

# THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS—THEIR SOCIAL AND LITERARY HISTORY—1775-1832.

[BY PROVOST MACANDREW.]

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AT the commencement of the period of which we are treating, the Highlands had entered on a state of social and economic change. Influences, which had long been at work in other parts of the country, and had gradually produced their results there, were all at once brought to bear on the Highlands, and were producing a dissolution of the old bonds of society. The defeat of the last rebellion resulted in the effective disarmament of the clans, the deprivation of the chiefs and landlords of all judicial and territorial power over their tenants and the residents on their lands, and in the making effectual and patent all over the Highlands the power of the Central Government, and the authority of the law of the land administered by judges appointed by the Crown. The law did not attempt to interfere with that feeling of kinship, of common origin, and of tribal loyalty, which, apart from territorial connection, bound the chief and the clan together. It had never recognised this tie, and, in the case of the Dunmaglass succession, it was not very long ago declared, on the highest judicial authority, and after careful and antiquarian investigation, that the law knew of no such corporation or body as a clan, could not define it, and could not, therefore, give effect to a provision in a deed which confined the succession to an estate to the members of Clan Chattan. But, by the opening up of the country, and the visible exhibition of the powers of the Central Government, in the shape of garrisons all over the country, it brought home, to chief and clansman alike, that the most powerful clans could effect nothing, either against the Government or against hostile clans, and that the clan tie had passed from a powerful fact, which enabled a few gentlemen, with a total revenue of about £6000—for that was the rental of the estates which passed under the charge of the Commissioners on forfeited estates after the rebellion—to



raise a powerful army, and almost to upset the Government of Great Britain, into a sentiment which, however pleasing, could produce no practical result. The chief had thus practically revealed and brought home to him the fact that he was, in the eye of the law, at least, but the owner of the soil, but, also, that he was the absolute owner, with no power over his tenants but the power to exact rent or to remove them; while, to the clansman, it was equally brought home that he had no right to the land on which he and his ancestors had resided from time immemorial, but in respect of the rent which he paid—a rent which he soon practically found could be increased at the will of the landlord, unless when there was the protection of a lease, and, against the raising of which, the clansman had no remedy but to relinquish his possession. The military leader, by divine right, of a tribe of soldiers, every man of whom went every day armed and wearing the tartan and badges of his tribe, was transformed into a mere landlord entitled to exact rent, and the armed clansman was transformed into a mere cultivator or herdsman, forbidden to wear arms or to wear the distinctive tartan of his tribe.

Here was a change of relations, calculated to produce great social results; but, naturally, these results took some time to manifest themselves. The chiefs who had actually called out their clans and led them in the Forty-Five, and the clansmen who had actually fought under the banners, could not, all at once, cast behind them the old feelings which bound them together, or realise all at once that “the good old times had passed away”; and, when the estates were not forfeited, matters continued for a time to go on as before. On the forfeited estates, too, the management was lenient; there was no attempt whatever to remove possessors; on the contrary, leases of forty years were, as a rule, granted to the existing possessors, and rents were so leniently dealt with that, in some cases, the tenants were able to send the old rents to the exiled chiefs, as well as to discharge their obligations to the Government. Up till the beginning of the time of which we are treating, therefore, there was little actual change in the possession of land or in the social relations of the people. The mould in which the social system had been cast, and which had hitherto protected it, was removed, and the struc-



ture, deprived of its protection, was left to the influence of causes intended and calculated to break it up, but which were now only beginning to show their effects. Let us endeavour to realise, then, what this system was.

We find, then, all over the Highlands at this time, a social system representing the very earliest state of settled society. The whole population was dependent on the land, on its cultivation, and on the pasturage on it of domesticated animals. The land was possessed in property either by the chiefs of clans or by smaller proprietors who had, in various ways, of which we cannot here treat, acquired charter rights to portions of the original tribe lands, and who, although holding these lands under the Crown or under some intermediate feudal superior, to whom they owed feudal service up to the extinction of such services, were yet members of the clan to which they belonged by descent, and had, invariably, and often despite their feudal superiors, followed their chiefs. These proprietors were resident on their estates, parts of which they held in their own hands, and cultivated, or managed the cattle on them, by their own servants. Next in social rank to these came the tacksmen, as they were called, who held considerable tracts of land for payment of rents in money and kind. These were the gentlemen of the clan; they held their possessions from father to son, and were often men of great power and influence—sometimes leaders of distinct septs. Next to them came the smaller tenants, holding, sometimes, and perhaps principally, of the tacksmen as sub-tenants, and sometimes direct of the proprietor. These were of various degrees, and, as a rule, they lived in small communities, holding the arable land in run-rig and dividing it every year, and possessing the pasture attached to the holding in common; and, beneath these, were cottars, who held houses and small patches of land from the landlords, the tacksmen, or the sub-tenants, and paid for these almost entirely in services, and the servants, or scallags, who also received the great part of their remuneration in the possession of a house, a small piece of land—which they were allowed one day in the week to till—and in food. And, besides all these, there was a class who cultivated pieces of land, receiving the seed from the landlord or tacksman, and receiving as their remuneration a certain portion of the produce,



or who leased cattle, giving for the use of them a return of so much butter and cheese.

The agriculture of this time was rude and primitive. Each farm, whether held by the landlord, the tacksman, or the community of small tenants, was divided into infield and outfield land, green pasture, and hill pasture, and meadow. The arable land, green pasture and meadow, was divided from the hill by a fence called the head dyke. The infield land was cultivated continuously, and the whole manure made on the holding was applied to it. There was no rotation of crops, for turnips were not yet in use, and potatoes were only just coming into use ; and, if the infield land was rested at all, it was rested in bare fallow. The outfield land was broke up occasionally, and cropped as long as it yielded a return for the seed, and, when it would no longer do so, it was allowed to rest in grass until it had regained sufficient fertility to bear another series of crops—the meadow lay in patches interspersed among the arable land, and bare a scanty crop of hay. On the green pasture within the head dyke, the milk cows were grazed, and in the hill pasture beyond the houses yeld cattle, sheep, and goats were grazed in early Summer and Autumn. The old wooden plough was in general use on the larger farms, worked by a number of horses, yoked one in front of another ; but on small patches of land, and among the smaller tenants, the *cas-crom*, or hand plough, which is still in common use in the West and in the Islands, was the principal instrument of agriculture. Water mills had long been in use, but the quern, or hand mill was still in general use, and corn, instead of being threshed out and dried in a kiln before being ground, was still very commonly *graddaned*, that is, burnt out of the husk either by burning the straw and ears together, or burning the ears alone, and thus separating the corn and drying it by one operation, tedious, no doubt, if only the husks were burned, and wasteful if the straw also was burned. This was a system of agriculture primitive and rude enough, but it must be borne in mind that the only object was to produce enough grain for domestic use, and that fifty or sixty years earlier the description, with the exception of the quern and the process of *graddaning*, would apply equally to the South of Scotland.

