by a previous marriage, he had one named Gillecallum.

The prosperous fortunes of Somerled at length inflamed his ambition. He had already attained to great power in the Highlands, and success inspired him with the desire of extending it. His grandsons having formerly claimed the earldom of Moray, their pretensions were now renewed, and this was followed by an attempt to put them in actual possession of their alleged inheritance. The attempt, however, failed. It had brought the regulus of Argyll into open rebellion against the king, and the war appears to have excited great alarm amongst the inhabitants of Scotland; but Somerled, having encountered a more vigorous opposition than he had anticipated, found it necessary to return to the Isles, where the tyrannical conduct of his brother-in-law, Godred, had irritated his vassals and thrown everything into confusion. His presence gave confidence to the party opposed to the tyrant, and Thorfinn, one of the most powerful of the Norwegian nobles, resolved to depose Godred, and place another prince on the throne of the Isles. Somerled readily entered into the views of Thorfinn, and it was arranged that Dugall, the eldest son of the former, should occupy the throne from which his maternal uncle was to be displaced. But the result of the projected deposition did not answer the expectations of either party. Dugall was committed to the care of Thorfinn, who undertook to conduct him through the Isles, and compel the chiefs not only to acknowledge him as their sovereign, but also to give hostages for their fidelity and allegiance. The Lord of Skye, however, refused to comply with this demand, and, having fled to the Isle of Man, apprised Godred of the intended revolution. Somerled followed with eight galleys; and Godred having commanded his ships to be got ready, a bloody but indecisive battle ensued. It was fought on the night of the Epiphany; and as neither party prevailed, the rival chiefs next morning entered into a sort of compromise or convention, by which the sovereignty of the Isles was divided, and two distinct principalities established. By this treaty Somerled acquired all the islands lying to the southward of the promontory of Ardnamurchan, whilst those to the northward remained in the possession of Godred.

But no sooner had he made this acquisition than he became involved in hostilities with the government. Having joined the powerful party in Scotland, which had resolved to depose Malcolm IV and place the boy of Egremont on the throne, he began to infest various parts of the coast, and for some time carried on a vexatious predatory warfare. The project, however, failed; and Malcolm, convinced that the existence of an independent chief was incompatible with the interests of his government and the maintenance of public tranquility, required Somerled to resign his lands into the hands of the sovereign, and to hold them in future as a vassal of the crown. Somerled, however, was little disposed to comply with this demand, although the king was now preparing to enforce it by means of a powerful army. Emboldened by his previous successes, he resolved to anticipate the attack, and having appeared in the Clyde with a considerable force, he landed at Renfrew, where being met by the royal army under the command of the High Steward of Scotland, a battle ensued which ended in his defeat and death (1164). This celebrated chief has been traditionally described as "a well-tempered man, in body shapely, of a fair piercing eye, of middle stature, and of quick discernment". He appears, indeed, to have been equally brave and sagacious, tempering courage with prudence, and, excepting in the last act of his life, distinguished for the happy talent, rare at any period, of profiting by circumstances, and making the most of success. In the battle of Renfrew his son Gillecallum perished by his side. Tradition says that Gillecallum left a son Somerled, who succeeded to his grandfather”s possessions in the mainland, which he held for upwards of half a century after the latter”s death. The existence of this second Somerled, however, seems very doubtful although Mr. Gregory believes that, besides the three sons of his marriage with Olave the Red, Somerled had other sons, who seem to have shared with their brothers, according to the then prevalent custom of gavelkind, the mainland possessions held by the Lord of Argyll; whilst the sons descended of the House of Moray divided amongst them the South Isles ceded by Godred in 1156. Dugall, the eldest of these, got for his share, Mull, Coll, Tiree, and Jura; Reginald, the second son, obtained Isla and Kintyre; and Angus, the third son, Bute. Arran is supposed to have been divided between the two latter. The Chronicle of Man mentions a battle, in 1192, between Reginald and Angus, in which the latter obtained the victory. He was killed, in 1210, with his three sons, by the men of Skye, leaving no male issue. One of his sons, James, left a daughter and heiress, Jane, afterwards married to Alexander, son and heir of Walter, High Steward of Scotland, who, in her right, claimed the isle of Bute.

Dugall, the eldest son of his father by the second marriage, seems to have possessed not only a share of the Isles, but also the district of Lorn, which had been allotted as his share of the territories belonging to his ancestors. On his death, however, the Isles, instead of descending immediately to his children, were acquired by his brother Reginald, who in consequence assumed the title King of the Isles; but, by the same law of succession, the death of Reginald restored to his nephews the inheritance of their father. Dugall left two sons, Dugall Scrag and Duncan, who appear in the northern Sagas, under the title of the Sudereyan Kings. They appear to have acknowledged, at least nominally, the authority of the Norwegian king of the Hebrides; but actually they maintained an almost entire independence. Haco, the king of Norway, therefore came to the determination of reducing them to obedience and subjection, a design in which he proved completely successful. In a night attack the Norwegians defeated the Sudereyans and took Dugall prisoner.

