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Electric Scotland's Weekly Newsletter for November 28th, 2014

To see what we've added to the Electric Scotland site view our What's New page at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/whatsnew.htm>

To see what we've added to the Electric Canadian site view our What's New page at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/whatsnew.htm>

For the latest news from Scotland see our ScotNews feed at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/>

Electric Scotland News

American Scottish Foundation

Join us as the American-Scottish Foundation welcomes The Kiltwalk to New York on Saturday, November 29, 2014. The inaugural walk, a prelude to a major walk in November 2015, offers a limited amount of spaces available for you to take part. See:

<http://www.americanscottishfoundation.com/events/kiltwalk.html>

The Alexander Robertson School, formed in 1789 by the Second Presbyterian Church and known as The Scots Church for the many Scots in its congregation, invites us all to join in celebrating their American Scottish heritage with a Kirking of the Tartan on Sunday November 30th, St Andrew's Day, at 10.15am

The Second Presbyterian Church 6 West 96th Street at Central Park West. See:

<http://www.americanscottishfoundation.com/Initiatives/robertson.html>

A wee video

I did a video about the newsletter that I posted onto YouTube...

<http://youtu.be/2NdEuE8k9og>

Electric Canadian

Joseph Howe

By Hon. J. W. Longley (1909)

This Maker of Canada was completed some time ago but I only found out this week that while I'd ocr'd the book in and prepared an index page for it I'd never actually completed the task. And so here it is which now completes the section on the Early Makers of Canada.

Here is a wee introduction...

Joseph Howe was in a very special sense at once the child and the father of Nova Scotia. His love for his native province was deep and passionate. He was one in whom her defects and excellences could be seen in bold outline; one who knew and loved her with unwavering love; who caught the inspiration of her woods, streams, and shores; and who gave it back in verses not unmeet, in a thousand stirring appeals to her people, and in that which is always more heroic than words, namely, civic action and life-service. 'Joe' Howe was Nova Scotia incarnate.

Once, at a banquet somewhere in England, in responding to the toast of the colonies, he painted the little province he represented with such tints that the chairman at the close announced, in half fun, half earnest, that he intended to pack up his portmanteau that

night and start for Nova Scotia, and he advised all present to do the same.

'You boast of the fertility and beauty of England,' said Howe, in a tone of calm superiority; 'why, there's one valley in Nova Scotia where you can ride for fifty miles under apple blossoms.' And, again: 'Talk of the value of land, I know an acre of rocks near Halifax worth more than an acre in London. Scores of hardy fishermen catch their breakfasts there in five minutes, all the year round, and no tillage is needed to make the production continue equally good for a thousand years to come.'

In a speech at Southampton his description of her climate was a terse, off-hand statement of facts, true, doubtless, but scarcely the whole truth. 'I rarely wear an overcoat,' said he, 'except when it rains; an old chief justice died recently in Nova Scotia at one hundred and three years of age, who never wore one in his life. Sick regiments invalided to our garrison recover their health and vigour immediately, and yellow fever patients coming home from the West Indies walk about in a few days.'

'Boys,' he said on one occasion to a Nova Scotia audience, 'brag of your country. When I'm abroad I brag of everything that Nova Scotia is, has, or can produce; and when they beat me at everything else, I turn round on them and say, "How high does your tide rise?" He always had them there — no other country could match the tides of the Bay of Fundy.

He loved and he sang of her streams and her valleys, her woods and her wild-flowers, most of all of the 'Mayflower' the trailing arbutus of early spring, with its fresh pink petals and its wonderful fragrance, long since adopted as the provincial emblem. After more than one political fight he retired to the country for a month or for a year, and there let nature breathe into his soul her beauty and her calm.

Of one such occasion he wrote: 'For a month I did nothing but play with the children and read old books to my girls. I then went into the woods and called moose with the old hunters, camping out night after night, listening to their stories, calming my thoughts with the perfect stillness of the forest, and forgetting the bitterness of conflict amid the beauties of nature.'

But while he was thus the child of Nova Scotia, he was her creator as well. Early Nova Scotia was rather a collection of scattered little settlements than a province. To Howe, in great measure, she owed her unity.

You can read about Joseph Howe at <http://www.electriccanadian.com/makers/howe/index.htm>

John A Macdonald

By common consent Sir John Alexander Macdonald has been assigned the foremost place among the statesmen whom the public life of Canada has hitherto produced. Popular opinion on this point has been ratified by the stricter and measured judgment of the ablest men among his Canadian contemporaries with whom he was brought into close personal and official contact. It was equally ratified, even during his lifetime, by opinion in Britain, where those who best knew his work recognized in him one of the foremost statesmen of the empire. At his death the creation of a peerage for his widow put a special stamp of national recognition upon the singular services which he had rendered to Canada and the nation. A memorial tablet in the crypt of St. Paul's Cathedral—his statue adorning the squares of most of the larger Canadian cities—indicate the general desire to perpetuate his memory.

It became clear to me from the above paragraph that I really needed to make available more information about him and so have now made available a 2 volume book "Memoirs of the Right Honourable Sir John Alexander Macdonald, first Prime Minister of the Dominion of Canada" (1894) By Joseph Pope in 2 volumes in pdf format which I've added to the foot of the page.

You can get to this at <http://www.electriccanadian.com/makers/macdonald.htm>

The Flag in the Wind

This weeks issue was compiled by Margaret Hamilton in which she mentions how the Scots Independent Newspaper is also making good headway.

You can read this issue at <http://www.scotsindependent.org> and there is a Synopsis this week.

Electric Scotland

Enigma Machine
Added puzzle 89.

An alternative to your crossword puzzle and created by a Scots Canadian, Doug Ross.

You can join with others in our community trying to complete these at:
<http://www.electricscotland.org/forumdisplay.php/17-Thistle-amp-Whistle>

You can get to the puzzles at <http://www.electriccanadian.com/lifestyle/enigma/>

Highland Rambles

And Long Legends to Shorten the Way by Thomas Dick Lauder (1837).

Added another article...

Legend of Gibbon More Cumin and his daughter Bigla

You can read this article at: <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/tauder/index.htm>

Wilkie Collins

A Biography by Kenneth Robinson.

Added the next 3 chapters that you can read at <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/collins/index.htm>

Scotland-UN Committee

The Scotland-UN Committee was active from July 1979 till being wound up in mid 2007, a period of 28 years, with its peak activity leading up to the reconstitution of the Scottish Parliament and Government in 1999. The Committee played a leading and very decisive role in the devolution process, since it was not only the source of some of the more revolutionary ideas on the Scottish political structure, but principally because its incisive international diplomatic campaign was what finally brought about action on the restoration of democratic government in Scotland, and also Wales. In terms of results achieved Scotland-UN is unique in the history of the Scottish home rule movement over the past 300 years. It is not practicable to list the entire range of material covering the 18 years of its main activity, much of which is repetitive, and most of its verbal diplomatic negotiations are unrecorded, but the cross-section presented on this site gives a rounded picture of its activities, ideas, and contribution to the future government of Scotland.

We have now completed the work on this committee by adding a further three papers and also a great Introduction to it all. In the Introduction we have added links to all the papers should you wish to read them. I'd thoroughly recommend reading this Introduction at the very least which you can download at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/independence/intro.pdf>

You can read all the papers at: <http://www.electricscotland.com/independence/scotlandun.htm>

Autobiography of a Working Man

By One who has whistled at the Plough.

