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CLUNY MACPHERSON AT CLUNY CASTLE.

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HIGH up in Badenoch, nine miles from Kingussie, on a slight eminence on the right of the road leading to Fort-William, stands Cluny Castle, the residence of Cluny Macpherson of Cluny, Chief of Clan Chattan. It is a plain but substantial building, commanding a magnificent prospect. The situation and its surroundings are just such as a great Highland Chief would be expected to choose for his home—retired, yet, for the district, central; the country subdued, open, and fertile in the immediate vicinity; but in the distance, on all sides, bold, majestic, grand, the Grampian range and the Cairngorms standing out in their magnificent “snow-capped towers,” and forming a prominent and awe-inspiring scene. The furnishings—warlike instruments, illustrative of the past: targets, battle-axes, claymores, swords, dirks, guns, pistols, old armour, banners, stag and rams’ heads, wild cats, swans, foreign heads and birds, and numberless other trophies of the battle and the chase—old relics and curiosities—evidence the taste of its occupant and the warlike predilections of the old cavalier race from which he sprang. The old Chief himself—a well-knit, erect, sturdy Highlander, about the middle height, dressed in full Highland costume—salutes you in the Gaelic vernacular of his ancestors, which he speaks with purity and ease. He begins to show signs of advancing years, but still looking twenty years younger than he really is. The natural affability and courteous ease of manner characteristic of him, in spite of an unconscious air of dignity of countenance and of motion, at once puts his visitor at perfect ease, who soon finds himself discoursing on old Highland feuds and clan battles which naturally lead up to the doings and history of the Risings of the Fifteen and the Forty-five, in which his ancestors had taken such a prominent but unfortunate part.

The present Chief, Cluny Macpherson of Cluny, is one of the few genuine remaining links that connect the “good old days” of the patriarchal chiefs, who cherished and were proud of their people, and the

present, when generally the lairds look upon the ancient inhabitants of the soil much the same way as a cattle-dealer looks upon his herd—to make the most of them. The House of Cluny has a history and a genuine respect among the Highlanders of which he may well be, and is, justly proud; for the family have always taken a distinguished share in everything calculated to advance the interests of the country. The origin of the House of Macpherson is lost in dim antiquity. By the genealogy known as the “MS. of 1450”—the oldest Gaelic genealogy in existence—we find that Cluny is descended from “Muirich, or Murdoch, son of Swen, son of Heth, son of Nachtan, son of Gillichattan, from whom came the Clan Chattan.”

There has been a long and warm controversy between the Chiefs of Mackintosh and the Chiefs of Macpherson, and others interested in them, regarding the chiefship of the great Clan Chattan, with the result that it is allowed by all disinterested parties that Cluny is undoubtedly the chief and male heir of that powerful and numerous Clan, while the Mackintoshes were for centuries its actual leaders or “Captains,” in virtue of the marriage of Angus Mackintosh, sixth chief of that Ilk, with Eva, daughter and only child of Dugall Dall, the undoubted and acknowledged Chief of Clan Chattan in his day. There are various instances in Highland history where the husband of the heiress of the chief became the leader or “Captain” of the clan, but we are not acquainted with a single instance where the chiefship descended through a female.

Murdoch above-named, from whom the Macphersons derive the patronimic of MacMhuirich, became chief in 1153. On the death of Dugall Dall the representation of the family devolved upon his cousin and male heir, Kenneth, eldest son of Ewen Bàn, Murdoch's second son. Kenneth's son, Duncan Macpherson of Cluny, fought with Bruce, at the head of his Clan, at the battle of Bannockburn. He was granted a commission to expel the Comyns from Badenoch, and on their forfeiture, as a reward for his services, obtained a grant of their lands in the district, and was allowed to add a hand holding a dagger to his armorial bearings. Duncan's grandson, Donald Mòr, was chief in 1386, when a battle was fought at Invernahavon between the Clan Chattan and the Camerons, on which occasion a dispute arose as to the precedence of the respective chiefs of the principal families of Macpherson and Davidson, Cluny and his followers claiming the right wing, as the eldest branch. Mackintosh in an evil hour decided in favour of the Davidsons, when Cluny and all the Macphersons, highly indignant, withdrew from the field. The Clan Chattan was defeated, many of the Mackintoshes and nearly all the Davidsons having been killed in the conflict. Cluny, seeing this, though greatly offended, forgot his wounded pride and next day attacked the Camerons, completely routed them, and slew a great many of their number, including their commander; and it is generally believed that this quarrel was the original cause of the celebrated combat between the two Clans on the Inch of Perth so graphically described by Sir Walter Scott in the “Fair Maid of Perth.”