Duncan was now the only member of his family who retained any power in the Sudereys; but nothing is known of his subsequent history except that he founded the priory of Archattan, in Lorn. He was succeeded by his son Ewan, who appears to have remained more faithful to the Norwegian kings than his predecessors had shown themselves; for, when solicited by Alexander II to join him in an attempt he meditated to obtain possession of the Western Isles, Ewan resisted all the promises and entreaties of the king, and on this occasion preserved inviolate his allegiance to Haco. Alexander, it is well known, died in Kerreray (1249), when about to commence an attack upon the Isles, and was succeeded by his son Alexander III. When the latter had attained majority, he resolved to renew the attempt which his father had begun, and with this view excited the Earl of Ross, whose possessions extended along the mainland opposite to the Northern Isles, to commence hostilities against them. The earl willingly engaged in the enterprise, and having landed in Skye, ravaged the country, burned churches and villages, and put to death numbers of the inhabitants without distinction of age or sex. Haco soon appeared with a Norwegian force, and was joined by most of the Highland chiefs. But Ewen having altered his views, excused himself from taking any part against the force sent by the Scottish king; and the unfortunate termination of Haco”s expedition justified the prudence of this timely change. In the year 1263 the Norwegians were completely defeated by the Scots at the battle of Largs; and the Isles were, in consequence of this event, finally ceded to the kings of Scotland. This event, however, rather increased than diminished the power of Ewan, who profited by his seasonable defection from the Norwegians, and was favored by the government to which that defection had been useful. But he died without any male issue to succeed him, leaving only two daughters, one of whom married the Norwegian king of Man, and the other, Alexander of the Isles, a descendant of Reginald.

The conquest and partition of Argyle by Alexander II and the subsequent annexation of the Western Isles to the kingdom of Scotland, under the reign of his successor, annihilated the power of the race of Conn as an independent tribe; and, from the failure of the male descendants of Dugall in the person of Ewen, had the effect of dividing the clan into three distinct branches, the heads of which held their lands of the crown. These were the clan Ruaru or Rory, the clan Donald, and the clan Dugall, so called from three sons of Ranald or Reginald, the son of Somerled by Ragnhildis, daughter of Olave.

Of this Ranald or Reginald, but little comparatively is know. According to the Highland custom of gavel, Somerled”s property was divided amongst all his sons; and in this division the portion which fell to the share of Reginald appears to have consisted of the island of Islay, with Kintyre, and part of Lorn on the mainland. Contemporary with Reginald there was a Norwegian king of Man and the Isles, who, being called by the same name, is liable to be confounded with the head of the Siol Conn. Reginald, after the death of his brother Dugall, was designated as Lord, and sometimes even as King, of the Isles; and he had likewise the title of Lord of Argyle and Kintyre, in which last capacity he granted certain lands to an abbey that had been founded by himself at Saddel in Kintyre. But these titles did not descend to his children. He was succeeded by his eldest son Roderick, who, on conquest of Argyle, agreed to hold his lands of Rory, or the crown, and afterward was commonly styled Lord of Kintyre. In this Roderick the blood of the Norwegian rovers seems to have revived in all its pristine purity. Preferring "the good old way, the simple plan" to more peaceful and honest pursuits, he became one of the most noted pirates of his day, and the annals of the period are filled with accounts of his predatory expeditions. But his sons, Dugall and Allan, had the grace not to follow the vocation of their father, for which they do not seem to have evinced any predilection. Dugall having given important aid to Haco, in his expedition against the Western Isles, obtained in consequence a considerable increase of territory, and died without descendants. Allan succeeded to the possessions of this branch of the race of Conn, and, upon the annexation of the Isles to the crown of Scotland, transferred his allegiance to Alexander III, along with the other chiefs of the Hebrides.

Allan left one son, Roderick, of whom almost nothing is known, except that he was not considered as legitimate by the feudal law, and in consequence was succeeded in his lordship of Garmoran by his daughter Christina. Yet the custom or law of the Highlands, according to which his legitimacy could “molt no feather”, had still sufficient force amongst the people to induce the daughter to legalize her father”s possession of the lands by a formal resignation and reconveyance; a circumstance which shows how deeply it had taken root in the habits and the opinions of the people. Roderick, however, incurred the penalty of forfeiture during the reign of Robert Bruce, "probably", as Mr. Skene thinks, "from some connection with the Soulis conspiracy of 1320"; but his lands were restored to his son Ranald by David II. Ranald, however, did not long enjoy his extensive possessions. Holding of the Earl of Ross some lands in North Argyle, he unhappily became embroiled with that powerful chief, and a bitter feud, engendered by proximity, arose between them. In that age the spirit of hostility seldom remained long inactive. In 1346, David II having summoned the barons of Scotland to meet him in Perth, Ranald, like the others, obeyed the call, and having made his appearance, attended by a considerable body of men, took up his quarters at the monastery of Elcho, a few miles distant from the Fair City. To the Earl of Ross, who was also with the army, this seemed a favorable opportunity for revenging himself on his enemy; and accordingly having surprised and entered the monastery in the middle of the night, he slew Ranald and seven of his followers. By the death of Ranald, the male descendants of Roderick became extinct; and John of the Isles, the chief of the Clan Donald, who had married Amy, the only sister of Ranald, now claimed the succession to that principality.

THE ISLES, Lord of, an ancient title, possessed by the descendants of Somerled, thane of Argyle, who in 1135, when David I expelled the Norwegians from Arran and Bute, and some other of the islands, appears to have gotten a grant of them from that monarch. To secure himself in possession, however, he married, about 1140, Effrica, or Ragnhildis, daughter of Olave the Red, king of Man, from which marriage sprang the dynasty known in Scottish history as the Lords of the Isles.