Continued to add further chapters to this book and now up to Chapter 10 so we'll complete this book by the next issue of the newsletter. Here is how Chapter 10 starts...

When the harvest was over in 1828 I continued to work on the farm, ploughing, carting, and so forth, up to Martinmas term. Wages were still low; it was difficult for labourers not already hired by the year to get employment, even at eight shillings a week. I went to the Dunse hiring markets in November; but like many other young men seeking to be hired for the ensuing half year, did not get even an offer.

On the day after the last of those hiring days I went on a visit to a place in the eastern part of the Lammermoors, at which I had heard some labourers were to be employed in draining. On my way, having to pass within half a mile of Harelawside, the place where eighteen months before, when working at the Bowshiel hag, I was a lodger, the thought occurred to me that I should make a call there, which doing, and telling the persons on whom I called where and at what I had been working lately—that I had been a sawyer for some months, they told me that it was fortunate I had called; for David Whitehead, the wright, who lived close by, had been saying that day, that he wanted a sawyer to help him to cut that timber which he had just got home for the new gates, which he was to erect on different farms on Renton estate. I soon introduced myself to David, and in ten minutes or less, was engaged to saw with him. His business as a country-wright was of a simple nature. Once upon a time he had employed a considerable number of hands, but had no journeymen then. He lived alone with his amiable and cheerful elderly help-mate, Kirsty. They had a dog, several cats, and an ass, and no other family. But for these they had a care as tender as they could have had for any human creatures. Indeed, they were incapable of unkindness towards anything. They took me into their house, and treated me as well as either dog, cats, or ass; and to say that, is to say a good deal. I remained with them seventeen months; but not alone all the while, as you will presently see.

You can read this book at <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/articles/working.htm>

Clan Leslie Society of New Zealand & Australia

Got in their Jan, Feb, Mar 2015 newsletter which you can read at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/familytree/newsletters/leslie/>

Electric Scotland 2015 Calendar

Have created a one page 2015 calendar which you can print out from a pdf file. You can download it from:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/2015.pdf>

The Highland Smugglers

A publication in 1832 in 3 volumes.

INTRODUCTION

Even such readers as "hate prefaces," need not be startled by the appearance of these few preliminary observations: they have no pretension to so alarming an appellation. The work before them is strictly a Highland tale; descriptive partly, as its title imports, of the habits and manners of a class of people, who not very long ago abounded throughout the Highlands, and who, in spite of every attempt at controul, or legislative enactment on the part of government, are still to be found there. That it was the author's original intention to turn the interest of the story more exclusively upon smuggling adventures, will account for the introduction of certain discussions on the subject of illicit distillation at greater length than may, by some readers, be deemed suitable to a work of this nature.

Another principal object of the author being to depict Highland scenery and manners in general, he trusts to be held excused, even by those who delight in "stirring adventure" alone, should local descriptions appear at first to predominate more than may be to their taste: they will find, as the narrative proceeds, that these give place to an increased variety of incident and action, which he flatters himself will not be thought deficient in interest or excitement.

A few words regarding the language, or rather the dialect, put into the mouths of the lower characters. There is no point, perhaps, in which the ablest and most admired Authors have been so little successful, as in conveying to their readers a correct idea of Highland dialect and accent. It differs essentially both in pronunciation and idiom from the Lowland Scotch, which has been usually but erroneously attributed to Highlanders. Its chief points of dissimilarity from English are to be found in its periphrastic phraseology and strong guttural, aspirated accent. A Highlander, even when he speaks English, seems to fJiink in his own language: hence, his conversation in that tongue is, in fact, a translation from Gaelic, while the long drawn aspirates of the Celtic enunciation infect and disguise his words to a degree extremely offensive to an English ear. To describe in writing a peculiarity, which chiefly consists in the inflections of that inexpressible thing accent, is very difficult. Should we wish, for instance, to convey to an English reader, the true sound of such common expressions as, "It's a fine day!" or "trouth," (in-truth)—"I'm no weel at all the day," as uttered by a Highlander, — the English alphabet affords no combination of letters that will approach nearer the truth than those we have made use of. How is that long nasal drawl, with which the Highlander would enunciate the words, to be expressed?

Again, the letter a is generally sounded broad by the Lowlander, who frequently substitutes its sound for that of the vowel o, as in auld, cauld, for old and cold. The Highlander preserves the vowel, but adds to it a long drawling u, making the words owld and could. The Lowlander pronounces the word good as gude, or giud; in the mouth of a Highlander it scarcely differs from the same word in English. The lad, or rather laud, of the former, bears but little resemblance to the interminable laaad of the Celt.

We do not, however, mean to write a treatise on Highland orthoepy; enough has been said to explain the reason of any variation that may be observed between the language used in this work, and the dialect commonly put in the mouths of Highlanders. But, as in portrait painting, it has been found that slight deviations from truth will rather add to than detract from a likeness; and as the judicious artist will rather reject such particulars as tend to diminish the general good effect of his work, than embarrass himself with unprofitable details; so has the Author in this case deemed it expedient to deviate occasionally from the rules he has laid down; and in order to maintain a suitable verisimilitude, when an expression or sentence might otherwise have appeared unnaturally English in the mouth of a Highlander of the lower classes, he has ventured to throw in a sprinkling of words, which in strictness belong to Lowland Scotch.

With regard to the localities and incidents of his story, the Author has little to remark. He has described but what he saw, and what he knows; and although there may be certain peculiarities of scene and of fact that will appear strange to some of his southern readers, he feels assured that the general truth of his delineations can be attested by many of the sons and daughters of "Merry England," as well as by those of the "Land of the Mountain and the Flood." To them he appeals with confidence for their favourable testimony, and to the public at large for that liberal encouragement which is seldom withheld from those who have at least the merit of good intentions to plead in behalf of their efforts.

You can download these volumes in pdf format at: <http://www.electricscotland.com/books/pdf/smugglers.htm>

Songs by John Henderson

Added three songs to John's collection, "Spinster Jean At Number One", "My Friend Pastor Colin" and "Cheggies".

Here is the song 'Cheggies' - Children's Autumn Chestnut Game to read here but if you visit the page on the site you'll be able to see

a picture and click on the music link for this song...

Two young urchins went searching for trees
Laden with 'cheggies' to please
When shaken down upon the ground
Ready for them to seize
Green-skins still covered a few
Hiding their ripe fruit from view
Till each slice just right brought into sight
Many-brown-nuts of shiny hue

The young searchers soon picked up the best
Saying good-bye to the rest
Then headed back along the track
Homeward to bake with zest
But firstly with care they made holes
Through ev'ry nut just like moles
Next with heat well done they baked each one
Until-ready to meet their goals

Each-choice-chestnut was lastly strung-taut
Ready for combat when sought
After the school when as a rule
Fighters would not be caught
The losers, poor mutts, were the nuts
Victims of childish fun
But with autumn o'er, there was no more
Until snow-balling took its turn!