The Macphersons adhered to the unfortunate Queen Mary throughout her disastrous reign; supported Charles I., and suffered much for their attachment to him; and, ever after, they continued, true as the dial to

the sun, unwavering and staunch Royalists, always supporting the Stuarts in whose interest Cluny took a prominent part in the '15.

In 1722 the chiefship devolved on Lachlan Macpherson of Nuide, whose eldest son, Ewen, was chief and became celebrated as a follower of Prince Charlie in 1745. In that year he was appointed to a company in Lord Loudon's Highlanders, on the side of the Government, and had taken the oaths; but on the arrival of Prince Charles, Cluny threw up his commission, and with six hundred Macphersons joined the Prince after his victory at Prestonpans. In the retreat from Derby the Clan greatly distinguished themselves, especially by their indomitable gallantry in the skirmish with the Government troops at Clifton. Lord George Murray commanded on the occasion, with Cluny at his side, at the head of the Macphersons, and when, receiving the fire of the Dragoons full in the face, and the balls whizzing about their ears, Cluny exclaimed, "What the devil is this?" at the same moment crying out "Claymore," and rushing, sword in hand, down to the bottom ditch of the enclosure, leading his men, and clearing the hedges as they went, they fell upon the King's troops, killing many of them and compelling the rest to fly for their lives. The Macphersons, commanded by their brave chief, formed part of the first line at the battle of Falkirk, but they arrived too late for the battle of Culloden—just after the Prince had fled from the field.

During the subsequent devastations and cruelties committed by the King's troops, Cluny Castle was burnt to the ground, when the other members of the family had to take shelter in a kiln in the neighbourhood,

For some time after this Cluny lived in hiding with Lochiel, in a retreat at Benalder, on his own property, near Rannoch. Wishing to see the Prince, he some time after this set out for Achnacarry, where he supposed him to be, and afterwards returned to Benalder, where he found His Royal Highness in a miserable hovel with Lochiel. On entering the hut Cluny was in the act of kneeling, when the Prince graciously prevented him, and kissed him, saying, "I am sorry, Cluny, you and your regiment were not at Culloden; I did not hear till very lately that you were so near us that day." They spent two nights together, and Cluny afterwards took the Prince to a more secure hiding-place, known as the Cage, which he had suitably fitted up for him, and where he remained concealed for several weeks, until the French frigate arrived, in which he ultimately made his escape to France.

The Government were so determined to capture Cluny, that they offered a reward of one thousand guineas and a company in one of the regiments of the line to any one who would bring him in, dead or alive; but the same faithful and loyal spirit which induced the Highlanders not to betray their Prince for thirty thousand pounds protected Cluny among his own followers, in spite of every attempt made to capture him. Every effort was made, and all imaginable means used for seven years, to discover his whereabouts, but all without avail. The Government now determined upon a final effort, and commissioned Sir Hector Munro, specially qualified for such a post, as he afterwards fully proved by his many desperate but fruitless efforts for two years to capture the fugitive. Munro was himself a Highlander, and knew the language of the people. He placed a detachment in almost every hamlet in the parishes of Laggan and Kingussie, and was

often, by various stratagems and sudden surprises, within an ace of being successful. Cluny's abilities, however, and the devoted attachment of his Clan, defied the whole power of Government and Sir Hector Munro. No sooner was an order issued, or any movement made by the troops, than intimation was made to the fugitive. He had many hairbreadth escapes, in which he exhibited resource and boldness of no mean order. Though every gentleman in the country knew his various haunts, and that he was occasionally the guest of his tenants, he never allowed more than one family at a time to know his place of concealment; and if by accident he was observed by any person, he at once removed to another. There were only four persons who knew where he could be found on all occasions, of whom one, James Macpherson, was his piper. These four always kept him supplied with food and other necessaries, and it was to one or other of them that any of his friends, even his wife, had to apply when they had anything in particular to communicate or send to him.

