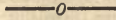


## SIR KENNETH S. MACKENZIE OF GAIRLOCH, BART.



WE expressed an intention some time ago to give a series of biographical portraits of our most distinguished living Highlanders, but as yet we have made little progress in that direction. We have already published a sketch of Cluny Macpherson of Cluny, a Conservative in politics, and one of the very best landlords and most enthusiastic and patriotic Highlanders in the country. We shall now proceed to say a little regarding the Gairloch Baronet, as good a Liberal as Cluny is a Conservative, and, in other respects, in the words of a leading Ross-shire gentleman and a true-blue Tory, who recently described Sir Kenneth to us as "as good a Highlander as ever stood in tartan." The *Celtic Magazine* takes no side in party politics, and never refers to them except in so far as they have a bearing on the position and necessities of our Highland countrymen; and any reference made here to the politics of Sir Kenneth Mackenzie and the contest in which he has so recently distinguished himself, must be held as applying only to the latter aspect of the question. For though those most intimately acquainted with him knew perfectly well that he possessed abilities above the average, as well as the other good qualities of a true Highland gentleman even in a higher degree, it was only during, and in consequence of, his late contest with Lochiel in the county of Inverness—with a gentleman in respect of lineage, high character, and almost in ability, well worthy of his lance—that these qualities became widely known to the outside world.

The reader need not at this date be informed of the high lineage of the Baronet of Gairloch, nor of the scions of the family who have distinguished themselves in their respective spheres in the various walks of life. The blood of the Bruce, of the old Earls of Ross, of the ancient Kings of Man, and of almost all the most ancient and distinguished of our Highland families, circulate in his veins. We know that some people consider good blood and lineage of little importance or value, though the very same people, regardless of consistency, will give fabulous prices for the lower animals, just in proportion to the length and purity of their pedigree. We do not by any means consider blue blood and high lineage all that can be desired, but when, as in the case of our present subject, these are combined with the nobler and best qualities of the heart and head, we are old-fashioned and sentimental enough to value them in a high degree.

The first of the family of Gairloch was Hector Roy, second son of Alexander Mackenzie, sixth Baron of Kintail, and a celebrated warrior in his day. He took a distinguished part on the fatal field of Flodden, but escaped with his life; and he is celebrated in local history, song, and story, for his achievements in the many clan battles of his day, as leader of the whole clan in the capacity of Tutor or guardian to his nephew, John Mackenzie of Kintail.

William Ross, the Gaelic bard, in his "Moladh a Bhaire air a Thir Fein," speaks of Gairloch, and Hector Roy's prowess at Flodden as follows:—

Beir mo shoraidh 'thir a' mhonaidh,  
 'S nam beann corrach arda,  
 Frìdh nan Gaisgeach 's nan sonn gasda,  
 Tìr Chlann-Eachuinn Ghearrloch,  
 Gur uallach eangach, an damh breangach,  
 Suas tro' ghleannan fasaich ;  
 Bì'dh chuach 's a' bhadan, 'seinn a leadainn,  
 Moch 's a' mhaduinn Mhai ?

Gum b'e Gearloch an tìr bhaigheil,  
 'S an tìr phairteach, bhìadhar,  
 Tìr a phailteis, tìr gun ghainne,  
 Tìr is glaine fialachd,  
 An tìr bhainneach, uachdrach, mhealach,  
 Chaomhach, channach, thìoral—  
 Tìr an arain, tìr an tachdair,  
 Sìthne, a's pailteas iasgaich,

Tìr an aigh i, tìr nan armunn,  
 Tìr nan sar-fhear gleusda ;  
 Tìr an t-suairceis, tìr gun ghruaimean,  
 Tìr a's uaisle feile.  
 An tìr bhòrcach, nam frìdh ro-mhor,  
 Tìr gun leon, gun gheibhinn ;  
 An tìr bhraonach, mhachrach, raonach,  
 Mhartach, laoghach, fheurach.

Cho fad 'sa dh' imich cliù na h-Alba,  
 Fhuaradh ainm na dùth' ud,  
 An am a h-uaislean dhol ri cruadal,  
 'S Eachainn Ruadh ais thus dìubh,  
 Bho la Raon *Flodden* nam beun trom,  
 A shoerùich bonn na fìudhaidh,  
 Gu h-uallach, dosrach, suas gun dosgainn,  
 Uasal o'n stoc mhuirneach.