The great wealth of the community consisted in cattle ; sheep



and goats were kept, the former for their wool for domestic use and for their mutton ; the goats for their flesh and milk ; but cattle were the only article of commerce, and the care of these was the principal occupation of life. The stock of cattle on a good farm in Skye is described as consisting of 50 cows, 40 yearlings or stirks, 35 heifers, two years old, 30 heifers, three years old, and 20 heifers fit for breeding ; and from this stock Pennant says the owner could sell only 20 cows at 45s. each, and make butter and cheese enough for domestic use, but none to sell—the cows not yielding more than three English quarts at a meal. But, besides this stock, there would be sheep and goats, and Pennant must have been misinformed as to the number sold ; for, besides old cows, there must have been oxen to sell at some age or other. The rent of such a farm, he says, was formerly sixteen pounds, but, at the time he wrote, it had been raised to fifty pounds. And, in considering the quantity of dairy produce, we must keep in mind that on such a farm 20 servants were employed, and these and their families had to be fed, and one considerable element in their food was milk in various forms.

Beyond the hill pasture attached to each farm, and which did not usually exceed a few hundred acres, there extended the great mountain ranges, the bogs, and high glens. These were either wastes, or appropriated by the King, the Chiefs, and the great nobles as hunting grounds—for there are some great tracts, such as the forests of Mar and of Athole, the Black Mount, Ben-Alder, and others, which have been appropriated to sport from the earliest times of which we have any record—but when they were not so appropriated, these wastes were vast commons, over which the people of whole communities grazed in common, and cut turf and peats. To these wastes, in the Summer, the whole community migrated with the cattle, and remained there while the grass lasted. This annual migration was one of the most beautiful and joyous features of that old times. The people went out in a procession with their cattle and other domestic animals, headed by pipers. They lived in temporary huts of turf and branches, moving as the necessities of the stock required, and leading a free and joyous life. The men occupied in the care of the stock, and in fishing and shooting to help to provide themselves with food ; the



women in the work of the dairy, in knitting and spinning, and the whole joining in the evening in song and dance.

The cattle were usually disposed of in the Autumn, and were purchased by drovers, and driven by them in herds to the South of Scotland and England, and sold to grazers. The occupation of a drover was not then considered beneath a gentleman of good family, or even of estate. In an older time, we know that Rob Roy began life as a drover, and I have come across various pieces of evidence that gentlemen of estate often engaged in the occupation of purchasing cattle and taking them to the Southern markets. Sometimes the factor on large and remote estates became the purchaser of the cattle of the tenantry, and in some cases, no doubt, insisted on getting them at very low prices, but this was rare. As a rule, these sales and purchases were conducted with good feeling and confidence on both sides. The cattle were taken generally by the same person—the drover of the district—for a course of years, no price being fixed at the time of delivery, the understanding being that the price to be paid was to be according to the markets; and, with the prices paid or the bills granted by the drovers, rents and all other pecuniary obligations were discharged.

Of money, in the shape of coin or bank notes, there was very little indeed in the country. Dr. Johnson and Boswell, during their famous tour in the Hebrides, had great difficulty in getting a £30 bill on Edinburgh cashed; and, in the remote parts, there were no shops, and for supplies of all foreign productions the natives were dependant on pedlars, or, if they lived on the coast, on passing vessels and on wrecks.



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THERE was a common idea in the Lowlands and in England at this time that our ancestors were a rude and barbarous, and even savage people, but no idea could be more mistaken. The better classes lived in great comfort; they had, as a rule, houses of two stories, and if they wanted some of the appliances and conveniences of life which were to be obtained in cities and more populous places, their mode of life was neither rude nor inelegant, while in culture and refinement of manners the Highland gentleman was certainly the equal of his southern neighbour. The domestic economy was of course suited to the outward circumstances; the farm supplied, as Mrs. Grant of Laggan says, all that was absolutely necessary for life. For the table it gave beef and mutton, meal and milk. It gave wool and flax, which were spun in the household, and woven into cloth, blankets, and linen by country weavers; the females made their own clothes, and those of the men were made by itinerant tailors, who went about from house to house, remaining at each place as long as there was work, and acting as the news-carriers and sometimes as the bards and story-tellers of the district. The life, too, was social. Hospitality was unbounded; every house was open to every comer, and intercourse was enjoyed, in the most agreeable of all ways, by long visits at each other's houses; and in hall, bothie, and kitchen the song, and dance, and story were the nightly amusement of rich and poor. Boswell was puzzled as to how the numbers which assembled in the houses, where he and his great friend visited, could be accommodated. He guessed that it was managed by separating husband and wife, and accommodating a number of ladies in one room, and a number of gentlemen in another; he had not apparently been initiated into the mystery of the shake-down, or learned that Highland gentlemen in a pinch did not despise the shelter of a barn.



In the matter of culture and education, the Highland gentlemen of this time certainly stood as well as men of the same rank in any other part of the country. They had generally received a classical education, and there were many who had served in foreign armies. In the pages of Boswell we have abundant evidence that, wherever he went, he and Dr. Johnson found intelligent ladies and gentlemen to converse with, and the great Doctor himself tells us that he was in no house where he did not find books, and generally in more than one language. The first night which he and Boswell passed in the Wilds was at an inn at Aonach, in Glenmoriston, and here they found several books of a class which would not now be found in a country inn. The landlord was an intelligent man, who was annoyed at their expressions of surprise at their finding him in possession of books, and who had learned his grammar, and, as the Doctor remarked, a man is the better of that as long as he lives. His daughter, who made tea for the Doctor, was a well-bred, well-dressed, young lady, who had been a year in Inverness at school, and had learned reading, writing, sewing, knitting, working lace, and making pastry.

The Highland clergy of this time seem to have been in an eminent degree learned and cultivated gentlemen, and in these respects much the superiors of many of their successors at the present time. Pennant, in his tour in 1774, bears the highest testimony to their worth.

Boswell and Dr. Johnson repeatedly remark on this; and we find in the Island of Coll a venerable old gentleman, of 77, who lived in a cottage, or, as Dr. Johnson calls it, a hut, not inelegantly furnished, who, for want of other accommodation, kept a valuable library in chests, and was able to hold his own in controversy with the Doctor about Leibnitz and Newton. Dr. Johnson describes him as a man with a look of venerable dignity, which he had not seen in any other, and a conversation not unsuited to his appearance. I fear, however, that these learned and venerable gentlemen were of the dignified old moderate school of Dr. Blair, Dr. Robertson, and Dr. Carlyle, of Inveresk; for the evangelical party, who ultimately secured so great an influence and ascendancy in the Highlands, were at this time only beginning to appear in



this part of the country, and were as yet only to be found on the eastern sea-board.