By her he had three sons: Dugall, Reginald or Ranald, and Angus. The Chronicle of Man adds a fourth, Olave. By a previous marriage he had one son, Gillecolane. According to the Celtic genealogists, this Somerled (the name is Norse, in Gaelic Somhairle, in English, Samuel) was descended, through a long line of ancestors, from the celebrated Irish king Conn Chead Chath, or Conn of the hundred battles. He assisted his son-in-law, Wimund, the pretended earl of Moray, when he invaded Scotland in 1141, and on the death of David I, accompanied by the children of Wimund, he landed with a great force, in Scotland, 5th November 1153, in order to revenge the wrongs done to him. Having, however, encountered a more vigorous opposition than he had anticipated, he found it necessary to agree to terms of accommodation with Malcolm IV, an event which was deemed of so much importance as to form an epoch from which various royal charters were dated.

His brother-in-law, Godred the Black, king of Man and the Isles, had acted so tyrannically that Thorfinn, one of the most powerful of the insular nobles, resolved to depose him, and applied to Somerled for his son, Dugall, then a child, whom he proposed to make king of the Isles in Godred”s place. Carrying Dugall through all the isles, except Man, Thorfinn forced the inhabitants to acknowledge him as their king, and took hostages from them for their obedience. One of the chief islanders fled to the Isle of Man, and informed Godred of the plot against him. Godred immediately collected a large fleet, and proceeded against the rebels, then under the guidance of Somerled, with a fleet of eighty galleys. After a bloody but indecisive battle (1156) a treaty was entered into, by which Godred ceded to the sons of Somerled what were afterwards called the South Isles, retaining for himself the North Isles and Man. Two years afterwards, Somerled invaded the latter island with a fleet of fifty-three ships, and laid the whole island waste, after defeating Godred in battle.

Somerled”s power was now very great, and for some time he carried on a vexatious predatory warfare on the coasts of Scotland, till Malcolm required of him to resign his possessions into his hands as his sovereign, and to hold them in future as a vassal of the Scottish crown. Somerled refused, and in 1164, assembling a numerous army, he sailed up the Clyde, with 160 galleys, and landed his forces near Renfrew, where he was met by the Scots army, under the high steward of Scotland, and was defeated, he himself and his son Gillecolane being amongst the slain. According to tradition, he was assassinated in his tent by an individual in whom he placed confidence. This celebrated chief has been traditionally described as “a well tempered man, in body shapely, of a fair piercing eye, of middle stature, and of quick discernment.” According to the then prevalent custom of gavel kind, whilst Gillecolane”s son, also named Somerled, succeeded to his grandfather”s superiority of Argyle, the insular possessions were divided among his sons descended of the house of Man. Dugall, the eldest of these, got for his share, Mull, Coll, Tiree, and Jura; Reginald, the second son, obtained Isla and Kintyre; and Angus, the third son, Bute. Arran is supposed to have been divided between the two latter. The chronicle of Man mentions a battle, in 1192, between Reginald and Angus, in which the latter was victorious. Angus was killed with his three sons, in 1210, by the men of Skye, leaving no male issue. One of his sons, James, left a daughter and heiress, Jane, afterwards married to Alexander, son and heir of Walter, high steward of Scotland, who, in her right, claimed the isle of Bute.

Both Dugall and Reginald were called kings of the Isles at the time that Reginald, the son of Godred the Black, was styled king of Man and the Isles; and in the next generation we find in a Norse chronicle, mention made of three kings of the Isles, of the race of Somerled, existing at one time.

the word king, as used by the Norwegians and their vassals in the Isles, was not confined as in Scotland, to one supreme ruler, it had with them an additional meaning, corresponding either to prince of the blood, or to magnate. On Dugall”s death, the isles that had fallen to his share, instead of descending immediately to his children, were acquired by his brother, Reginald. As lord of Kintyre, the latter granted certain lands to the abbey of Saddel, in Kintyre, which had been founded by him, for monks of the Cistercian order. He also made ample donations to the monastery of Paisley.

From Dugall sprung the great house of the MacDougals of Lorn, who styled themselves de Ergadia or of Argyle. He left two sons, Dugall Scrag, and Duncan, who, in the northern Sagas, bear the title of the Sudereyan kings. Dugall was taken prisoner by Haco, king of Norway, but of Duncan nothing is known, except that he founded the priory of Ardchattan in Lorn. Duncan was succeeded by his son, Ewen, commonly called King Ewen, and sometimes, erroneously, King John.

Reginald had two sons, Donald and Roderick. From Donald, who appears to have inherited the Isles, spring the great family of Isla, patronymically styled Macdonald. On Roderick or Ruari, his second son, Reginald bestowed Bute and part of Kintyre. He was the founder of a distinct family, that of Bute, (Patronymically styled Macruari or M”rory,) which afterwards became very powerful in the Isles. Roderick was one of the most noted pirates of his day, and the annals of the period are filled with accounts of his predatory expeditions. The Scots having driven him out of Bute, he went to Norway, to solicit assistance from King Haco, and the complaints made by him and other islanders, of the aggressions of the Scots, led to Haco”s celebrated expedition to Scotland in 1266, which ended in his defeat and death. Roderick had two sons, Dugall and Allan, who, with their father, were devoted partisans of Haco. They were forced to resign Bute, but had lands assigned to them, on their agreeing to become vassals of Scotland in that portion of the Isles which had belonged to the king of Man. This family, in consequence, were styled Macruaries of the North Isles; and on the death of Dugall, called Rex Hebudum, without descendants, his brother Allan succeeded to his possessions, to which afterwards he appears to have added the lordship of Garmoran, on the mainland comprehending the districts of Moydart, Arassaig, Morar, and Knoydert.