The present Baronet of Gairloch was not the first of his family whose destiny it was to represent his native county in Parliament, which, we have no doubt whatever, he is certain at no distant date to do. His ancestor, the first baronet, also Sir Kenneth, was one of the representatives for the county of Ross in the Scottish Parliament—1700-3—when he strongly opposed the Union between England and Scotland, as a measure which he considered would be “the funeral of his country.” He received valuable favours from Queen Anne after her accession to the throne, and was highly respected and beloved by his people. The famous blind piper and poet, John Mackay, spoke of him in a “Marbh-rann” or elegy as follows :—

Seabhag nach clothadh ri comhraig,  
 An leomhann curanta cruaidh,  
 Bu mhor a bh'annad do bhuaidh,  
 An tì bu rioghail cuir suas,  
 An triath nach crìonadh an duais.

Cha robh aca na thug barr ort,  
 Ann an gliocas, 's ann an tabhachd ;  
 Ann am mor-chuis, 's ann an ardan,  
 'S tu nach soradh orra 'phaidheadh,  
 Lamh na feile 's an robh bhuaidh ;  
 Bu cheannard treun thu air sluagh,  
 Measg nan ceudan dhaoin' uaisl'  
 Thug thusa steud air srian uatha.

The same bard composed a song of welcome to his successor, Sir Alexander, on his return to "Tigh Dize nan Gorm-Ghlac" in 1720, in which he exhorts him to be kind and gentle to his people, and not on any account to remove any of his tenants:—

Ri do chinnich bi suairc,  
 Ann am furan 's an stuaim,  
 Na bi 'g iomairt air tuath,  
 Neo cha do thuaths i, 's uat siubhlaidh  
 Tlachd, ceatharnachd, 'us uaisl', &c., &c.

If we are to believe the bards and tradition Sir Alexander was in every respect a very worthy man. He was undoubtedly an excellent landlord and a good man of business. Though left with a heavily burdened property, he added greatly to its extent and value, and paid off heavy debts. In 1729 he purchased Cruive House and the Ferry of Scuidale; in 1735 Bishop Kinkell; in 1742 Logie Riach, now known as Conan; and, in 1742, the lands of Kenlochewe. He also redeemed the properties of Davochcairn and Ardnagrask, which were then held by the widow of his uncle William; and in 1752 he executed an entail of all his estates, an act of forethought without which the present popular proprietor would, more than likely, be to-day without an inch of the family estates. In 1738 Sir Alexander built the present family residence in Gairloch, known as Flowerdale House, one of the most beautifully situated in the Highlands, and where the present Baronet spends the summer months. Sir Alexander, unlike most of the Highland chiefs, declined to follow Prince Charles Edward Stuart in 1745, and appears to have had little sympathy with those who took part in that unfortunate but chivalrous adventure.

The readers of the *Celtic Magazine* are already acquainted with the antiquated conditions on which this excellent landlord hired out his lands to his tenants, who were bound to sell him all their marketable cattle "at reasonable rates," and to deliver to him, at current prices, all the cod and ling caught by them, and how they were obliged to keep boats and men to prosecute these fishings. They were also bound to pay him, in addition to their ordinary rent, a certain sum for the privilege of being allowed to cut peats, and other sums for cruives, and for minister's stipend, while they had to supply him with carts and horses "for mucking," with "custom wedders," fed kids, hens, with men to shear corn and hay, and to plough, make roads, and various other conditions, which, in the present day, would be considered harsh and tyrannical; but, notwithstanding all this, Sir Alexander was almost as popular and as much beloved as his great-great-grandson, the present Baronet of Gairloch, is at the present day.

Sir Hector Mackenzie, who ruled in Gairloch for nearly sixty years, was one of the most popular and best landlords of his time; was Lord-Lieutenant of the county of Ross for many years, and was repeatedly invited to enter Parliament for his native county; but he always refused, asking what would become of his people, among whom he resided, if he were to leave them. He was their judge, counsel, and adviser in all questions of difference, and his decisions were accepted without a murmur. He patronised and encouraged the local bards, and gave a great impetus to the Gairloch cod and ling fishing. He was indeed considered the

father of his people, and his name is still spoken of by those who remember him with genuine reverence and affection. When his son and heir, Sir Francis, grew up, instead of an annual allowance he gave him a few of the principal farms, over which he acted as landlord and tenant, and thus brought him up in the full knowledge of agriculture and county matters generally, and with a personal knowledge of every tenant on his wide property.