The condition of the poorer classes at this time is a matter of much controversy. Were they better or worse off? Were they happier or more miserable than their representatives of the present day? The testimony of all foreign observers is almost uniform, and represents them as living in a state of degrading poverty and misery. Dr. Johnson, Pennant, Knox, Buchanan, Loch, and others all speak in this way. But if we examine their evidence a little, I think we will be led to doubt their competency as witnesses. They came into the country as strangers, they could not speak the language or learn the thoughts of these people, and they drew the conclusions of poverty and wretchedness because they saw the people living in a social and economic condition, which was new to them, and which, it appeared to them, could only co-exist with these conditions. But poverty is a relative term, and even where poverty exists, wretchedness or a feeling of degradation are not its necessary consequence. It is all a matter of the idea of the man and of the society in which he lives. These foreign witnesses, if I may so call them, tell us that the poorer classes among the Highlanders lived in miserable huts built of stones without cement, thatched with turf or heather, with the fire in the middle of the floor, and without window or chimney, except a hole in the roof, which admitted light, and allowed the smoke to escape, and that their food consisted mainly of oatmeal and milk. That their cattle were housed in one end of the hut, and that the other end was common to the family and the poultry. But these are conditions which we can examine for ourselves. Meal and milk and potatoes are yet the common food of our agricultural labourers, of our shepherds, and of our country tradesmen, and yet we do not attach the idea either of poverty or of misery or degradation to any of these occupations. Bothies, no doubt, are fast disappearing in our immediate neighbourhood, and hereabout the cattle have long been excluded, and the fire placed against a wall, and covered by a hanging chimney. But still one need not go a very long journey from Inverness to see a veritable black house, with its smoke and its clay floor, with poultry walking about in it—but still



\* \* buirdly chields and clever hizzies  
Are bred in such a house as this is.

and the occupants will be found to be well clad, looking well fed on their meal, and milk, and potatoes, the children going to school, the lasses, if not helping at home, out in service, and the lads probably in shops and offices in Inverness, or mayhap one of them at College. And, if we go to the West, we can still find the fire in the middle of the room, the cattle in one end of the house, but the same conditions in other respects as I have described. The premises of these foreign witnesses do not, therefore, warrant their conclusions, and they are confuted, not only by what we may observe any day for ourselves, but by the whole history of the country. Because a man lives in a bothy, and on oatmeal and milk as the principal articles of his diet, although he may be called poor, he is not necessarily either rude or wretched, and, in fact, is generally neither. The early Scottish and Irish monks, who filled Europe with the fame of their learning, lived in wattled huts or bothies of the meanest description. The Covenanting army, which marched into England, was composed of men who lived in bothies, and whose commissariat consisted of oatmeal, of which each soldier carried a sack ; and, yet, there was hardly a man in that army who could not discuss theology and pound texts with the best. George Buchanan came from a bothy on Loch Lomond side, and was reared on oatmeal, and the same may be said of thousands of Scotsmen, who, since his time, have distinguished themselves in every walk of life. We will admit then, with these foreign observers, that the majority of the people, at this time, lived in black bothies, and on what may be considered poor food, but we will admit no more. On the other hand, these observers bear ample testimony to the courteous bearing of the poorest of Highland peasants, and when we have any evidence from those who lived among the people at this time, it is all to the effect that they certainly did not look on their poorer neighbours as in any degree wretched or as labouring under the sense of poverty or of degradation. Mrs. Grant of Laggan, who had better opportunities of judging, and was in a better position for forming a sound and just opinion of those about her than any person of her time, inasmuch as, although born of Highland



parents, she resided in America until she was grown up, gives us the idea rather that a Highland glen was an arcadia than an abode of wretchedness, and she is never tired of expressing her admiration of the intelligence, courtesy, and self-respecting independence of her poorer neighbours.

It is true the lower orders at this time were sometimes exposed to actual famine, but that is the lot of all communities dependent entirely on agriculture and pasture, and without the means of easy communication with other countries. Famines were periodic all over England and Scotland some time earlier, and when hard times did come they were looked on as one of the necessary incidents of life, and the laird and the tacksman still felt that it was his duty to help his poorer neighbours, and the help which was given carried with it none of the degradation of charity.

It is true also that these people rendered services to the chief and tacksman which would now be, indeed—where they still subsist even now—considered irksome, if not degrading; but in the old times of which I am treating, the old feelings of mutual inter-dependence still subsisted, and these services were looked on as the natural right of those to whom they were rendered, and the duty of those who rendered them. They were rendered without any feeling of wrong or oppression, and consequently without any feeling of degradation.

It must be borne in mind, too, that in these times social rank depended on pedigree alone, and poverty did not carry with it the loss of social position. The younger sons of the laird and chief became tacksmen; the younger sons of the tacksmen were provided with small holdings, and the sons of these again were often forced to earn a living by very humble occupations, but still they had the blood of the chief in their veins, and they did not cease to be gentlemen. There are many anecdotes which show the perplexity which this state of things created in the mind of Southern visitors. Burt tells us that on one occasion he was riding into Inverness with a nobleman, and, much to his surprise, his companion dismounted from his horse in Petty Street, and embraced cordially a man who kept a little drinking shop there. Burt afterwards expressed his surprise at this conduct, but his lordship replied that there was nothing to be surprised at, for the



man had some of the best blood of the country in his veins. On the other hand, as illustrating both the feeling of pride of blood and of veneration for the chiefs, which long subsisted, I may relate an anecdote which I have from a lady, still alive, about her uncle, whom she well remembers. The uncle's father had a pedigree, but in worldly circumstances he was but a small farmer, and had several sons. One of these sons was noted as an excellent piper, and the late Glengarry asked him to become his family piper. By this time even Glengarry had so far yielded to modern notions that, instead of having his piper to sit at table with him as a social equal, he had degraded him to the position of a menial, and expected him to stand behind his chair and wait on him at dinner. The young Highlander's pride rebelled at the idea of such social degradation, but he hesitated to offend his chief by a refusal, and he got out of the dilemma by going out to the wood to cut firewood, and, in the operation, deliberately chopping off two of his fingers, and thus incapacitating himself from acting as piper.

Such, then, was the state of society in which we find our ancestors at this time, and I will endeavour to indicate as rapidly as I can the influences which were now, or came afterwards, to operate in breaking it up.