Angus, lord of Isla, the son of Donald, styled Angus Mor by the Seannachies, had his lands ravaged in 1255, by Alexander III, for refusing to renounce his fealty to Norway. Although, on this occasion he was forced to submit some eight years later, on the arrival of Haco in the Isles, he joined the Norwegians. But on the annexation of the western isles to Scotland, he finally transferred his allegiance to the Scottish crown. In 1284 he was present at the convention by which the Maid of Norway was declared heiress to the throne of Scotland. At this convention attended also Alexander de Ergadia of Lorn, son of Ewen, and Allan MacRuari of the North Isles, son of Roderick. Angus Mor died soon after 1292. He had two sons, Alexander of Isla, and Angus. The elder son, Alexander, by a marriage with one of the daughters of Ewen of Lorn, acquired a considerable addition to his possessions, but having joined the lord of Lorn in his opposition to Robert the Bruce, he became involved in the ruin of that chief; and being obliged to surrender to the king, he was imprisoned in Dundonald castle, Ayrshire, where he died. His whole possessions were forfeited and given to his brother, Angus Og, who had supported the claims of Bruce. After the defeat at Methven, and the subsequent unfortunate skirmish with the men of Lorn at Tyndrum, Angus hospitably received Bruce into his castle of Dunaverty, in August 1306, and there sheltered him until he found it necessary to take refuge in the island of Rachlin. He assisted in the attack upon Carrick, when the king had landed in his patrimonial district, and he was present at the battle of Bannockburn where the men of the Isles, under “Syr Anguss of Ile and But,” formed the reserve. When the struggle was over, Bruce bestowed upon Angus the lordship of Lochaber, which had belonged to the Comyns, with the lands of Durrour and Glenco, and the islands of Mull, Tyree, &c., which had formed part of the possessions of the family of Lorn. He left two sons: John, his successor, and Join Og, ancestor of the Macdonalds of Glenco.

Allan MacRuari of the North Isles, above mentioned, had an illegitimate son, Roderick, the leader of the vassals of Christina, his daughter and heiress. This Roderick, having also attached himself to the fortunes of Bruce, received from that monarch the greater part of Lorn, and at the same time his sister, Christina, bestowed on him a large portion of her inheritance in Garmoran and the North Isles. In 1325, Roderick was forfeited of all his possessions for engaging in some plot against the king possibly from some connection with the Soulis conspiracy of 1320. His lands were restored to his son, Ranald, by David II, about 1344. Two years thereafter, Ranald was killed in the monastery of Elcho, near Perth, where he had taken up his temporary quarters, having been attacked there at midnight by the earl of Ross, from whom he held the lands of Kintail in N. Argyle.

John of Isla, the son and heir of Angus Oig, and chief of the clan Donald, having had some dispute with the regent concerning certain lands which had been granted by Robert the Bruce, joined the party of Edward Baliol, and by a treaty concluded 12th December 1335, engaged to support his pretensions in consideration of a grant of the lands and islands claimed by him. On the return of David II. From France in 1341, that monarch, anxious to secure the support of the most powerful of his barons, concluded a treaty with John of Isla, who, in consequence, pledged himself to support his government. He had married Amy, the sister of Ranald, and as that chief left no issue, she became his heir, and her husband, uniting her possessions to his own, assumed the title of lord of the Isles. The king, however, unwilling to aggrandize a chief already too powerful, determined to evade his claim, and John, again, transferred his support to the party of Baliol. When David returned from his captivity in England in 1357, John of the Isles abandoned that party, and having without any cause divorced his lady, with whom he had got such extensive possessions, he married, secondly, the lady Margaret, daughter of Robert, high steward of Scotland. In 1366, when the heavy burdens imposed upon the people for the ransom of the king, had produced general discontent, and the steward had been thrown into prison by David, the northern barons broke out into open rebellion, to put down which the steward was released. All the northern chiefs submitted, except the lord of the Isles, who was forfeited; but the steward prevailed upon his son-in-law to meet the king at Inverness, in 1369, when an agreement was entered into, by which John not only engaged to submit to the royal authority, and pay his share of all public burdens, but promised to oppose all others who should attempt to resist either, and gave hostages for his faithful fulfillment of this obligation. The accession of the steward to the throne took place the following year, and during the whole of the reign of Robert II., John of the Isles conducted himself as a loyal and obedient subject. From his father-in-law he received a feudal title to all those lands which had belonged to his first wife, whom he had divorced. Godfrey, his eldest surviving son by her, resisted this unjust proceeding, maintaining his mother”s prior claims and his own as her heir, but Ranald, his younger brother, for not opposing it, was rewarded by a grant of the North Isles, Garmoran, and many other lands, to hold of his father and his heirs. Subsequently, John resigned into the king”s hands nearly the whole of the western portion of his territories, and received charters of these lands in favor of himself and the issue of his second marriage (three sons), so that the latter were rendered feudally independent of the children of the first marriage, also three sons. John of the Isles died about 1386, at his own castle of Ardtornish, in Morvern, and was buried in Iona. He had given liberal grants to the church, and the ecclesiastics of the Isles are traditionally said to have bestowed upon him the appellation of “the good John of Isla.” According to the seannachies, Ranald, the youngest son of the first marriage, was “old in the government of the Isles at his father”s death.” He afterwards acted as tutor or guardian to his younger brother, Donald, lord of the Isles, to whom, on his attaining majority, he delivered over the lordship, in presence of the vassals. He did not long survive his father, and his children were dispossessed by their uncle, Godfrey, who assumed the title of lord of Uist and Garmoran.