I remember playing this game myself many years ago now and brings back great memories. "Conkers" is a traditional children's game in Britain and Ireland played using the seeds of Horse Chestnut trees—the name 'conker' is also applied to the seed and to the tree itself. The game is played by two players, each with a conker threaded onto a piece of string: they take turns striking each other's conker until one breaks. You can learn more about this game at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conkers>. See also: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1cQ-eZOWgvI>

You can get to John's Songs at the foot of the page at:
<http://www.electricscotland.com/poetry/doggerels.htm>

THE STORY

The Highland Garb
From the Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness

In these days of Celtic revival, it may not be out of place to take up the subject of the garb of the Highlanders. A good deal has already been written on this subject, and the age and authenticity of the dress have been very severely criticised. This, in many cases, has been more the result of prejudice and jealousy than careful and impartial research. To be able to form an intelligent opinion of any subject, it is necessary to be perfectly familiar with the details, and in this many of the critics on the Highland dress have been woefully far short. No doubt some of them have been very clever, learned, and able writers, but that is no reason why their decision should be taken as final, even at this age, when the "Garb of Old Gaul" is oftener seen in the streets of our busy towns, in the brilliant assemblies of the metropolis, or on the burning sands of India, than on its own native heath.

The events connected with that unfortunate but gallant attempt which went nigh to establish on the throne of his ancestors the rightful heir to the Crown, naturally directed attention to the history, institutions, manners, character, and language 'of a people who, though far behind in the career of civilization, had given a splendid example of chivalrous loyalty, incorruptible fidelity, and self-sacrificing devotion. To this cause then, taken in conjunction with the brilliant behaviour of the Highland regiments, the excitement caused by the proscription of the dress, and the repeal of that infamous and silly Act, may we ascribe the numerous articles which have been written on this subject; and it is a matter of infinite regret, that many of those who have undertaken this office have been ill qualified for the task. Being acquainted with a state of society and manners altogether different from what they attempted to describe—brimful of prejudice, and utterly ignorant of the language of the people—they took upon themselves to describe and criticise a dress of which they knew as much as it did of them!

It is unfortunate that our Highland ancestors did not believe in the old adage, that the pen is mightier than the sword, and left so much

of their history and manners to be written by "Cockney literati" and silly "view hunters," who have successively invaded the fastnesses of the Gael, who, after partaking of the hospitality of the simple-hearted natives, exported, for the edification of the crowd, dry descriptions of cairns, castles, vitrified forts, and parallel roads, or gossiping mendacious anecdotes of the cunning, selfishness, extortion, filth, indolence, and barbarism of a race who never closed their doors against a stranger, till his treachery and ingratitude taught them to regard him with suspicion and distrust. We know of no one who would choose, if he could help it, to have his portrait taken by a caricaturist; his country described by a flimsy, shallow, conceited tourist, ignorant of its manners, customs, institutions, and language, and prevented by prejudice and incapacity from acquiring a knowledge of either the one or the other; yet this was the fate of the Highlanders, and all this was done at a time when they were prevented from defending themselves, through want of intercourse with the outer world. It was an easy matter, under such circumstances, to pass off as genuine all manner of absurdity, nonsense, and "pure fiction." without fear of contradiction.

Let us, however, pass over a whole host of authors of "Tours," "Journeys," "Dissertations," "Thoughts," and so forth, and come at once to the subject of the Highland dress. The various arguments against the dress are that the "Clan tartans," as used at present, are of modern design, and are not the same pattern as existed (if any did at all exist) previous to the year 1745; that the Highland dress was never worn by gentlemen; that it was only worn by such as could not afford trousers; that the kilt, in its present shape, was invented by an Englishman; that the dress is vulgar and indecent; and, in fact, that it is altogether only a fancy dress, and of modern invention!

We will, in the first place, give the details of a complete outfit for a Highland chief, previous to the proscription of the dress, and then take up the various objections in their order. The outfit was as follows :—A jacket, vest, and feile-beag or kilt; a belted plaid or breacan-feile, a full-trimmed bounet, set of belts, a pair of tartan hose made of cloth, a pair of knitted hose, a pair of garters, a silver-mounted sporrán, a target, with spear, a claidheamh-mor, brace of pistols, dirk, with knife and fork, a sgian-dubh, a powder horn, and shoulder brooch.

We can gather sufficient from the works of ancient writers to prove that tartans were worn in the Highlands at a very remote period, but their knowledge of the language and manners of the people was so very meagre, that they could hardly be expected to be very minute in their description. From the particulars, however, which they handed down to us, together with an ordinary knowledge of the history of the country, and with a little careful and unbiased research, it can be seen that the clan tartans, as we now have them, are the same as were in existence not only at the "45," but for many centuries previous to that era.

One of the strongest arguments brought forward by our critics is the difference between the description given by several of the ancient writers on the tartans at their time, and those at present in use. George Buchanan, who wrote in the year 1612, says that "for the most part they are brown near to the color of the hadder to the effect that when they lie down amongst the hadder, the bright color of their plaids shall not bewray them;" and Martin in his "Western Isles," tells us that the tartans worn by the women were for the most part white, with a few stripes of black, blue, and red, while the tartans of most of the Clans in the districts which they visited are now very bright in colour. This is a clinching argument and evidently considered to be indisputable, but instead of being so only serves to prove a very important fact, namely, that it is no mere fancy to have the tartans divided into "Dress," "Hunting," and "Clan." Buchanan, who was tutor to King James VI., was evidently on a hunting expedition in the Highlands, and of course saw tartans used as he describes, as would be natural to the occasion, and Martin describes the Dress tartans most minutely, the only difference between them and the Clan patterns being that the large squares are made white and the smaller lines left to distinguish the sets.

Several of the Clan tartans carry on their very face sufficient to prove to an ordinary intelligent individual their age and authenticity, and go very far to show the skill, ingenuity, and neatness with which they were arranged. All who are acquainted with the Highland Clans are aware that several of them trace their origin to some common ancestor of whom they were all equally proud. Many of them prove their claims by ancient Charters and MSS.—others merely by tradition. On comparing the Armorial Bearings of these Clans we find great resemblance in many of the devices. These of course point to some particular event in the history of the founder and common ancestor of the Clans; and such is the resemblance, that in many cases it forms a very correct guide to show the Clans that are related. The science of Heraldry was very much studied among the Highlanders, and we find it frequently mentioned in the works of the bards. So much was it practised that the devices were emblazoned on the various ornaments in connection with the dress, and formed in itself to a Highlander a very ready index to his clan. In like manner, if we compare the tartans of the various Clans descended from the same ancestor, we find the most striking resemblance, and in order to illustrate this more fully we will take up a few of the most important ones.

We will take first the tartan of the Lord of the Isles, and that of the different Clans descended from him. These are the various branches of the Macdonalds, Macdugalds, MacAlisters, and MacIntyres, and if we take the tartan known as the "Lord of the Isles," we will find that by the addition of a few lines of other colours we can form the set of any of the Clans mentioned, and that without any material disarrangement of the original.

Then let us take the "Clan Chattan" — the Mackintoshes, Macphersons, Macqueens, Shaws, Farquharsons, MacBeans, &c., &c. If we take then the Macpherson or Chief Mackintosh, we will find that by very little alteration or addition we can form any of the others. The greatest difference occurs in the Farquharson's, where the smaller lines are all that is left of the original, but still sufficient to show the set.