The first of these influences, and the most powerful, was undoubtedly the desire of landlords to compensate by increased rents for the loss of feudal and patriarchal power, and to extract from their tenants means which would enable them to vie in comfort and luxury with their wealthier neighbours of the Lowlands, among whom many of them now began to exhibit a tendency to reside. The testimony of contemporary writers on this point is unanimous, but I shall choose a witness who can lie under no suspicion of any sympathy adverse to the landlords. General Macleod of Macleod, the grandson and successor of the Macleod of the Forty-five, has left a fragment of a memoir of his own life, and, speaking of the circumstances under which he assumed the management of his ancestral estates, he says :—"The laws which deprived the Highlanders of their arms and garb would certainly have destroyed the feudal military power of the chieftains, but the fond attachment of the people to their patriarchs would have yielded to no laws. They were themselves the destroyers of that



pleasing influence. Sucked into the vortex of the nation, and allured to the Capitals, they degenerated from patriarchs and chieftains to landlords, and they became as anxious for increase of rent as the new made lairds—the *novi homines*—the mercantile purchasers of the Lowlands. Many tenants, whose fathers for generations had enjoyed their little spots, were removed for higher bidders. Those who agreed at any price for their antient *lares* were forced to pay an increased rent, without being taught any new method to increase their produce. In the Hebrides, especially, this change was not gradual but sudden—and sudden and baleful in its effects.” And so it was. All over the Highlands there was, during a few years preceding and succeeding the year 1775, a general, and in many cases, a very considerable, if not exorbitant, raising of rents. To some extent this was, perhaps, justified by the very considerable rise in the price of cattle which took place about the same time, and on the eastern side of the country it was to some extent accompanied by the attempt to introduce improved methods of agriculture ; but the necessities of the lairds could not wait for the gradual improvement of the means of the tenants, and the rise of rents was so great and so rapid that the tenants at least felt that it was greater than they could bear. They did not, however, at that time set up any claim to a right of possession concurrent with that of the landlords, and the three F.’s had not been discovered. The tenants of that time, if they found that the rent demanded was greater than they could pay, gave up their holdings, and either migrated to other estates, or emigrated to America. There is a belief—much fostered by some people at present—that migration and emigration were unknown in the Highlands previous to the suppression of the last rebellion—but this is an entire mistake. Long previous to that time the right of Highland landlords and tacksmen to remove tenants and sub-tenants was well recognised and commonly exercised. No doubt, a tenant was seldom removed altogether from the land of the clan, because it was not the interest of the chief or of the clan, and could not be the desire of the clansmen, but instances of men belonging to one clan and holding land in the territory of another were frequent long before this. Numerous



instances could be given, but one, somewhat memorable, may suffice. When Dundee was in Lochaber, shortly before the Battle of Killiecrankie, a party of Camerons, who formed part of his army, went on an expedition into Glen-Urquhart, partly for the purpose of avenging some injury and partly to lift cattle for the support of the army. In Glen-Urquhart they came on a relation of Glengarry, who was living there among the Grants, but who expected not only that his name and lineage would protect himself, but also would enable him to protect his neighbours among whom he was living. The Camerons were quite willing to leave the Macdonell unmolested, if he separated himself from the Grants, but, as he would not do so, he was attacked along with the Grants, plundered and killed, and this incident nearly led to a fight between the Macdonells and the Camerons, and the breaking up of Dundee's army. It is evident, too, that long before this time a very considerable emigration had been going on, from the number of Highlanders who were in America, and engaged in the wars with the French, and in the War of Independence. But this emigration was gradual and unobserved. At the time we speak of, however, and in consequence of the raising of rents, there was a very great migration of families from one part of the country to another, and emigration to America became so general that it created a feeling of alarm not only in the landlords, who began to fear that their estates would be depopulated, but in the country at large. Whole families and districts left the country together, and as they went entirely at their own expense, we may assume that those who went were of the class who were able to take some means with them. General Macleod tells us that his first act of management on his estates was to assemble his clansmen, and remonstrate with them against yielding to this emigration fever, and he adds that, in consequence of his appeal and of such remissions of rent as he was able to make, there was very little emigration from his estates. Dr. Johnson tells us, however, that, in course of his tour in the Western Isles, he found that the great object of insular estate policy was to stop emigration. In Boswell's account of this tour, which, so far as the Islands were concerned, only lasted from the 2nd of September to the 22nd of October, mention is



made of three emigrant-vessels with which they came in contact. And Mr. Macdonald of Kingsburgh told the travellers that whereas the people who left Skye by the first emigrant vessels manifested most extraordinary symptoms of grief at leaving their native land, emigration had then become so common, and the people so accustomed to the idea of it, that they left with apparent indifference. When Dr. Johnson and Boswell paid them a visit, Flora Macdonald and her husband were preparing to emigrate, and, as is well known, they shortly after carried out their intention. The places of those who left were occupied by others, often by strangers, and thus a great severance of antient ties took place, and the tie of blood and kinship which bound the inhabitants of whole districts together were loosened. The new tacksmen had no interest in their sub-tenants, except as rent-payers, and they began to exact from them a higher rent than they themselves paid, and southern estate managers, who began to appear and to introduce improved methods of management, preached the doctrine that tacksmen themselves were mere middlemen and cumberers of the ground, and that the lairds should deal directly with all who held land on their estates, a doctrine which, when put in practice, reduced the tacksmen from the position of power and influence, which, as gentlemen of the Clan, and leaders of the people under the Chief, they had formerly held, to that of mere farmers of curtailed possessions.



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[BY PROVOST MACANDREW.]

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*(Continued.)*

THE next great cause of change was the introduction of the rearing of sheep as a prime industry. When the Highlands were opened up, and the landlords directed their attention to the means of increasing their rentals, it was perceived that the Highland hills were well suited for sheep walks, such as had long been in existence on the Borders, and had then almost without record or observation, turned the land of the Scotts and Elliots, Kerrs and Johnstones, and other Border clans into great pastoral wastes, and that the great mountain wastes which had hitherto been the common grazing grounds of a whole district, for a few weeks in summer afforded pasture for a proportionably small number of cattle requiring a host of attendants, were fitted to maintain all the year round, or nearly so, great flocks of sheep which required very little attendance, and in their wool, and in their lambs, afforded a double source of annual profit in addition to the return from those sold for mutton. This mode of using the hills not only thus afforded a more ample rent to the proprietors, and a great saving of trouble in management of estates, but by the wily southern graziers who began to come in, and by enlightened people from the south, it was lauded as an improvement, and the man who caused the barren hills to produce so many pounds of mutton and of wool, when before only a much smaller number of pounds of beef had been produced, was looked on as a benefactor to mankind, inasmuch as he increased the material resources of the country, and was placed on the same pedestal as the man who made two blades of grass grow when only one grew before. In fact, improvement in this sense became a rage. Now, there is no doubt that it was carried out much too rapidly, and on too great a scale, and without due regard to the feelings or the interests of the dwellers on the soil, and, as we are now learn-



ing, without due regard to the permanent interests of the land and its possessors, or of the country at large.