Donald, second lord of the Isles, the eldest son of the second marriage, married Mary Leslie, afterwards countess of Ross, which led to a contest with the regent, the duke of Albany regarding that earldom, and to the celebrated battle of Harlaw in 1411. On his brothers of the full blood Donald, virtual earl of Ross in right of his wife, bestowed ample territories as his vassals and each of them became the founder of a powerful family. Donald died in Isla about 1420, and was interred in Iona, with the usual ceremonies. He left Alexander, his successor both in the Isles, and the earldom of Ross, and Angus, afterwards bishop of the Isles.

Alexander”s son and successor, John II., fourth lord of the Isles, and earl of Ross, on 13th February 1462, entered into a treaty with Edward IV. Of England and the banished earl of Douglas, for the conquest of Scotland. On this occasion he assumed the style of an independent prince, and granted a commission to his “trusty and well beloved cousins, Ranald of the Isles and Duncan, archdean of the Isles,” to confer with the deputies of Edward IV. According to the conditions of the treaty, the lord of the Isles, with the celebrated Donald Balloch of Isla, who had some years previously defeated the royal forces under the earls of Caithness and Mar, and John, his son and heir, and all their retainers, agreed to become Edward”s sworn vassals, and to assist him in all his wars, upon payment to each of a stipulated sum of money; and it was farther provided that, in the event of the entire subjugation of Scotland, the whole of the kingdom north of the Forth was to be equally divided between the earls of Ross and Douglas, and Donald Balloch, while Douglas was to be put in possession of his extensive estates between the Forth and the English border. Soon after the lord of the Isles raised the standard of rebellion. Assembling a large force under the command of his bastard son, Angus, and Donald Balloch, they made themselves masters of the castle of Inverness, whence proclamations were issued in name of the earl, addressed to all the inhabitants of the burghs and sheriffdom of Inverness, including also Nairn, Ross and Caithness, and the people were commanded to obey the said Angus as the earl”s lieutenant, under pain of death, to pay to him all the taxes usually paid to the crown, and to refuse obedience to the king.

On the suppression of this rebellion, the earl of Ross was summoned before parliament for treason, but failed to appear. In 1475 the treaty above mentioned became known to the government. He was, in consequence, summoned in his castle of Dingwall to appear before the Estates of the realm at Edinburgh, and the earl of Argyle received a commission to prosecute the decree of forfeiture against him. Failing to appear, he was declared a traitor, and his estates were confiscated. He only prevented an armed invasion of the Isles by suing for pardon, by the intercession of the earl of Huntly. He even appeared in person at Edinburgh, and with many expressions of contrition surrendered himself to the clemency of James III. The queen and the Estates of the realm also pleaded for him, and in July 1476, he was restored to the forfeited earldom of Ross and the lordship of the Isles. He then voluntarily resigned that earldom, and the lands of Kintyre and Knapdale, and, as a compensation, was created a peer of parliament by the title of lord of the Isles. He had no children by his wife, Elizabeth Livingston, daughter of Lord Livingston, great-chamberlain of Scotland, but the succession to the new title, and the estates connected with it, was secured in favor of his illegitimate sons, Angus and John, the latter of whom was dead before 16th December 1478. The elder son, Angus, married a daughter of the earl of Argyle.

The resignation of the earldom of Ross and of the lands of Kintyre and Knapdale, had irritated the island chiefs descended from the original family, and while the Macleans, Macneills, Macleods, and other tribes adhered to the lord of the Isles, the various branches of the clan joined his turbulent son and heir, Angus, who, early accustomed to rebellion, and of a violent temper, soon obtained an ascendancy over his father, and had great influence with his vassals. Kenneth Mackenzie of Kintail having repudiated his wife, Lady Margaret of the Isles, sister of Angus, a quarrel was the consequence, and the latter, assisted by his kinsmen, resolved to make it a pretence to regain possession of the whole or a part of the earldom of Ross. Accordingly, at the head of a numerous band of Island warriors, he invaded that district. The earl of Athol was sent against him, and was joined by the Mackenzies, Mackays, Frasers, and others. A conflict ensued at a place called Lagebread, where they were defeated by Angus, with great slaughter. The earls of Crawford and Huntly were then sent against him, the one by sea and the other by land; but neither of them was successful. A third expedition, under the earls of Argyle and Athol, was accompanied by Angus” father, and several families of the Isles joined the royal force.

Argyle and Athol procured an interview between Angus and his father, in the hope of bringing about an accommodation between them; but in this they were disappointed, and the two earls returned without effecting anything. The lord of the Isles, however, proceeded onward through the Sound of Mull, accompanied by the Macleans, Macleods, Macneills, and others, and having encountered Angus in a bay of the Island of Mull, near Tobermory, a desperate battle ensued, in which Angus was again victorious. This engagement is traditionally called “The Battle of the Bloody Bay,” and by it Angus obtained possession of the extensive territories of his clan, and was recognized as its head. John was afterwards reconciled to his son, who, however, does not appear to have made any surrender, in consequence, of his power or influence. Having once more thrown off his allegiance to the throne, he engaged in a treaty with Edward IV., who was then preparing to invade Scotland, and, during the remainder of his life, continued in a state of open resistance to the government.