Third come the descendants of Connacher—the Mackays, Urquharts, and Forbsees. Though the relationship of these clans only rests on tradition, the resemblance in their armorial bearings and tartans is so very strong as to put it almost beyond a doubt. This Connacher Mackay lived in Glen-Urquhart, and being out one day hunting, accompanied by an old and faithful hound, fell in with a wild boar, long the dread of the whole surrounding country, and after a long and fierce struggle the boar was killed, but not alone, for no sooner did the ferocious animal “bite the dust” than Connacher’s faithful companion breathed his last. As a memento of this deadly struggle, the Mackays have three boars’ heads muzzled on their armorial bearings, and originally had two hounds for supporters. The Forbsees and Urquharts have also three boars’ heads on their arms, and hounds for supporters, and the only difference between the tartans of the three clans is—where there is one red line in the Urquhart, it is white in the Forbes and black in the Mackay (with the addition of three small green lines in the latter).

Next come Siol Alpin—the Macgregors, Mackinnons, Macquarries, and Macphees. The tartans of these clans are so very like each other that the resemblance has often been pointed out by parties quite ignorant of their history and tradition.

We might go on in this way ad infinitum, for the same theory holds good with almost the whole of them, but we think we have quoted sufficient in the meantime to make good our point. What then do we learn from this very marked resemblance in the tartans of these clans? It is simply this. That they are as old as the clans themselves, and were designed at whatever time they formed themselves into clans. It is quite natural to suppose that each branch of a clan, when asserting its own independence, or, to use a homely phrase, when setting up on its own account, would be desirous to have as much as possible of what belonged to an ancestor of whom they were all equally proud, and would just add a few lines to the tartan of the clan to make a distinction, but leave sufficient to show the relationship. We have this feeling very clearly shown in the armorial bearings, and there is every reason to suppose they would be equally particular with the tartan.

It was by his tartan a Macdougall was known from a Macallister; and it could be known by their tartan that they were both descended from the Lord of the Isles.

We may ask now if the tartans were of modern design, how would it happen that it is only those of the related clans that have this resemblance by what strange chance would the M’Gregors, who were situated in Perthshire, the M’Kinnons in Skye, the M’Quarries in Mull, and the M’Phees in Colonsay, have hit upon the same design? The various clans of the “Clan Chattan” were never on such very friendly terms that they would call a public meeting to arrange a set of tartan for each other.

It is true that some of the other clan tartans have a very strong resemblance to each other; but that only happens in those that are of dark colours, which could not be blended in any other way; and many of them having only three or four colours, they were bound to be something of the same design.

It is argued that, even allowing there were recognised clan patterns, the laws proscribing the dress were so strict, and remained in existence so long, that all trace of them would be lost; but the Act only remained in force for thirty-five years, and it is well known that so great was the attachment of the Highlanders to their dress, that they took every means in their power to evade the law, and though tartan was prohibited to be worn, it would be preserved as a sacred relic of what they considered their fallen greatness; and even supposing that the dress was not worn for thirty-five years, what was to come of all the tartan that was in existence at the time it was proscribed! It was not seized as contraband goods, and it is not likely the Highlanders would destroy it—it was far too precious in their eyes for that; and even allowing that to happen, it would be necessary that all the weavers (of whom there would be one in every clachan) should die before the sets could be forgotten; and not even that would do it, in fact the whole generation that lived and saw the tartan would need to be swept away before it could be entirely lost!

We think we have now satisfactorily proved our first point, and will, without any further comment, take up the second, viz. :— That the dress was never worn by gentlemen.

This idea has arisen merely from the fact of Highland chiefs when visiting London being dressed in the trows. Of course in these days, there were no public conveyances, and parties going long journeys had to go on horseback, and the kilt not being suitable for riding, the trows, which were intended specially for riding, were usually worn, and the London people seeing them dressed only in that garb, took it for granted, without thinking it worth while making enquiry that they wore nothing else.

In 1471, John Bishop, of Glasgow, treasurer to King James III., gives in his account for tartan for the use of the King. For a yard and a half the price was £1 10s. Scots, and the colour blue—evidently Hunting Stewart; also half-a-yard of what is called “double tartan” for the Queen.

In the accounts of the Lord High Treasurer of Scotland in August, 1538, we find the following entries regarding a Highland dress for King James V. on the occasion of his making a hunting excursion to the Highlands.

John Taylor, the Water Poet, made an excursion to Scotland in the year 1618, of which he published an account under the title of the “Pennyless Pilgrimage”. He tells of his visit to Braemar for the purpose of paying his respects to the Earl of Mar and Sir Wm. Moray of Abercairney, and says :—

'Thus with extreme travell ascending and descending, mounting and alighting, I came at night to the place where I would be in the Brae of Marr, which is a large county all composed of such mountaines, that Shooters hill, Birdlip hill, Gadshill, Highgate hill, Hampstead hill, or Maivernes hills are but molehills in comparison, or like a liver or a gizzard under a Capon's wing, in respect to the altitude of their tops or perpendicularite of their bottomes. There I saw Mount Benavon with a furr'd mist upon his snowy head, instead of a nightcap, for you must understand that the oldest man alive never saw, but the snow was on the top of divers of these hills (both in summer as well as in winter). There did I find the truly noble and Eight Honourable Lords John Erskine, Earl of Marr, James Stuart, Earle of Murray, George Gordon Earle of Engye, sone and heire to the Marquise of Huntley, James Erskine Earl of Buchan, and John Lord Erskine, sonne and heire to the Earl of Mar, and their Countesses, with my much honoured and my best assured and approved friend Sir Wm. Moray, Knight of Abercairney, and hundreds of other Knights, Esquires and their followers, all and every man in one habit, as if Lycurgus had been there and made laws of equality. Eor once in the year, which is the whole month of August and sometimes part of September, many of the Nobility and Gentry, for their pleasure doe come into these Highland countries to hunt, when they do conform themselves into the habits of the Highland men, who for the most part speake nothing but Irish, and in former times were those people which were called Bedshanks.

"Their habit is shoes with but one sole apiece, stockings which they call hose, made of a warm stuff of divers colours which they call tartane.

"As for Breeches many of them nor their forefathers never wore any, but a jerkin of the same stuff as there hose is of with a plaed about their shoulders, which is a mantle of divers colours, much finer and lighter stuffe than their hose, with blue flat caps on their heads, a hankerchief knit with two knots about their necks, and thus they are at tyred."

John Duke of Argyle, and Greenwich, the author of the well-known song, "Argyle is my Name," says in the third verse:—

I'll quickly lay down my sword and my gun,
And I'll put my plaid and my bonnet on,
"Wi' my plaiding, stockings, and leather heeled shoon,
They'll mak' me appear a fine sprightly loon;
And when I am dressed thus frae tap to tae,
Hame to my Maggie, I think for to gae,
"Wi' my Claymore hinging doon to my heel,
To whang at the bannocks o' barley meal.

There is a picture in Taymouth Castle of the Regent Murray in full Highland costume (breacan feile.) There are also pictures at Holyrood Palace, and Armadale and Dunrobin Castles, of gentlemen dressed in the kilt.

Burt, who wrote in the year 1729, mentions several Highland chiefs as wearing the kilt. The chiefs and officers who followed Prince Charlie wore it, and if none of them were gentlemen, surely it will be allowed that Prince Charlie himself was at least a gentleman, and he wore it.

We come now to the next point—"That the kilt, in its present shape, was invented by an Englishman." This is a most important point, and, at the same time the most ridiculous charge of the whole, and it is really astonishing to find so many able and intelligent writers taking up the idea, and repeating it without making any investigation as to the correctness of it. This opinion was first broached by an anonymous writer in the " Scots Magazine," in the year 1798, who says the "Eileadh beag was first introduced in the year 1728, by Rawlinson or Parkinson, the Superintendent of the Lead mines at Tyndrum, who, finding his Highland labourers encumbered with their Belted plaids, taught them to separate the plaid from the kilt, and sew it in its present form."