In Sutherland the change was carried out wholesale and at once, and in course of a very few years the people were removed wholesale from the inland glens and settled along the sea coast. The history of these deplorable evictions is well-known, and need not be dwelt upon. Nobody probably has deplored them more deeply than the amiable nobleman in whose name they were carried out, and who certainly believed that he was improving his county, and benefiting his successors. In other parts of the country the process was more gradual, for I do not find any case of wholesale eviction from the last of those in Sutherland, which took place about 1820, till after the end of the period about which we are now speaking. In very many instances the old tacksmen became sheep farmers, and by their personal and family influence they no doubt induced their sub-tenants to remove voluntarily. The way in which the conversion of the country into sheep walks affected the smaller class of holders appears to have been this—The holding of a tacksman with the addition of a vast range of waste over which he and his sub-tenants, and probably the possessor of adjoining club farms, grazed in common in summer were converted into a sheep walk. With the proper occupation of it as such the holdings of the sub-tenants, scattered probably all over it wherever there was a patch of good soil, interfered materially, and the cultivated patches and green spots around the settlement were coveted as grazing; the dogs and children of these people disturbed the sheep, and their few sheep mixed with the flocks, and probably communicated disease. In fact, the people became a nuisance to the sheep farmer, and their land became a necessity to him, and either gradually or wholesale they were removed, and settled, in the West Coast, along the sea coast, or on the farms already held by joint tenants sub-dividing the possessions with them, and in the East Coast along the skirts of the cultivated land in the great valleys, and along the coast. Hence the green spots showing signs of cultivation, and the ruins of houses which are to be found in all the upland glens, particularly on the West.

Almost co-temporary with the introduction of sheep-farming



were two other circumstances, which had a powerful effect, principally on the West Coast and Islands. These were the general cultivation of the potato and a rise in the price of the products of kelp which took place about the beginning of this century. The extraordinarily prolific nature of the potato made it possible, by its cultivation, for a family to subsist on a very much smaller extent of ground than they could when their dependence was on corn and cattle, and the manufacture of kelp, while affording a very large profit to the landlords whose estates were bordered by the Western seas, afforded a remunerative source of labour for a few months in the year to the people, and seems to have been one of the main causes which led to the stoppage of the flow of emigration. This was one of the main causes which produced the overcrowding of the people in what are now called the congested localities along the Coast. Coincident with this again was the introduction of the system of lotting, as it is called, which led to the existence of the present West Coast crofts. Formerly, as I have said, the arable land in townships occupied by joint-tenants was, like the grazing, held in common, and divided every year among the occupiers. About the beginning of the century a change was introduced, and it became the practice to divide the arable land into lots or crofts, which were possessed separately, the possession carrying a right to the grazing of a fixed number of animals on the grazing land of the township, which was still, by the necessity of the case, held in common. This was intended, and one would suppose it to be an improvement, for naturally it was to be expected that when a man had exclusive possession of a piece of arable land, he would cultivate it more carefully than if he only had the right to crop it for a year at a time. The effect has been, however, the very reverse. Formerly, and when a farm was possessed by a number of families in common, it was the interest of all to prevent any increase of the families living on it—latterly, and when each man possessed his own croft, he could settle a son, or a daughter's husband, or other relative on it without consulting any person, and accordingly a system of subdivision has gone on, often in the face of the exertions of landlord and factor to prevent it, till there are now very few of the original lots or crofts possessed by one tenant, a half croft being the common



holding, and there being often greater subdivision, and a host of cottars and squatters, besides, settled on every crofting township. The extent of land possessed by each family is thus only sufficient for a patch of oats and a patch of potatoes, and is cultivated by these crops in alternate years without rest of any kind; sown grasses are not used; the arable land is run over by the sheep and cattle in winter, and the system of agriculture is absolutely worse than it was a hundred and fifty years ago. The extent to which subdivision and the compression of the people into small space has taken place, has now been shown beyond all doubt by a pamphlet which has just been published by Mr. Macdonald of Skaebost, which is worth all the literature on the subject which has hitherto been published, and which all interested in the crofter question should read. In it are given the rentals of the Macleod estates in 1664, of the Macdonald estates in 1733, and of the Mackinnon estates in 1751, these comprising very nearly the whole of Skye. According to calculations made by Mr. Macdonald from these rentals, and from the evidence of the tenants given in ascertaining them, and on the assumption that there was no material change till after the Rebellion, it appears that the rental of Skye has increased since then about ten times, that the number of joint-tenants then possessing land was 517, paying an average rent of what, according to the present rental, would be £17; and 1031 sub-tenants holding from tacksmen, and paying on the average a rent of £9; whereas there are now 2043 crofters paying an average rent of £4 11s. 7d., or so, or to put it in another way, and equalising the rents, the joint-tenants and sub-tenants in 1746, paid £18,279 of rent, and now, while the number has increased one-third, they pay only £9357, or little more than one-half. Again, at the former time, there were 142 landlords and tacksmen holding land, and now there are only 7 proprietors and 29 tacksmen.

These figures contrast the changes in the economic condition of the people on the West during the time of which we are treating. On the Eastern side of the country some of the causes which I have indicated did not apply, and the course of events has led to very different results. This is to be accounted for partly by the difference of climate and soil, and partly by the



different natural distribution of the land, but so great has been the difference that one is tempted to suspect some radical difference of race. The climate on the East is favourable to cultivation ; there is a broad belt of arable land along the coast, and the greater distance of the coast from the water shed has given us rivers with long courses, which have furrowed the country into broad valleys, with long and fertile bottoms. This was all favourable to agriculture, and consequently attention was soon directed to it, and great improvements had taken place in this way before the introduction of sheep. Sheep, too, were late of being introduced, and they never became the exclusive possessors of the land as in the West. There has no doubt been far too much adding of field to field, but we have not had anything approaching the massing of the people into contracted areas which took place on the West, and even now there is a fair distribution of land into holdings of various sizes, which offers to the industrious small farmer that opportunity of improving his position which is totally absent in the West.

Another cause which led to change, but which was only beginning to be powerful at the close of our period, was the letting of our moors and mountains for purposes of sport. Deer forests had hardly begun to be talked of, but grouse moors were becoming much the fashion, and their tendency was to discourage small holdings in sporting districts—for the sportsman desires a waste—and to lead very much to the new residence of the proprietors.