The following incident illustrates his great coolness and presence of mind in extreme danger:—After the burning of the castle, the family resided in a small cottage. On one occasion the Chief was on a visit, when the house was suddenly surrounded by the Government troops, commanded by Munro, who received such correct information, and managed the surprise on this occasion with such secrecy, that there was scarcely any possibility of escape. But Cluny's presence of mind stood him well, and saved him in this perilous emergency. Though he found himself on the brink of destruction, and about to fall into the clutches of his persecutors, in whose hands a certain and ignominious death awaited him, he maintained his coolness—deliberately stepped into the kitchen, and instantly changed clothes with one of his own men servants, walked outside to meet the officer in command as he marched up to the door, and, without the slightest hesitation or apparent concern, held the stirrup while the officer dismounted, walked the horse about while he searched the house, and on his return again held the stirrup while Munro mounted. The officer asked him if he knew where Cluny was? and received for answer, "I do not; and if I did I would not tell *you*." "Indeed, I believe you would not," returned the other. "You are a good fellow; here's a shilling for you."

Another noteworthy instance, out of many marvellous such, deserves to be told:—On one occasion as the soldiers were returning home from a fruitless search for Cluny, they met a young lad carrying what turned out on investigation to be a savoury dinner of venison; and correctly surmising that the dish was intended for the fugitive chief, they threatened the boy with instant death if he did not at once conduct them to his hiding-place. The boy led them over the hills for several miles, and their rigour towards him having somewhat abated by the exertion, following him in a rough, long, and dreary mountain walk, he began to gather a little more courage, and asked several curious questions regarding their arms and accoutrements, especially expressing great wonder at the weapon carried by the drummer. In broken English he asked him what kind of animal he carried inside such a large cage. In reply the drummer beat a tattoo, which, to all appearance, greatly delighted the Highlander; so much so, that he offered the drummer the dinner he was still carrying if he would

allow him to handle the wonderful instrument. The drummer, quite innocent of the *ruse*, slipped the belts round the boy's neck, who no sooner got possession of it, than he seized the drumsticks, and applied them with such vigour and effect, that the hills, far and near, echoed with the sound. They were soon almost in the immediate vicinity of the cave in which Cluny was in concealment. He heard the sound of the drum, as his faithful clansman had anticipated, thought the troops were close upon him, and hurriedly made his escape. The soldiers, led by the lad, were soon at the mouth of the cave, only to find it empty. They were naturally much chagrined and disappointed after such a long and difficult journey; but no suspicion fell on the boy, for in his innocent appearance there was nothing to suggest the clever device by which he had saved his master.

During the summer months he chose caves and hiding-places far up in the mountains, while in the winter he occupied artificial caves nearer home, one of which was made under the floor of a clansman's house at Ralia; another at Biallidmore, under the floor of a sheep-cot, belonging to a special confidant; but it was at Nessintully he found the greatest comfort, quietness, and security, until this place of concealment was accidentally discovered by a worthless fellow, who divulged the secret, after which the unfortunate chief never again occupied it. This cave was constructed in a most unlikely place, in the wood, by James Dubh Leslie and his brother Peter, working at it only during the night; carefully carrying the soil in sacks, and depositing it at a considerable distance in the river Spey. The inside was lined with boards, the roof covered with tanned cow-hides, over which was placed a thin layer of gravel, covered over on the level surface with green sods. Inside was placed a comfortable bed, a table, two chairs, and a small press or cupboard, while a pane of glass was placed in an out-of-the-way corner to admit the light—the whole so ingeniously constructed as to make discovery almost impossible. It was in this manner that the famous Cluny of the Forty-five spent the last ten years of his eventful life. In 1755 he effected his escape to France, and died at Dunkirk in the following year.

Duncan, his son and successor, was born in 1750, in the kiln already mentioned, in which his mother, a daughter of Simon Lord Lovat, found shelter after the destruction of the castle. Being only six years of age when his father died, his uncle, Major Macpherson of the 78th Highlanders, acted as his guardian during his minority.