Now to any one at all acquainted with the history and customs of the Highlanders, this must appear a very extraordinary statement, and more so that it has been accepted as truth by writers who have taken upon themselves the task of enlightening us on our Highland History.

Before taking up any of the proofs which we propose bringing against this assertion we will take a look at the argument itself, and the authority, namely, "An Anonymous Writer," in the year 1798. He tells us of a thing that happened in the year 1728, exactly 70 years previous. Now is it not very strange that this individual was the only person that knew of such a thing, and that he should be so long in making it public! Upon this authority alone then is the dress which we have fondly ascribed to our ancestors, from time immemorial, taken from us and the credit given to an Englishman.

For the sake of those who may not be familiar with the different styles of the dress, it may be as well to give a few particulars :— The breacan-feile was twelve yards of tartan, i.e., six yards of double tartan, and was plaited and fastened round the body by a belt, the lower part forming the kilt, and the other half being fixed on the shoulder by a brooch, hung down behind, anil thus formed the plaid, in the same shipe as the belted plaids now used by the military, which is an imitation of it. There was great neatness displayed, in arranging the plaits so as to show the set of the tartan. This was a particularly convenient style of dress, as the plaid hung loosely

behind, and did not encumber the arms, and in wet weather could be drawn over the shoulders, and formed a sufficient covering for a Highlander, while, in the event of a camping out at night, it could be thrown loose, and covered the whole body. The feileadh beag, it is scarcely necessary to say, is the style of dress now in use.

The trews was a style of breeches worn close to the skin, the trews and hose being of one piece, made of tartan and cut on the cross, and were used for riding on horseback.

There was another style of the dress called the feildag, which was a piece of plain tartan drawn round the body like the feileadh-beag, but not plaited.

Now is it not very ridiculous to suppose that if the Highlanders were ingenious enough to think of plaiting the kilt and making the tartan, that they would not see the necessity of separating it from the plaid when occasion needed it, without it being pointed out by an Englishman? Or is it at all likely that a light-footed, active race like the Highlanders would go about their daily avocations with twelve yards of tartan hanging about them? They were known to be fond of leaping, running, throwing the stone and the hammer, tossing the caber, shinty, and many other athletic games which needed great activity and lightness, and how could they engage in such exercises encumbered with both kilt and plaid? Every Highlander was a gentleman, but still he was his own joiner, shoemaker, and farm labourer, &c. They were particularly jealous of strangers, and adhered strictly to the customs and manners handed down to them from their ancestors. Burt says:—"The whole people are fond and tenacious of the Highland clothing, as you may believe by what is here to follow : —

"Being in a wet season upon one of my peregrinations accompanied by a Highland gentleman, who was one of the Clan through which I was parsing, I observed the women to be in great anger with him about something that I did not understand, at length I asked him wherein he offended them. Upon this question he laughed, and told me his greatcoat was the cause of their wrath, and their reproach was that he could not be content with the garb of his ancestors, but was degenerated into a Lowlander, and condescended to follow their unmanly fashions."

If such then were their feelings towards strangers and their customs, is it at all likely that they would take to an alteration or improvement in a dress of which they were so proud, and that at the hands of a hated Saxon? Now, supposing the feileadh-beag was invented by Parkinson, how did it happen that it was known all over the Highlands at the same time? They had no "Gazette of Fashion" in those days, to tell them that a new style of kilt was invented at Tyndrnm. Again, if the feileadh-beag was such an improvement on the breacan-feile, how was the latter not discontinued, for we find it in use for the purposes for which it was intended, down to the proscription of the dress, though the former would have been a saving of a considerable quantity of cloth

In the year 1729 the Independent Companies of the Freiceadan dubh or Black Watch were raised. The uniform of the corps consisted of a scarlet jacket and waistcoat and belted plaid or Breacan Feile. At night the plaid served the purpose of a blanket, and was sufficient covering for a Highlander. They were called belted plaids from being kept tight to the body with a belt., and were worn on guard, reviews, and on all occasions when the men were in full dress. In the barracks and when not on duty the little kilt or Feileadh beag was worn. This was just one year after the reputed invention of the Feileadh beag, and still we find both garbs worn by the same men for the different purposes for which they were intended, viz., the Breacan Feile for full dress or for going on any expedition, and the Feileadh beag for undress or for going about their daily avocations.

Burt, who wrote about the year 1729, gives a description of the Highland dress, and in his work there is a plate showing the dress in the three different forms, viz., "Triubhais," "Breacan Feile," and "Feile beag." Still he makes no mention of Parkinson's invention, and there is not the slightest doubt, if there were any truth in the story, but he would be only too glad of the chance, as he had done all in his power to hold the Highlanders up to ridicule. He mentions the kilt several times, calling it "Quelt." He also mentions another matter which, though there would be no further evidence, would be sufficient in itself to settle the dispute. "I have observed before," he says, "that the plaid serves the ordinary people for a cloak by day and bedding by night. By the latter it imbibes so much perspiration that no one day can free it from the smell, and even some of better than ordinary appearance when the plaid falls from the shoulder or otherwise requires to be re-adjusted, while you are talking with them, toss it over again, as some people do the knots of their wigs, which conveys the offence in whiffs that are intolerable. Of this they don't seem to be sensible, for it is often done only to give themselves airs."

If this then was the Breacan Feile or belted plaid, how could it be tossed over the shoulder, seeing it was only fastened on to the shoulder from behind, and there would not be more than a few inches in front altogether. It was nothing more or less than the "Breacan- Guaille" or shoulder plaid, the same as now worn, and was used with the "Feileadh bong." It was worn by shepherds, huntsmen, &c., on account of its being easily thrown aside, but was seldom worn on warlike expeditions, as it cumbered the arms and was a hindrance in the use of their weapons.

About the year 1513 there was a battle fought in Badenoch, between the Frasers and the Macdonalds of Clanranald. The day being very hot (3rd July), the Frasers threw off their plaids and jackets, and fought in their shirt sleeves, from which circumstance the battle was called Blar-na-leine, or the Field of Shirts; and at the battle of Tippermuir, in the year 1643, and the battle of Sherriffmuir, in the year 1715, several of the Highlanders threw aside their plaids and jackets and fought in the same way. Some writers would like people

to understand that they fought "stark naked," or with no covering but their shirts. This is very ridiculous, and it is very questionable if they would fight any better "in their shirts" than with the Feileadh beag, unencumbered by plaid or jacket, than which they could not possibly get a freer or lighter fighting garb. Martin thus describes their method of fighting:—"The chief of each tribe, after the arrows are spent, advance within shot, having first laid aside their Upper Garments, and after one general discharge, attack. Aut mors cita, aut victoria laeta."

It stands to reason that the Highlanders who stripped themselves of their plaids as related above, were dressed in the Feileadh beag, and would necessarily require to throw aside their plaids, as they could not wield the Claidheamh-mor encumbered with them; whereas if they had been dressed in the Breacan Feile or Belted Plaid there would be no occasion for them to throw anything aside, as their shoulders would be perfectly free.