No account of the Highlands during this period would be complete without a reference, which must now be a short one, to the military spirit which pervaded the people during the whole period of which we are treating. Previous to the suppression of the Rebellion, every Highlander was a soldier, and went habitually armed. It was natural, therefore, that they should look to the army as a means of employment when they found their presence at home no longer required. At that time too the army was very different from what it is now. The extravagant habits of the present mess-tables were unknown, and the short-service system had not been thought of. The officer of those days seldom had any private fortune, and the habits of the army were such that he was able to live on his pay, and even if he only attained the rank of lieutenant, on his pension ; while to the common soldier pay and



pension were an ample provision. To enter the army in any rank was thus a provision for life. To the proud, poor Highlander of all ranks the profession of a soldier therefore offered irresistible attractions. It was the profession of a gentleman, it was congenial to his habits and to his thoughts and feelings—nurtured as he was on the stirring records of a warlike race, it relieved him from the necessity of any menial or mechanical employment, and from all anxiety as to the future. The time too was propitious ; it was a time of constant wars, men for the army were urgently required, and the elder Pitt saw with the glance of genius where they were to be got. As he said himself, in a memorable and often-quoted speech :—“ I sought for merit where it was to be found ; it is my boast that I was the first Minister who looked for it and found it in the mountains of the North. I called it forth, and drew into your service a hardy and intrepid race of men, who, when left by your jealousy, became a prey to the artifice of your enemies, and had gone nigh to upset the State in the war before last. These men in the last war were brought to combat on your side, they served with fidelity as they fought with valour, and conquered for you in every part of the world.” The system which Pitt adopted, and which was continued down to the close of the Napoleonic wars in 1815, the giving of commissions for the raising of a certain quota of men, admirably suited the circumstances of the Highlands. Accordingly, from 1757 to 1815, Highlanders literally swarmed into the army, and many a youth brought up in a bothy, but with good blood in his veins, was able, by this influence still attaching to his blood and name, to gather together a band of his neighbours and companions sufficient to entitle him to a commission, and thus to establish himself in a social position, to which he felt his lineage entitled him, but to which he had probably no other means of attaining. It was during this time that all the ever-victorious Highland Regiments, which are yet the pride and glory of the nation, were raised, and there were many others, which have since been disbanded, raised. Down to the time of the Crimean War, too, these regiments all continued to be substantially Highland, and until that time the Highlands were a favourite and prolific recruiting ground. With the Crimean War came the necessity



of great and immediate increase to the army, and the great towns had to be resorted to, and regiments were filled up without regard to nationality. Following on this came the short service system, with the disappearance of the pension, and somehow not only were the Highlands neglected as a recruiting ground, but the conditions of service appear to have become unsuitable, and to a very great extent Highland Regiments were so only in name and dress. This is very greatly to be regretted, for nowhere does the Highlander appear to greater advantage than as a soldier, and it is to be hoped that, with the increased permission for long service, and the quartering of a Highland Regiment permanently in the Highland Capital, the old spirit may revive, and that Highland Regiments may become so in reality both as regards officers and men. I have not said anything about the services of the Highland Regiments, for this does not fall within my present subject, but if any proof is wanted that the Highland people of the time of which we are treating, or of an earlier time, were not rude and uncivilized, and were in no sense degraded by poverty, but were, on the contrary, a sober, God-fearing, intelligent, and moral race, in a much higher degree than persons of the same class in other parts of the country, we have only to turn to the records of the conduct of the Highland Regiments, particularly those first raised, in camp and quarters. They were not only brave in the field, but in peace they were orderly, sober, amenable to discipline, thus exhibiting the highest qualities of men and of soldiers.

The large number of men who served in the army naturally produced a large number of retired military men, who settled in their native land. It became much the fashion with them to take farms, and these men naturally gave a tone to the society of their time, and contributed to keep up that honourable tone of feeling and high and gentleman-like bearing which had distinguished the Highlanders of the old time.

Such are briefly some of the causes and their effects which marked this period of time in the Highlands. But even at the close of this period, much of the old spirit and the old state of society still remained. All over the Highlands many of the old tacksmen families remained, and even when new men had come



they were rapidly assimilated, and adopted the old habits of free and cordial hospitality which had distinguished the good old time. The causes I have indicated were still at work, but they had not produced their full effects, and it is since the close of this period that the great changes have taken place; that the race of long descended gentlemen-tacksmen has been swept entirely away. I believe there are not now half-a-dozen considerable farmers in the Highlands and Islands who hold the farms which their ancestors held over one hundred and fifty years ago. I only really know of one. To show the magnitude of the change, I will just quote one sentence:—When the late Cluny brought home his bride in 1832—and we have lost them both only within the last eighteen months—he was met at Dalwhinnie by upwards of sixty mounted gentlemen of his clan. Where are these or their descendants now? An echo answers where? They are certainly not in Badenoch.



THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS—THEIR SOCIAL  
AND LITERARY HISTORY—1775-1832.

[BY PROVOST MACANDREW.]

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(*Continued.*)

ON the subject of the literature of the Highlands my remarks must be brief, and in the aspect in which I look at it the subject is not extensive. If I claimed as Highland literature the writings of all men of Highland descent it would be necessary to review the literature of Europe from the times of George Buchanan—if not from the earlier time of the wandering Scottish and Irish monks and missionaries of the sixth and seventh centuries—to the times of Sir James Mackintosh and of Macaulay. But those earlier scholars wrote in Latin and the later writers in English, and while their genius was no doubt inspired by their Celtic blood, their literature was the outcome of a foreign culture. To come lower, I might claim such writers as actually lived and wrote in the Highlands, and among these would be, first, Mrs. Grant, of Laggan, whose letters from the mountains are redolent of the dis-



trict from which they are issued, and bear in every line the impress of Highland instruction, and the most charming prose idyll in the language, and give a picture of a Highland home and its surroundings, its inmates and neighbours, their joys and sorrows, which show that in the upper district of Badenoch in the latter end of last century life passed with more peace, and joy, and real happiness than, I fear, is common in any part of the Highlands now. And second would be the Baroness Nairne, with her touching domestic history, and her singular temperament, which made her, the child of an ultra-Jacobite family, brought up under the influence of her grandfather, who had been out in the Forty-five, an Episcopalian and the writer of the Laird of Cockpen, shun the acquaintance of Sir Walter Scott, although she lived in Edinburgh for many years during the time of his fame, because he had, as she thought, cast ridicule on the Covenanters, and in her later days, although she still remained an Episcopalian, to live in close intimacy with the last Duchess of Gordon and the leaders of the Disruption. But these, Highland as they were, wrote in English, and their writings never were current among the body of the Highland people.

In the short space at my disposal, I prefer, therefore, to glance at what really was the popular literature of the Highlands during the time of which we are treating, and which necessarily, therefore, was written in Gaelic.