In 1793 he received back the forfeited estates; entered the army; afterwards became Lieutenant-Colonel of the 3d Foot Guards; and, on the 12th of June 1796, married Catherine, youngest daughter of Sir Ewen Cameron of Fassifern, Baronet. On the 1st of August 1817, he was succeeded by his eldest son, Ewen Macpherson, the present Chief of Clan Chattan—twenty-third chief from MacGillichattain Mòr—who has now occupied that honourable position for the long period of sixty-one years. He was born on the 24th April 1804, and is therefore in the 74th year of his age, but still active and vigorous, looking, in his Highland dress, the very picture and embodiment of the really genuine and warm-hearted Highland Chief and gentleman he is universally admitted to be. He is well up in the history of his family, full of Highland traditions

and folklore, and delights his visitor by relating such reminiscences as are here presented to the reader. For several years he served in the 42d Highlanders—the Black Watch—of which his eldest son and heir, Duncan Macpherson, younger of Cluny, is the present Colonel; also in the First Royal Scots. He is Lieutenant-Colonel of the Inverness-shire Highland Rifle Volunteers, Deputy-Lieutenant and Magistrate of the County, Permanent Steward of the Northern Meetings, Governor of the Caledonian Bank, Director of the Highland Railway; and he takes a lively and intelligent interest in all questions affecting the Highlands—agriculture, and in the breeding of pure Highland cattle and blackfaced sheep, for both of which he obtained prizes at the Highland Society's Shows. In appreciation of his interest in everything Celtic, his kindness to his tenants, his encouragement of the Gaelic language in the wide district over which his influence extends, the Gaelic Society of Inverness in 1871 elected him their first Chief, and re-elected him for a second year. He more than once presided at their annual festivals, and is a life member of the Society. The town of Inverness in 1874 presented him with the freedom of the burgh, as a distinguished Highland Chief, one of the best landlords in the Highlands, and a good neighbour; while, at the same time, a similar honour was conferred on his gallant son, on his return from Ashantee, for his distinguished bravery while serving as senior Major, and in actual command of the famous Black Watch at the battle of Amoaful, where he was severely wounded. Cluny is a Presbyterian in religion, takes a deep interest in the Free Church, of which he is a member, and uses his influence in the School Boards of his district in favour of teaching Gaelic in the schools. He is, in short, a model chief, of whom, unfortunately, few are now to be found in the Highlands.

He, as befits the Chief of Clan Chattan, keeps up many of the ancient customs of the Highlands, encourages all the manly sports—shinty and shooting matches, tossing the caber, putting the stone—music (especially bagpipe music), and Highland dancing; and never sits at table without having his piper, according to the good old custom, playing on the great Highland bagpipes, and every morning the inmates are aroused by the piper marching round the Castle from seven to eight playing "Hey, Johnny Cope, are ye wakin' yet?" an appropriate tune, in more ways than one; for it was within two miles of Cluny Castle that Sir John Cope commenced his famous retreat in 1745. Cluny naturally delights and takes great pride in his large and unique collection of ancient relics and curiosities, many of which have an interesting connection and many touching associations with the warlike annals of his race; while others—trophies of the forest and the chase—indicate the sporting proclivities which were in the past associated with the warlike and cavalier spirit of the gentlemen of Clan Chattan. Here is the target made of wood in France for Prince Charlie, and worn by him at the battle of Culloden, covered with leather, studded with silver ornaments, and richly chased. It is surrounded in the hall by seven basket-hilted swords used by the Frasers in 1745. *There* is the shirt frill of lace left by the Prince at Fassifern the morning after raising his standard at Glenfinnan. Yonder are shirt studs and silver mountings. Here is the old MS. in the charter chest with Prince Charlie's autograph; and yonder, carefully treasured, are, perhaps the most interesting of all,

the Prince's autograph letter to Cluny, dated 18th September 1746, and the bronze plate for engraving notes, or paper money, which were never issued, found by a shepherd a few years ago at the west end of Loch Laggan, where it was lost by one of the Prince's followers while on their way to the cave at Loch Ericht.

The following is Prince Charlie's autograph letter :—" Macpherson of Cluny,—As we are sensible of your and Clan's fidelity and integrity to us during our adventures in Scotland and England in the years 1745 and 1746 in recovering our just rights from the Elector of Hanover, by which you have sustained very great losses, both in your interest and person, I therefore promise, when it shall please God to put it in my power, to make a grateful return suitable to your sufferings."

(Signed) CHARLES, P. R.

Is it to be wondered at, looking at these and the many other relics of the same description, and connected as they are with the same unfortunate period of our country's history, that the highly interesting historical incidents connected with the Fifteen and the Forty-five, to which reference has been already made, should have become the subject of mixed reflections and conversation !