Not only was the Feileadh beag known in the Highlands at a very remote period, but it was known in the Lowlands as being the dress of the Highlanders, and we have abundant proofs of this in the many songs and poems composed about the "15," all of which prove that it was known in the Lowlands, which could not possibly happen if it was only invented in 1728.

In the second verse of the old Jacobite song, "The White Cockade," which refers to the "15," we find the following:—

O leeze me on the philabeg,
The hairy hough and gartered lug,
But aye the thing that tak's my e'e,
Is the White Cockade aboon the bree.

This song was composed by a Buchan lady, on her betrothed joining the rebellion under the Earl of Mar, in the year 1715.

In the song, "Though Geordie Reigns in Jamie's Stead," which was composed about the same time, we find the following verse :—

He wears a Broadsword by his side,
And weel he kens to draw that,
The Target and the Highland plaid,
The shoulder belt and a' that,
A Bonnet bound with ribbons blue,
A White Cockade and a' that,
The tartan hose and Philabeg,
Which malt's me blyth for a' that.

In a song, composed on the battle of Sheriffmuir, by the Rev. John Barclay of Muthills, who was born in the year 1734, we find the Feileadh-beag mentioned thus :—

The Camerons fled as they were mad,
Lifting their neighbour's cows man,
Mackenzie and the Stewarts fled,
But Philabeg or trews man;
Had they behaved like Donald's corps,
And killed all those came them before,
Their King had gone to France no more;
Then each whig saint would soon repent,
And straight recant his covenant,
And rent it at the news man.

Though this gentleman lived after the date of the reputed invention of the Feileadh beag, still he was an intelligent and educated man, and living on the confines of the Highlands, he would be sure to hear of it, if there was any truth in the story, and would not picture them as being in that garb if it was invented thirteen years later.

We could still bring forward proof after proof, but think we have quoted sufficient to put the matter beyond the reach of a doubt; and it is astonishing that in the face of such evidence the charge should ever have been made, and more so, that it should be repeated by parties who ought to know better, if they chose to make enquiry.

Keltie, in the "History of the Highland Clans," says—"It appears to be a well-authenticated fact that the kilt or philabeg, as distinct from the belted plaid, is a comparatively modern article of dress in the Highlands;" and then he goes on to give the Parkinson theory. We may now ask, who has this theory been acknowledged by? Was it acknowledged by a single individual whose opinion is worth the paper it is written on? Did Skene believe it? Did General Stewart, Logan, Robertson, Browne, or any other who was an authority on Highland matters believe it? No, certainly not.

We will now take up the fourth charge, viz.: That the Highland dress is vulgar and indecent. The garb is called beggarly, grossly indecent, and absurd—with tasteless regularity and “vulgar glare of the tartan.”

The colours of the tartan are not more red or glaring than the peers' robes and military uniforms, or the Royal livery, and yet these are not considered vulgar!

One of the most distinguished artists of his age, Mr. West, President of the Royal Academy, differs from this opinion. He has expressed his surprise at the blending and arranging of the colours, and considers that great art, that is to say, much knowledge of the principles of colouring with pleasing effect has been displayed in the composition of several of the Clan tartans, regarding them in general as specimens of natural taste, something analogous to the affecting but artless strains of the native music of Scotland.

In “Eustace’s Classical Tour,” in treating of the various costumes of the European and Asiatic nations, he says regarding the Highland dress, “In one corner of Great Britain, a dress is worn by which the two extremes are avoided It has the easy folds of a drapery which takes away from it the constraint and angular air of the ordinary habits, and is at the same time sufficiently light and succinct to answer all the purposes of activity and ready motion.”

We do not say that some of the bright patterns, such as M'Pherson, M'Lean, Ross, Fraser, &c., are particularly well suited for every occupation in life; but there is a remedy for this, of which our calumniators are evidently not aware. The clans having bright tartans had also a darker set called “hunting tartan,” which was usually worn on every-day occasions, and was formed by the larger checks being made brown, green, or any other dark colour, but the arrangement kept the same to show the clan. The dress pattern was formed in the same way, by making the larger checks white; and it is difficult to conceive of anything more gentlemanly or tastefully got up than the Hunting M'Pherson, Fraser, or M'Lean. The colours are arranged to show the clan patterns, and at the same time blended so correctly as to make them both pleasing to the eye and serviceable for wear ; and as to the dress being indecent, we would ask what is the difference between a Highlander exposing 6 inches of his knees and our fashionable and aristocratic ladies exposing their arms and breasts? In regard to the question of decency, General Stewart, in his Sketches gives an account of a ball given by the officers of the Royal Highland Emigrant Regiment, to which the reader may be referred.

Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen, in her “Journal of Our Life in the Highlands,” makes mention several times of the Highland dress. The nobles and gentlemen attending the Court at Balmoral wore it; all the Royal servants wore it; and Prince Albert, the Prince of Wales, and the other Princes of the Royal Family showed they did not think it indecent, by wearing it. Her Majesty gives her opinion of it several times in such expressions as these :— “The men looked so handsome in their kilts.” “M'Donald, in his shooting jacket and kilt, looked quite a picture; he was remarkably tall and handsome.”

Burt says—“The stockings rise no higher than the thick of the calf, and from the middle of the thigh to the middle of the leg is a naked space, which, being exposed to all weather, becomes tanned and freckled, and the joint being mostly infected with the country distemper, the whole is very disagreeable to the eye.” (Martin, on the other hand, says—“The plaid is tied round the middle with a leather belt. It is plaited from the belt to the knee very nicely.”) Burt is here, evidently, as in many other instances, drawing on his imagination, for, as in other cases, the one part of his story cuts up the other. In describing the breacan feile or belted plaid, he says it is formed of a plaid two breadths wide; that is, between $\frac{1}{2}$ of a yard and one yard when folded on the double; and, the plaid being belted at the waist, he must be an extraordinary size of a man indeed that the lower end would only reach the middle of his thigh; and again the hose could not be fixed on the middle of the calf, as they would not remain up; they must necessarily be fixed on the top of the calf. The acknowledged length of the kilt is to the middle of the knee-cap, so that a man could go on his knees without it touching the ground. And as to the knees being freckled or affected with distemper, we can say, without fear of contradiction, that it is a base and malicious exaggeration. Burt may have seen one instance of what he describes, but to give that as a general description is false.

We are here able to speak from experience, having been innocent of breeches until 20 years of age, wearing the kilt in all weathers, being exposed to all manner of rough treatment from brushwood, heather, brambles, &c., and can safely say that we never experienced the slightest discomfort or had any distemper that would hurt the feelings of the daintiest or most tender-hearted cockney. We have seen farmers, shepherds, and gamekeepers who never wore anything but the kilt, and were exposed to the very same treatment as the Highlanders in Burt's days, and they were equally free from anything unpleasant.

“That the dress is altogether a fancy dress and of modern invention” is another baseless assertion. We have already said so much bearing on this point that we may dispose of it in a short time. The history of our Highland regiments shows that instead of being a fancy dress it is a most serviceable one. and that they were able to undergo hardships and fatigues which men dressed in the low country garb could not endure. We could give numerous instances of this, but we just give two as being sufficient to show that it is no mere assertion :—In the year 1757, when the Fraser Highlanders landed in North America, it was proposed to change the uniform, as the Highland dress was said to be unfit for the severe winters and hot summers of that country. The officers and soldiers vehemently protested against any change, and Colonel Fraser explained to the Commander-in-chief the strong attachment which the men had to their national dress, and the consequences that might follow if deprived of it. This representation was successful. In the words of a veteran who embarked and returned -with the regiment :—“Thanks to our generous chief we were allowed to wear the garb of our fathers, and in the course of six winters showed the doctors that they did not understand our constitutions, for in the coldest winters

our men Were more healthy than those regiments who wore breeches and warm clothing.”