In very early times the Gaelic was a literary language, that is to say, it was used by learned and cultivated men, as the vehicle of the expression of their thoughts and feelings on all subjects, and in Ireland it continued to be so used until comparatively late times; but in recent times, and particularly during the period of which I am speaking, it cannot, in this sense, be said to have been so in Scotland. There have been many learned men who knew Gaelic, and many learned Gaelic scholars, but there has been no class of learned or literary men who used the language for all literary purposes. Such original compositions as we have are all poetical and mostly lyrical. Of Gaelic poets during the period of which I am writing, there have been a fair array, and their songs and poems are very beautiful, but they all belong to that earlier stage of literature when the song or poem is the result of natural



poetical feeling and genius, and not the result of literary culture, and this is evidenced by the circumstance that some of the best poets of this time could not write—such, for instance, are Duncan Ban Macintyre and Rob Donn Mackay—and that the poetry circulated more by oral repetition from mouth to mouth than by printed books. Some of the later Gaelic poets were, no doubt, educated and cultivated men, as were the bards of the older time, but it was only such of their compositions as caught the popular ear, and were learned and repeated, that really circulated among the people, and the literature of this time may be classed along with that older literature which really formed the intellectual food of the Highland people as oral and traditional. And this brings us to that older literature, and to the circumstances which led to its discovery, so to speak, to the learned world, and to the preservation of such of it as we now have.

Obviously no account of the literature of the Highlands during this period would be complete without some notice of the Ossianic controversy and of its results. The poems attributed to Ossian came to light, and the controversy originated from what appears a very simple and natural incident.

In the autumn of 1759, John Home, the author of "Douglas," was residing at Moffat. He had heard from Adam Ferguson, the predecessor of Dugald Stewart in the Chair of Moral Philosophy in Edinburgh, a native of Perthshire—and who had a sufficient knowledge of Gaelic to have been in his youth ordained to the ministry earlier than was usual, in order that he might act as chaplain to the 42nd Regiment—that there were in the Highlands remains of ancient poetry in the Gaelic language. Mr. Home had long been on the look-out for some of these, or some person who could give an account of them. At Moffat he met a young man, named James Macpherson, who was then residing there in the capacity of tutor to young Graham of Balgowan. Mr. Home found Macpherson to be intelligent and a good classical scholar, and, on questioning, he found that he had in his possession several pieces of ancient Gaelic poetry. Mr. Macpherson was persuaded to translate one of these—a poem on the death of Oscar. Mr. Home was so much pleased with this that he persuaded Macpherson to translate more. These were shown to Dr. Carlyle of Inveresk, who paid Home a



visit at Moffat, and they both agreed that here was a precious discovery, and that it ought to be published to the world. Mr. Home carried these pieces to Edinburgh, and showed them to Dr. Blair—then the great arbiter of literary merit in Scotland—to Adam Ferguson, Dr. Robertson, and Lord Elibank, who were no less pleased with them than Home and Carlyle had been, and the result was that Macpherson was persuaded to publish a volume of “Fragments of Antient Poetry Collected in the Highlands,” to which Dr. Blair wrote an introduction. This volume attracted universal attention, and as Macpherson had stated that there was much more of such poetry in existence in the Highlands, he was with some difficulty persuaded to undertake the collection of it, and a subscription was raised in Edinburgh to defray the expense of a journey by him over the Highlands and Islands for this purpose. Macpherson accordingly, in the summer and autumn of 1760, did journey through the Highlands and Islands collecting such manuscripts as could be got, and taking down from oral recitation such poems as could be repeated by persons with whom he came in contact. On his return he resided some months in Badenoch, his native county, in the house of Mr. Gallie, the clergyman there, and occupied himself in translating the manuscripts he had collected and the poems which he had taken down from recitation. He afterwards came to Edinburgh, where he resided for some time under the roof of Dr. Blair, and continued his work under his eye and under the eye of Dr. Ferguson and others; and ultimately he went to London, and in 1762 published *Fingal*, an Epic in six books, and in the following year *Temora* and other poems. These poems were represented by Macpherson to be the genuine works of Ossian, the son of Finn or Fingal, a poet and warrior, said to have lived and composed and sung or recited them in the third century, and to have been contemporary with the Roman Emperor Caracalla; to have been found by him in the Highlands; and translated by him from the original Gaelic into the English which was given to the world. Here was certainly a startling announcement, and it soon attracted the attention of literary men all over the world. That fragments of ancient poetry in the Gaelic language existed in the Highlands was readily admitted, but the announcement



that Epic poems, such as Fingal and Temora, were composed among a people so rude and barbarous as the Caledonians were supposed to have been at the time of the Roman occupation of Britain, and preserved among a rude and unlettered people for 1400 years, was not readily to be accepted by the learned world. On the contrary, it was rudely assailed, and a controversy arose which raged throughout the whole period of which we are treating, and, indeed, still continues, as to the authenticity of these poems, and as to the part which Macpherson had in their composition. As a rule, Scotsmen have taken one side, and many of them have maintained, and still maintain, that these are the genuine works of Ossian, and that Macpherson did no more than collect the scattered fragments and unite them again in their original form; on the other hand, it was maintained that Macpherson found no more in the Highlands than the names and some of the stories; that the poems were his own composition, and that his putting them forth as the works of Ossian was an impudent literary forgery. On the English side, so to speak, in the earlier days of the controversy the most prominent man was Dr. Johnson. It is supposed that he was induced to take his famous journey to the Hebrides in order to enquire into the authenticity of Ossian, and into the truth of the existence of second sight; and General Macleod says that, while he evidently did not desire to be convinced about Ossian, he was very anxious to be convinced on the subject of second sight. On one occasion he was asked whether he thought any living man could have written the poems which Macpherson published, and replied, "Yes, sir; many men, many women, and many children." And in answer to Boswell, who made some remark about its being wrong of Macpherson to publish an Epic in six books, if he had not found it in that state, he said, "Yes, sir; and to ascribe it to a time, too, when the Highlands knew nothing of books or of six, or, perhaps, even got the length of counting six." When, in the journal of his tour, he expressed his entire disbelief in the authenticity of the poems, Macpherson sent him a challenge, to which he sent the following famous reply:—

"Mr. James Macpherson,—I received your foolish and impudent letter. Any violence offered me I shall do my best to



repel; and what I cannot do for myself, the law shall do for me. I hope I never shall be deterred from detecting what I think a cheat, by the menaces of a ruffian. What would you have me retract? I thought your book an imposture; I think it an imposture still. For this opinion I have given my reasons to the public, which I here dare you to refute. Your rage I defy; your abilities, since your Homer, are not so formidable; and what I hear of your morals inclines me to pay regard not to what you shall say, but to what you shall prove. You may print this if you will.

“SAM. JOHNSON.”