Some time after the battle of the Bloody Bay, the earl of Athol crossed privately to Isla, and carried off the infant son of Angus, called Donald Dubh, or “the Black.” Having been placed in the hands of his maternal grandfather, Argyle, he was carefully guarded in the castle of Inchconnel, in Lochow. When Angus discovered by whom his child had been carried off, summoning his adherents, he sailed to the neighborhood of Inverlochy, where he left his galleys. He then made a rapid and secret march into the district of Athol, where he committed the most appalling excesses. This expedition is known as “the Raid of Athol.” The earl of Athol and his countess took refuge in a chapel dedicated to St. Bride, whence they were dragged by the ferocious chief, and his followers, loaded with plunder, conveyed them to Inverlochy. Here he embarked them in the galleys, and sailed for Isla; but in the voyage from Lochaber, many of his galleys sunk in a dreadful storm, with all the plunder with which they were laden. Believing this loss to have been occasioned by his desecration of the chapel of St. Bride, he soon liberated his prisoners, and even performed a humiliating penance in the chapel he had violated. After this event he marched to Inverness to attack Mackenzie of Kintail, when he was assassinated by an Irish harper sometime between 1480 and 1490.

The rank of heir to the lordship of the Isles devolved on the nephew of John, Alexander of Lochalsh, son of his brother, Celestine. Placing himself at the head of the vassals of the Isles, he endeavored, it is said, with John”s consent, to recover possession of the earldom of Ross, and in 1491, at the head of a large body of western Highlanders, he advanced from Lochaber into Badenoch, where he was joined by the clan Chattan. They then marched to Inverness, where, after taking the royal castle, and placing a garrison in it, they proceeded to the north-east, and plundered the lands of Sir Alexander Urquhart, sheriff of Cromarty. They next hastened to Strathconnan, for the purpose of ravaging the lands of the Mackenzies. The latter, however, surprised and routed the invaders, and expelled them from Ross, their leader, Alexander of Lochalsh, being wounded, and as some say, taken prisoner. In consequence of this insurrection, at a meeting of the Estates in Edinburgh in May 1493, the title and possessions of the lord of the Isles were declared to be forfeited to the crown. In January following the aged John appeared in presence of the king, and made a voluntary surrender of his lordship, after which he appears to have remained for some time in the king”s household, in the receipt of a pension. He finally retired to the monastery of Paisley, where he died about 1498; and was interred, at his own request, in the tomb of his royal ancestor, Robert II.

With the view of reducing the insular chiefs to subjection, and establishing the royal authority in the Islands, James IV., soon after the forfeiture in 1493, proceeded in person to the West Highlands, when Alexander of Lochalsh, the principal cause of the insurrection which had led to it, and John of Isla, grandson and representative of Donald Balloch, were among the first to make their submission. On this occasion they appear to have obtained royal charters of the lands they had previously held under the lord of the Isles, and were both knighted. In the following year the king visited the Isles twice, and having seized and garrisoned the castle of Dunaverty in South Kintyre, Sir John of Isla, deeply resenting this proceeding, collected his followers, stormed the castle, and hung the governor from the wall, in the sight of the king and his fleet. With four of his sons, he was soon after apprehended at Isla, by MacIean of Ardnamurchan, and being conveyed to Edinburgh, they were there executed for high treason.

In 1495 King James assembled an army at Glasgow, and on the 18th May, he was at the castle of Mingarry in Ardnamurchan, when several of the Highland chiefs made their submission to him. IN 1497 Sir Alexander of Lochalsh again rebelled, and invading the more fertile districts of Ross, was by the Mackenzies and Munroes, at a place called Drumchatt, again defeated and driven out of Ross. Proceeding southward among the Isles, he endeavored to rouse the islanders to arms in his behalf, but without success. He was surprised in the island of Oransay, by MacIean of Ardnamurchan, and put to death.

In 1501, Donald Dubh, whom the islanders regarded as their rightful lord, and who, from his infancy, had been detained in confinement in the castle of Inchconnell, escaped from prison, and appeared among his clansmen. They had always maintained that he was the lawful son of Angus of the Isles, by his wife the Lady Margaret Campbell, daughter of the first earl of Argyle, but his legitimacy was denied by the government when the islanders combined to assert by arms his claims as their hereditary chief. His liberation he owed to the gallantry and fidelity of the men of Glencoe. Repairing to the isle of Lewis, he put himself under the protection of its lord, Torquil Macleod, who had married Katherine, another daughter of Argyle, and therefore sister of the lady whom the islanders believed to be his mother. A strong confederacy was formed in his favor, and about Christmas 1503, an irruption of the islanders and western clans under Donald Dubh was made into Badenoch, which was plundered and wasted with fire and sword. To put down this formidable rebellion, the array of the whole kingdom, north of Forth and Clyde, was called out; and the earls of Argyle, Huntly, Crawford, and Marischal, and the Lord Lovat, with other powerful barons, were charged to lead this force against the islanders. But two years elapsed before the insurrection was finally quelled. In 1505, the Isles were again invaded from the south by the king in person, and from the north by Huntly, who took several prisoners, but none of them of any rank. In these various expeditions the fleet under the celebrated Sir Andrew Wood and Robert Barton was employed against the islanders, and at length the insurgents were dispersed. Carniburg, a strong fort on a small isolated rock, near the west coast of Mull, in which they had taken refuge, was reduced; the Macleans and the Macleods submitted to the king, and Donald Dubh, again made a prisoner, was committed to the castle of Edinburgh, where he remained for nearly forty years. After this the great power formerly enjoyed by the lords of the Isles was transferred to the earls of Argyle and Huntly; the former having the chief rule in the south isles and adjacent coasts, while the influence of the latter prevailed in the north isles and Highlands.