In no former campaign was the superiority of the Highlanders over their companions-in-arms in enduring privations and fatigues, more conspicuous than in Holland, in the year 1794; for whilst some of the other regiments lost more than 300 men by disease alone, the 42nd, which had 300 young recruits in its ranks, lost only 25, including those killed in battle, from the time of their disembarkation at Ostend, on 26th January, till their embarkation at Bremen on the 14th of April.—(General Stewart.)

Such was the opinion the sagacious President Forbes had of the dress, that at the time of its proscription, in writing on the subject to Brodie of Brodie, then Lord Lyon for Scotland, he says: —“The garb is certainly very loose, and fits men inured to it to make very quick marches, to go through very great fatigues, to bear out against the inclemency of the weather, to wade through rivers, shelter in huts, woods, and rocks, upon occasions which men dressed in the low country garb could not possibly endure. But it is to be considered that, as the Highlands are circumstanced at present, it is, at least it seems to me, to be an utter impossibility, without the advantage of the dress, for the inhabitants to tend their cattle and go through the other parts of their business, not to speak of paying their rents to the landlords.”

The gallant veteran, Colonel Cameron of Erracht, had an equally good opinion of the serviceableness of the dress. When it was proposed to change the uniform of his regiment, he argued that it was healthier, cleaner, and more comfortable for the men, besides being a greater saving in the long run, and we can get good proof of this in our own day, for where can we see such sturdy, healthy, and stalwart men as the Highland farmers and shepherds, who make a habit of wearing the garb of their fathers. It is a known fact that men who have worn the kilt in their youth are always stouter and hardier than those who have worn trousers.

If a Highlander may be allowed to be a judge of what suits best, we can just say with Kenneth M'Kenzie himself, the Bard :—

\Se 'feile preasach tlachd mo ruin.
'S osan nach ruig faisg an glun,
'S cota breac nam basan dlì,
'S bonaid dhu-ghorm thogarrach.
B'annsa leam a' fèile cuaich
Ka casag de 'n aodach luaight',
'S brigis nan ceannglaichean cruaidh—
Gur e 'n droch-uair a thogainn dh'i.
Tha mo run do'n eideadh las,
Cuach an fhàidh nan dlì bhas,
Shiubhlain leis's na sleibhtean cas,
'S rachainn brais air obair leis!
Ged a tharlainn anns a' bheinn
Fad na seachduin's mi leam fein
Fuachd na h-oidhch' cha dean dhomh beud—
Tha'm breacan fhein cho caidearach.
Am feileadh air am beil mi 'n geall,
Dealg nar guailibh suas gun f heall,
Crios ga ghlasadh las neo-theann,
'S biodh e gach am gu baganta.
'S ann leam bu taitneach e bhi 'n
Mrd 'N dm dhomh tachairt ri mo ghradh—
B' fhearr leam seachduin dhe na dha
De 'n bhrigis ghrainnde rag-sheallach!

“That the dress is of modern invention.” We have already proved that the tartans are very ancient, and that the kilt in its present shape was the dress of our ancestors for many centuries, but we now wish to point out the great age of the dress altogether, and that it was in use as far back as being beyond the reach of either history or tradition.

Some years ago a sculptured stone was dug up from the ruins of the Roman Wall (which was constructed in the year 140), representing three figures dressed exactly in the ancient garb of the Highlanders.

Herodian, who wrote about the year 204, in speaking of the dress of the Caledonians says, they were only partly clothed, which would agree with the opinion of many subsequent writers on the Highland dress.

The Sculptured Stones of Scotland also give clear and decided evidence of the great antiquity of the dress, and their period may be said to extend from the sixth to the ninth century. There is one at Dupplin in Perthshire, Forres in Morayshire, Nigg in Ross-shire, each representing figures in the Highland dress.

There is also a sculptured slab in the Antiquarian Museum, Edinburgh, which was found at Dull in Perthshire, some years ago, and represents several figures in the Highland dress. In Kil-muir, Skye, there is also a rock bearing a natural representation of the dress. It is called "Creag an fheilidh," or the rock of the kilt, from its marked resemblance to a man dressed in the kilt. This name must be coeval with the arrival of the Gael in Skye, for being a natural representation, it could not get the name through any event or accident.

In the Norwegian Sagas, in reference to the expedition of King Magnus to the Western Isles, in the year 1093, it is said that he, adopted the costumes in use in the Western lands on his return, and likewise many of his followers; and for this he was called Magnus Barefoot.

The seal of King Alexander I., whose reign began in 1107, represents that monarch in the Feileadh-beag, and also with the round Highland target. King David I., who began to reign in 1124, and Malcolm IV., in 1153, used a seal identical with that used by Alexander I., and their adopting it proves conclusively that they wore the dress represented.

In the song composed on the battle of Harlaw, in 1411, by M'Mhuirich, bard to the Lord of the Isles, the Highland dress is mentioned, and also in a Scotch song made on the same occasion.

We think therefore that with a careful and deliberate comparison of the proofs and authorities brought forward, it will be found that we have made good our point, and rebutted each of the various charges brought against the dress, and that the clan tartans are as old as the Clans themselves, and were known in the Highlands from the remotest ages; that the kilt was the dress of the chief as well as the clansman, and also of royalty; that the Feileadh-beag was not invented by an Englishman; that it was known in the Highlands before an Englishman was ever seen there; that the dress is neither vulgar nor indecent, but that it is both gentlemanly and becoming; that instead of being a fancy dress, it is a most serviceable and comfortable one; and that its age is beyond the reach of either history or tradition.

Oh first of Garbs, garment of happy fate,
So long employed, of such an antique date,
Look back some thousand years till records fail,
And lose themselves in some romantic tale;
We'll find our God-like fathers nobly scorned
To be by any other dress adorned.
—Allan Ramsay.

We may now be blamed for making "much ado about nothing," and creating a fuss about such a simple matter as a dress, but surely if it was worth the while for such eminent men as Pinkerton, Dr. M'Culloch, Capt. Burt, and many others (not to speak of the numerous Cockney newspaper correspondents), to misrepresent it, it is worth our trouble to vindicate it; or if it was considered such an important matter as to be worthy of a debate in the British Parliament, our time is not lost over it.

The subject of the Highland dress should be an interesting one not only to Highlanders, but to Lowlanders, when we consider what it has done for Scotland : that it is this dress alone that has sustained the military character of Scotland since the Union; for, while we hear of the English Navy and Army, the English Parliament, the English Colonies, &c., Scotland is never once mentioned. In the great naval victories of Britain we have never heard of Scotch sailors, nor should we ever hear of the soldiers of Scotland, were it not for those corps distinguished by their national dress ; and were it not then for this dress, Scotland would be as low in military as in naval fame, and as unnoticed at Waterloo and Alexandria, as at Trafalgar and Aboukir. In the Seven Years' War in Germany, 1200 Highlanders gave celebrity to the warlike character of Scotland, at the same time that (on a calculation from the usual proportion) there were at least 3000 Scotch soldiers intermixed with the English regiments under Prince Ferdinand, but although each of these men had been as brave as Julius Caesar, we should never have heard of Scotland. Fortunately, however, there was no mistaking "the brave band of Highlanders," with their plaids and broadswords.