The controversy, in fact, has created a literature in itself; but it would be impossible to give any account of this literature here. As is usual in controversy, both sides went farther than was justifiable, and I think most persons who have considered the question calmly are now satisfied that Ossian, who is represented as contemporary with Cuchullin in the first century, as fighting with the Romans in the third, and as disputing with St. Patrick in the fifth, cannot be accepted as an historical personage, but that a great deal of poetry attributed to him was current in the Highlands from the earliest time, and that either by Macpherson or by some predecessor, whose work he found, the poems were, some time after the Reformation, put into the present form. The part which Macpherson or the previous compiler had in the work will now never be accurately known, and it can hardly be doubted that Macpherson wilfully mystified the subject, for he undoubtedly procured several Gaelic manuscripts of ancient date, which were seen by various people, and represented by him to contain the poems he was translating, which were not found after his death, and have disappeared. This, at all events, is clear, that either by Macpherson or some one else, these poems were either collected or composed, and that they are Gaelic poems of great genius and of a very high order of poetry.

Apart from their own merit or authenticity, the publication of the poems did this service, that it caused inquiry to be made for any genuine remains of ancient poetry which might exist in the Highlands. Dr. Blair made inquiries at all clergymen of his acquaintance, and later, in 1800, the Highland Society, which did not then confine its operations entirely to agriculture and stock-raising, circulated inquiries all over the Highlands, and the evidence collected



by both was published, along with an elaborate report by Henry Mackenzie, author of the *Man of Feeling*, in 1805. In this way, and by the efforts of private collectors, and the discovery of old manuscripts, especially that of the Dean of Lismore, written about 1530, it has been established that there existed in the Highlands a great quantity, both oral and written, of ancient songs and poems, much of which was attributed to the blind bard, Ossian, and his brother, Fergus, and much of this has been collected and preserved. But not only was it established that the poetry existed, but what is more important, that it was the common property of the people, and that in the castle of the Chief, the house of the tacksman, and the bothy of the clansman and retainer, the common amusement of the winter evenings was the repetition of these poems by bards and others. Here, then, we have another great branch of the popular literature of the Highland people, but there was yet a third.

The whole literature of a people can hardly be poetical or heroical, and accordingly we find that concurrently with this heroic poetry a literature of prose tales and legends. These did not attract attention so early as the poetry, but in recent years Mr. Campbell of Islay set himself diligently to collect what remained of them ; and what he has done makes us regret that the persons appealed to by Dr. Blair and the Highland Society did not adopt his method. He was not content with general statements that such and such persons could repeat so many stories, as many of these persons could, but he set himself, and got able and competent assistants to set themselves to search out the persons who could tell any of these stories, and to write them down in Gaelic as they were repeated. The stories which he thus collected he has given to the world in four volumes, published in 1860 and 1862. Many of these stories relate to the *Feinne*, and many of them are Highland editions of fairy tales and legends, which are the common property of the Aryan race. But what is interesting to us with reference to the subject I am at present treating of is, that they also formed part of the living popular literature of the Highland people of all classes, at the beginning and during a great part of the period of which we are treating, and in odd corners of the remote islands they may still to some extent exist.



Here, then, is a very considerable literature entering into the life of the people, constituting their intellectual food, and giving the materials from which they formed their ideals of manhood and of womanhood. It is interesting therefore to consider its character. And first among its characteristics and as regards all the really ancient literature, all that is attributed to Ossian and his contemporaries and the tales, I would place its crystal purity and delicacy of thought and feeling and expression. This, especially when it is contrasted with the frequent and sometimes very gross coarseness of the later poets, is very striking and very pleasing. Next I would place the high and chivalrous tone of feeling and expression, and the high ideal of manhood and of womanhood, which is given in the heroes and heroines, in Finn, and Oscar, and Gaul, and Diarmid, and all the other heroes; in Deirdre, Darthula, Agandecca, Everallin, and other heroines. The hero is of course a warrior, and first of virtues is martial prowess and courage; but he is no mere fighter, he is not only great of stature and brave of heart, but he is also courteous, generous, just, truthful, honourable, gentle to women, and faithful in love. The heroine is beautiful, but she is more, she is gentle, loving, devoted. I doubt if in any literature there has been developed a higher ideal of either manhood or womanhood than we find here. I will give one example, in the shape of a few extracts from a poem about Fingal, preserved by Dean Macgregor and translated by the late Mr. Thomas Maclauchlan, and I may premise that the translation is literal and line for line, so that it is as poetry seen under every possible disadvantage.

Generous, just,  
 Despised a lie;  
 Of vigorous deeds;  
 First in song.  
 A righteous judge—  
 Firm his rule,  
 Polished his mien.  
 Who knew but victory;  
 Who is like him  
 In fight or song?  
 Resists the foe  
 In house or field.  
 Marble his skin,  
 The rose his cheek,  
 Blue was his eye,  
 His hair like gold—  
 All men's trust,  
 Of noble mind,

Of ready deeds;  
 To women mild;  
 A giant he:  
 The fields delight.  
 Three hundred battles  
 He bravely fought.  
 With miser's mind,  
 From none withheld;  
 Anything false  
 His lips ne'er spoke;  
 He never grudged,  
 No, never, Finn.  
 A noble house  
 Was that of Finn;  
 No grudge, nor boast,  
 Babbling, nor sham—  
 No man despised  
 Among the Feinn.



Such, then, was the great body of the oral literature on which the minds of our forefathers were fed, and I think we find it reflected in the national character. The noble, manly, and courteous bearing, the devotion to chief and clan, and king and country, or whatever was looked to as higher or deserving of devotion ; the chivalrous fidelity to an exiled line of kings, and to a fugitive and hunted prince, the marked courage which all down the course of history have distinguished the race, are surely what might have been expected from those who, in infancy, were lulled to sleep by the plaintive wailing of Deirdre for her beloved Albyn, and whose youth and manhood were fired by songs of the daring, and prowess, and chivalry, and courtesy, of the high-souled heroes of the Feinne.

But, alas ! within the time of which we are now speaking, all this literature has disappeared as a living influence among the people. The schoolmaster has taught another language, the clergy, from the time of the Reformation, and for reasons which are not easy to discern, persistently discouraged the native literature, and it has fled to the library-shelves of the well-to-do and the educated, or to the very remotest corners of the Outer Hebrides. The bard and the story-teller are no longer welcome guests at the winter fireside ; the charm which their recitations gave to life is gone, and the old ideals no longer exist. This is an enormous loss to any people, and we should see to it that the want which has been left is supplied with something equally good and noble, and that the grand old national type is not degraded by the Highlander having no higher ideal than himself, and no higher aspiration than to supply his material wants.

H. C. MACANDREW.