The " Black Chanter " of Clan-Chattan—which has a peculiar interest for the family, and is highly prized by its possessor—is exhibited and handled with great care, for the prosperity of the House of Cluny is supposed to depend upon its possession. Of the many peculiar traditions related regarding it, one is—that its original fell from heaven during the famous Clan battle between the Macphersons and the Davidsons on the Inch of Perth ; and that, being made of crystal, it was broken by the fall, when this one was made in *fac simile*. Another tradition has it, that this is the genuine original, and that the cracks in it were occasioned by its violent contact with the ground. The belief that it brings prosperity to the family, so long as it remains in their possession, was considerably strengthened by the fact that it was carried away in the eighteenth century—which might be called the black century for the House of Cluny—by the Laird of Grant, but was many years afterwards restored to its original possessors by one of his descendants. James Logan says regarding the " Feadan Dubh," that on a certain occasion when the Clan Grant were sorely disheartened, in consequence of the defeat of a body of them by three of the brave Macdonalds of Glencoe, " to re-animate them the chief sent to Cluny for the loan of the Feadan Dubh, the notes of which could infallibly rouse every latent spark of valour. Cluny is said to have lent it without hesitation, saying his men stood in no need of it. How long it remained with them at this time does not appear ; but after it had been restored, the Grants again received it, and it remained with them until 1822, when Grant of Glenmorrison presented it to Ewen Macpherson, Esq. of Cluny, the present worthy chief. . . . The Macphersons assuredly, whether in consequence of the fortunate talisman or their own bravery, have never been in a battle which was lost, at least where their chief was present. Before the battle of Culloden, an old witch, or second seer, told the Duke of Cumberland that if he waited until the bratach uaine, or green banner, came up, he would be defeated." Among the various specimens of ancient weapons in the castle there are no less

than twenty-four very fine claymores, and several swords, among which are not a few Ferraras. Here is the "Charmed Sword," worn by the present Colonel of the Black Watch during the Indian Mutiny, so-called from the tradition that no one using it was ever killed in an engagement. *There* are two, taken respectively by Cluny and an ancestor of Macpherson of Biallid, from their adversaries at Penrith; and yonder is a weapon not much less interesting—the claymore worn by the present chief himself while serving in the Black Watch, the 42d Royal Highlanders. Here, carefully treasured, is a piece of the colours of the same celebrated regiment carried at Waterloo; of another, carried in the Crimea and in the Indian Mutiny; as also a piece of the colours of the 93d Sutherland Highlanders—of which Cluny's second son, Ewen, is Major—carried at Balaclava. Here is the brass candlestick used by Cluny of the Forty-five, and carried about by him to his various places of concealment; also, the snuff-mull, bound with an iron hoop, made and fixed on by himself—his constant companion during those eventful years. These, with numberless other relics of the past—trophies of the chase at home and in foreign lands—the position of the Castle and its natural surroundings, impress the visitor with the complete propriety of the place and its contents as a suitable and appropriate home for the courteous, spirited, and genuine Highlander, and, withal, proud chief who lives in it—whose greatest delight in his old age is to glance at, and ruminate on the eventful history of the past through his warlike and sporting surroundings; at the same time priding himself not a little, and not without good cause, upon his proved loyalty to his sovereign Queen Victoria, having personally served her in the line and the reserve, and furnished her army with three gallant sons—a colonel, a major, and a captain—than whom there are no braver in Her Majesty's Service.

A. M.

TO CONTRIBUTORS.—Simon Mackenzie, Penola, Australia—Copy of notice of the "Ministear Laidir," from Statistical Account, received with thanks; but we had a Memoir prepared, in which the particulars are given at greater length, which will appear in our next; also, "Notes on Celtic Philology," by Hector Maclean, Islay; and the first of a series of papers on "Ian MacCodrum," the Hebridean Bard.

THE HISTORY OF THE CLAN MACKENZIE.—We may answer several enquirers at once by saying that it is our intention to publish the "History of the Clan Mackenzie" with several important additions, and valuable original documents, in book form, if a sufficient number of subscribers are forthcoming to insure us against loss. It will form a bulky volume of at least from 400 to 500 pages, demy octavo.