The children of Sir Alexander of Lochalsh, the nephew of John the fourth and last lord of the Isles, had fallen into the hands of the king, and as they were all young, they appear to have been brought up in the royal household. Donald, the eldest son, called by the Highlanders, Donald Galda, or the foreigner, from his early residence in the Lowlands, was allowed to inherit his father”s estates, and was frequently permitted to visit the Isles. He was with James IV. At the battle of Flodden, and appears to have been knighted under the royal banner on that disastrous field. Two months after, in November 1513, he raised another insurrection in the Isles, and being joined by the Macleods and Macleans, was proclaimed lord of the Isles. The number of his adherents daily increased. But in the course of 1515, the earl of Argyle prevailed upon the insurgents to submit to the regent. At this time Sir Donald appeared frequently before the council, relying on a safe-conduct, and his reconciliation to the regent (John, duke of Albany) was apparently so cordial that on 24th September 1516, a summons was dispatched to “Monsieur de Ylis,” to join the royal army, then about to proceed to the borders. Ere long, however, he was again in open rebellion. Early in 1517, he razed the castle of Mingarry to the ground, and ravaged the whole district of Ardnamurchan with fire and sword. His chief leaders now deserted him, and some of them determined on delivering him up to the regent. He, however, effected his escape, but his two brothers were made prisoners by Maclean of Dowart and Macleod of Dunvegan, who hastened to make their submission to the government. Soon after the earl of Argyle, with the Macleans of Dowart and Lochbuy, and Macleod of Harris, presented to the council certain petitions and offers relating to the suppression of the rebellion. In the following year, Sir Donald was enabled to revenge the murder of his father on the MacIeans of Ardnamurchan, having defeated and put to death their chief and two of his sons, with a great number of his men. He was about to be forfeited for high treason, when his death, which took place a few weeks after his success against the MacIeans, brought the rebellion, with had lasted for upwards of five years, to a sudden close. He was the last male of his family, and died without issue.

In 1539, Donald Gorme of Sleat claimed the lordship of the Isles, as lawful heir male of John earl of Ross. With a considerable force he passed over into Ross-shire, where, after ravaging the district of Kinlochew, he proceeded to Kintail, with the intention of surprising the castle of Elandonan, at that time almost without a garrison. Exposing himself rashly under the walls, he received a wound in the foot from an arrow, which proved fatal.

In 1543, under the regency of the earl of Arran, Donald Dubh, the grandson of John, last lord of the Isles, again appeared upon the scene. Escaping from his long imprisonment, he was received with enthusiasm by the insular chiefs, and with their assistance, he prepared to expel the earls of Argyle and Huntly from their acquisitions in the Isles. At the head of 1,800 men he invaded Argyle”s territories, slew many of his vassals, and carried off a great quantity of cattle, with other plunder. At first he was supported by the earl of Lennox, then attached to the English interest, and thus remained for a time in the undisputed possession of the Isles. Through the influence of Lennox, the islanders agreed to transfer their alliance from the Scottish to the English crown, and in June 1545, a proclamation was issued by the regent Arran and his privy council against “Donald, alleging himself of the Isles, and other Highland men, his partakers.” On the 28th July of that year, a commission was granted by Donald, “lord of the Isles, and earl of Ross,” with the advice and consent of his barons and council of the Isles, of whom seventeen are named, to two commissioners, for treating, under the directions of the earl of Lennox, with the English king. On the 5th of August, the lord and barons of the Isles were at Knockfergus in Ireland, with a force of 4,000 men and 180 galleys, when they took the oath of allegiance to the king of England, at the command of Lennox; while 4,000 men in arms were left to guard and defend the Isles in his absence. Donald”s plenipotentiaries then proceeded to the English court with letters from him both to King Henry and his privy council; by one of which it appears that the lord of the Isles had already received from the English monarch the sum of one thousand crowns, and the promise of an annual pension of two thousand. Soon after the lord of the Isles returned with his forces to Scotland, but appears to have returned to Ireland again with Lennox. There he was attacked with fever, and died at Drogheda, on his way to Dublin. With him terminated the direct line of the lords of the Isles

The lordship of the Isles, annexed on 3d Dec. 1540 inalienably to the crown, forms one of the titles of the prince of Wales.

The difference between clans, families and septs is the source of many questions as is the question phrased in one way or another, which asks, "to which clan do I belong". There are many definitions of clans and families as there are people, but this article will try to indicate how these matters are viewed in the Lyon Court.

It should first be recognized that a clan or family is a legally recognized group in Scotland, which has a corporate identity in the same way that a company, club or partnership has a corporate identity in law. A clan or family is a ““noble incorporation" because it has an officially recognized chief or head who being a nobleman of Scotland confers his noble status on the clan or family, thus making it a legally and statutorily recognized noble corporation often called "the Honorable Clan..." A name group, which does not have a chief, has no official position in the law of Scotland. The chiefs Seal of Arms, incorporated by the Lord Lyon”s letters Patent, is the seal of the corporation, like a company seal, but only the chief is empowered by law to seal important documents on behalf of his clan. A clan as a noble incorporation is recognized as the chief”s heritable property - he owns it in law and is responsible for its administration and development.