The assault on San Sebastian called forth stronger proofs of bravery than almost any enterprise of the Peninsular campaigns. On that occasion there was three times the number of Scotch officers and soldiers than there was at Aroyos de Molino, where the Gordon Highlanders were engaged, and where a detachment of the French Army was surprised and dispersed. This was a mere skirmish in comparison to the assault on San Sebastian, in which Scotland was never mentioned; while the other affair, with men distinguished by a particular garb, is introduced into the ballads of the country, and the tune "Hey, Johnnie Cope" has gained additional celebrity by being played that morning, when the pipers struck up the advance in quick time to the attack.

Few regiments were more purely Scotch than the "Greys," when the invincible charges made by them at Waterloo called forth the admiration of Bonaparte, who exclaimed—"Qu'ils sont terribles ces chevaux gris." He knew not of what country they were, but when he saw the Gordon Highlanders, in their kilts and bonnets, charge his solid columns, he at once discovered their country, and, while they contributed so much to blast his earthly glory, he could not suppress his admiration of "Les braves Ecosais."—(General Stewart).

In short, if there were no Highland uniform, we would hear as little of the military character of Scotland as we do of the naval exploits. There might be, as there always are, individual instances of distinguished merit, but there would be no national character.

And O ! loved warriors of the minstrel land,
Yonder your bonnets nod, your tartans wave—
The rugged form may mark the mountain band,
And harsher features and a mien more grave;
But ne'er in battlefield throbbed heart so brave
As that which beats beneath the Scottish plaid.
And when the pibroch bids the battle rave,
And level for the charge your arms are laid,
Where lives the desperate foe that for such onset staid.
—Scott.

We say, therefore, that Lowlanders as well as Highlanders should interest themselves in a dress so much connected with the honour of their country—a dress whose checks has so often been dyed with the blood of its devoted wearer on many a hard fought field; and we would conclude in the words of John Campbell, Leadaig :—

Is toigh leam a' Gliaidhealtachd, 's toigh leam gach gleann,
Gacli eas agus coire an duthaich nam beann;
Is toigh leam Ila gillean 'nan eideadh glan iir
A's boineid Ghlinn-Garaidh rnu'n camagan dluth.
Is toigh leam an deise o 'mullach gu 'bonn—
Am breacan, an t-osan, an sporan's an lann ;
Cs toigh leam iad sgeadaicht' an eideadh an tir—
Ach's suarach an deise seach seasmhachd an cridh'.

And Finally...

Some more stories from The Book of Scottish Anecdote...

This week I provide a few stories of Hawkie, a famous beggar...

THE MACNABS

Curiosity, says Saussure, led me to pay a visit to the blacksmith Macnab, to see the MSS. of the Poems of Ossian, which, according to report, were long possessed by his family. I saw the old man, but not the manuscripts; they had long ago been sent to Edinburgh, for the use of the members of the Highland Society. He showed me the ancient armour of his ancestors, for he gloried in a long succession of them, all blacksmiths like himself. This family inhabited the same cottage upwards of four hundred years. In the ages of feudalism, they handled successively the hammer and the sword. One of the ancestors of Macnab had been employed in building the castle of Kilchurn, and many of them, no doubt, contributed to defend it against the attacks of the enemy's clans. What appalling vicissitudes in human affairs. The castle of that powerful lord, of that once formidable chief, is now deserted and in ruins; whilst the hut of the humble vassal still exists, and has never changed its masters. This long succession from father to son, who have followed without interruption the same profession, and in the same place, is considered as a high mark of respectability. If they cannot boast, as other men in a more exalted sphere, of famous names, and of illustrious warriors among their ancestors, it is to be presumed that integrity, irreproachable conduct, and hereditary adherence to the virtues and duties of an obscure state, have insured to subsequent generations the protection of their chiefs and the laws. These examples of ancient families in an inferior rank of life, are by no means rare among the Highlanders. Whilst I was walking in the park of Inveraray, I met a Highlander, who, with the natural curiosity of these people, came to ask me what country I belonged to, and whither I was going? After satisfying him, I put the same questions to him; he replied- "I am going to that cottage which you see there between those trees high above on the hill: we have lived in it during the three hundred years that we have been vassals of the Duke of Argyle."

A MAN OF HONOUR

The Hon. James Murray, was appointed governor of Minorca in the year 1774, and in his defence of Fort St Philip in 1781 and 1782, he displayed the most heroic traits of fidelity and valour. The fort having been for some time closely besieged by the combined forces of France and Spain, under the Duke de erillon, the most strenuous efforts were made to obtain possession of it, but the assailants being repulsed in all their attacks, the duke, despairing of success, took the opportunity of communication relative to an exchange of prisoners, to offer General Murray one million of money, with a foreign peerage, to surrender the place. Geneml Murray immediately notified this disgraceful proposal in the orders to the garrison, and sent the fllowing indignant letter to the commander of the allies:-

"Fort 5t Philip,
16th October, 1781.

"When your brave ancestor was desired by his sovereign to assassinate the Duke de Guise, he returned the answer which you should have done, where you were charged to assassinate the character of a man whose birth as illustrious as your own, or that of the Duke de Guise. I can have no further communication with you but in arms. If you have any humanity, pray send clothing for your unfortunate prisoners in my possession. Leave it at a distance to be taken up for them, because I will admit of no contact for the future, but such is hostile to the most inveterate degree.

To this the Duke replied:-

"Your letter restores each of us to our places; It confirms me in the high opinion I have always had of you. I accept your last proposal with pleasure."

The garrison, reduced to great extremities, three-fourths of the men being cut off by the scurvy, was at length compelled to capitulate, and they marched out with all the honours of war, declaring that the surrender was made to God alone.

A WAR-LOVING BISHOP

David de Moravia, bishop of Moray, and founder of the Scots College at Paris, preached to the people of his diocese, "That in the peril of his soul he esteemed it equally meritorious to rise in arms against the King of England, in the cause of Bruce, as to engage in a crusade for the recovery of the Holy Land from the Saracens."

ROUGH-FOOTED SCOTS

The brogue of the Highlanders was made of half dried leather, with holes to admit and let out the water; for walking the moors dry-shod was a matter altogether out of the question. The ancient buskin was still ruder, being made of the undressed deer hide, with the hair outwards, a circumstance which procured the Highlanders the well-known epithet of Red-shanks. The process is very accurately described by one Eldar (himself a Highlander), in the project for a union between England and Scotland, addressed to Henry VIII. "We go a hunting, and after that we have slain red-deer we flay off the skin by and by, and setting of our barefoot on the inside thereof, for want of cunning shoemakers, by your grace's pardon, we play the cobblers, compassing and measuring so much thereof as shall reach up to our ankles, pricking the upper part thereof with holes, that the water may repass where it enters, and stretching it up with a strong thong of the same above our said ankles. So, and please your noble grace, we make our shoes. Therefore, we using such manner of shoes, the rough hairy side outwards, in your grace's dominions of England, we be called "Rough-footed Scots."

That's it for this week and hope you all enjoy your weekend and have a great Thanksgiving.

Alastair