So far the words clan and family have been used interchangeably in this article and this is the position. There is now a belief that clans are Highland and families are Lowland but this is really a development of the Victorian era. In an Act of Parliament of 1597 we have the description of the "Chiftanis and chieffis of all clannis...duelland in the hielands or bordouris" thus using the word clan to describe both Highland and Lowland families. Further, Sir

George MacKenzie of Rosehaugh, the Lord Advocate (Attorney General) writing in 1680 said "By the term “chief” we call the representative of the family from the word chef or head and in the Irish (Gaelic) with us the chief of the family is called the head of the clan”“. So it can be seen that all along the words chief or head and clan or family are interchangeable. It is therefore quite correct to talk of the MacDonald family or the Stirling clan, although modern conventions would probably dictate that it was the MacDonald clan and Stirling family. The Lyon Court usually describes the chief of a clan or family as either the ““Chief of the Name and Arms" or as "Chief of the Honorable Clan - -"

Who belongs to what clan is of course, a matter of much difficulty, particularly today when the concept of clan is worldwide. Historically, in Scotland a chief was chief of "the cuntrie". He was chief of his clan territory and the persons who lived therein, although certain of his immediate family, would owe him allegiance wherever they were living. The majority of his followers and in particular his battle relatively to a neighboring chief, they would switch their allegiance to the other chief. Thus we find that when Lord Lovat took over a neighboring glen to his clan territory for the donation of a boll of meal to each family, the family was persuaded to change their name to Fraser and owe him allegiance - to this day they are called the "boll meal Frasers". Another example is a migration of a family of the Macleans from the West Coast to near Inverness and on moving to Inverness they changed their allegiance from the Maclean chief to the chiefs of the Clan Chattan. Thus the Macleans of Dochgarroch and their descendants and dependants are properly members of the Clan Chattan and not members of the Clan Maclean even though they bear a common surname.

A chief was also entitled to add to his clan by the adoption of families or groups of families to membership of his clan, a good example being the "boll meal Frasers". Equally, a chief has and had the power to expel or exclude particular persons from membership of his clan and this included blood members of his family. It was his legal right to outlaw certain persons from his clan. This is accepted in the modern sense to mean that a chief is empowered to accept anyone he wishes to be a member of his clan or decree that his clan membership shall be limited to particular groups or names of people. All persons who bear the chief”s surname are deemed to be members of his clan. Equally, it is generally accepted that someone who determines to offer their allegiance to the chief shall be recognized as a member of that clan unless the chief has decreed that he will not accept such a person”s allegiance, Thus, if a person offers his allegiance to a particular chief by joining his clan society or by wearing his tartan, he can be deemed to have elected to join that particular clan and should be viewed as a member of that clan unless the chief particularly states that he or his name group are not to be allowed to join the clan.

It should also be said that the various Sept lists, which are published in the various Clans and Tartan books, have no official authority. They merely represent some person”s, (usually in the Victorian eras) views of which name groups were in a particular clan”s territory. Thus we find members of a clan described, as being persons owing allegiance to their chief "be pretence of blud or place of thare duelling". In addition to blood members of the clan, certain families have a tradition (even if the tradition can with the aid of modern records can be shown to be wrong) descent from a particular clan chief. They are, of course, still recognized as being members of the clan.

Historically, the concept of "clan territory" also gives rise to difficulty, particularly as certain names or Septs claim allegiance to a particular chief, because they come from his territory. The extent of the territory of any particular chief varied from time to time depending on the waxing and waning of his power. Thus a particular name living on the boundaries of a clan”s territory would find that while the chiefs power was on the up they would owe him allegiance but - if his power declined retrospectively at some arbitrary” date which the compiler of the list has selected. Often the names are Scotland-wide and so it is difficult to say that particular name belongs to a particular clan. Often surnames are shown as potentially being members of a number of clans, and this is because a number of that name has been found in each different clan”s territory. Generally speaking, if a person has a particular sept name which can he attributed to a number of clans, either they should determine from what part of Scotland their family originally came and owe allegiance to the clan of that area or, alternatively, if they do not know where they came from, they should perhaps owe allegiance to the clan to which their family had traditionally owed allegiance. Alternatively, they may offer their allegiance to any of the particular named clans in the hope that the chief will accept them as a member of his clan. Equally, as has already been said, with the variations from time to time of particular chiefly territories, it can be said that at one particular era some names were members of or owed allegiance to a particular chief while a century later their allegiance may well have been owed elsewhere.

In summary, therefore, the right to belong to a clan or family, which is the same thing, is a matter for the determination of the chief who is entitled to accept or reject persons who offer him their allegiance.

(c) Sir Crispin Agnew of Lochnaw Bt

The Norse Code

An Oxford University scientist believes he has traced the Y-chromosome, which determines maleness, of the founder of Clan Donald - the great Somerled of Argyll, who was born around 1100.

This microscopic fragment which lives on in the DNA of half a million clansmen throughout the world could be among the most successful in the world.

Prof. Sykes and his team made the discovery almost by accident while researching genetic links between the Scots and the Vikings and looking for Norse Y-chromosomes.

He and researcher Jayne Nicholson had taken thousands of DNA samples from men in the Highlands and Western Isles, and spotted a group that stood out.

They were at first puzzled, until Miss Nicholson realized the men with the identical Y-chromosomes were MacDonalds, MacAlisters and MacDougalls and shared a common ancestry.

They wrote to dozens of those clansmen throughout Scotland, enclosing a sampling brush for them to collect DNA from inside their cheeks and in the samples of those who replied, they found a single common Y-chromosome.

Prof Sykes then embarked on a sensitive piece of research involving the living chiefs of the Clan Donald and their septs.

He approached Lord Godfrey Macdonald, Sir Ian Macdonald of Sleat, Ranald MacDonald of Clan Ranald, William McAlester of Loup and Ranald MacDonnell of Glengary, enclosing a DNA brush. They all shared the same chromosome.

There was now no doubt they had identified the legacy of Somerled, who traditionally is descended from the ancient Irish kings - but says the chromosome indicates he actually has Norse ancestry.