The distinguished services of Sir Hector's brother, General John Mackenzie, known among his brothers in arms as "Fighting Jack," are so well known as to require no notice here.

Sir Francis Alexander, the late Baronet, was a most popular and kindly landlord, and, in this respect, maintained the characteristics of the race. He also patronised local talent, and was instrumental in starting the late John Mackenzie of the "Beauties of Gaelic Poetry," in his literary career, having supplied him with aid when he left for the south, and guaranteed the cost of his first publication, the poems of William Ross, the famous Gairloch Bard, who has been aptly designated "the Burns of the Highlands." Nor was Sir Francis a mean member of the literary craft himself. He published an excellent and most useful book on agriculture, "Hints for the use of Highland Tenants and Cottagers, by a Proprietor," with Gaelic and English on opposite pages. This work shows beyond question that its author held advanced and enlightened views on the subject of which he treats, and that he had the old family interest in his tenantry. He once stood as a candidate for the representation of the county of Ross, but lost the election at the last moment, though a majority of the voters were ready to support him, in consequence of his inability to put in a personal appearance on the hustings, he being at the time in the south. He died at a comparatively early age in 1843, leaving the present Baronet without father or mother, only eleven years of age, under trustees, whose indiscreet management resulted in great hardships to the tenantry and injury to the estate. The history of this period must yet be told, but this is not the place; for it has no bearing on our present subject beyond showing the serious difficulties Sir Kenneth had to contend with when he came into possession of his injured property and dependants.

The Gaelic bards, including William Ross and Alastair Buidhe Mac-Iamhair, have been loud in their praises both of Sir Hector and Sir Francis, but we must leave them and pass on to the subject more immediately under notice, and who, coming of such a race of excellent landlords, it is gratifying to find that he has come up in every respect to the very best of his forbears, while in others he far excels them.

At the time of his father's death, in 1843, Sir Kenneth was attending a preparatory school at Rugby, but he was then brought home, and educated by a tutor at Flowerdale, in Gairloch, during the summer. In the winter he went to Edinburgh, accompanied by the same tutor, and attended the classes there. In 1849 both pupil and tutor went to the University of Giessen, in Germany, where he studied Chemistry and Natural Science—the former under the celebrated Professor Liebig. Here he attended for two years, and took his degree. After this he travelled in Italy, principally residing in Rome, where, in 1852, he completed his education. Sir Kenneth having gone to the German University almost

immediately on the back of the revolutionary uprisings of 1848, found Liberal ideas very prevalent among his fellow students, and it was there that the foundation of his future political opinions was first formed.

In 1853 he became of age, and succeeded to the property, amidst the enthusiastic plaudits, and to the great gratification, of his numerous tenantry. Processions came from all parts of the Gairloch property to Flow-erdale House, with pipers playing at their head, many of them a distance of from fifteen to twenty miles. There were bonfires on every prominent hill, the people carrying, each, some piece of combustible material, in many cases an old *cas-chrom*, or other instrument of agriculture which had seen better days—thus to show their personal respect in a special manner by each placing his stick on the burning pile. Whisky and other good things were as plentiful and free as the mountain air. The writer, having travelled eight miles, was a mere boy among the crowd, and well does he remember the vivid impressions made upon his young mind by the enthusiastic crowd, especially by the dancing in the open air, under the canopy of heaven, when fire was set to the great bonfire on the top of the Aird, and old Mrs Fraser (*Bean Eachainn Shim*)—about seventy years of age—led off the reel with an ancient partner, to the stirring strains of her own husband's violin. Similar proceedings took place on the Conan property. A very fine Gaelic poem was composed to Sir Kenneth on the occasion, by Mr F. D. Macdonell, Plockton. The complete poem is printed in volume vii. of the Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness. It gives excellent advice to the young chief, and the sound counsel tendered has indeed proved prophetic. Only a few verses can be given, but these will show how truly the counsel given by the bard so long ago has been realised in the life of Sir Kenneth during the last twenty-seven years. After doing full justice to the Baronet's ancestors, the bard proceeds—

'Sa Choinnich oig b'i m' iarratus,  
O'n 's geug o shugh nam friamh ud thu,  
Gum meas thu'n ainm 's an riaghailtean,  
Ni 's fiachaile na'n storas,  
Gu'm meas thu'n ainm, &c.

Na lean an ceim nan uachdaran,  
A tha 'cur fas nan tuath-bhailtean,  
Le'n docha feidh m'an an cuairt orra,  
Sa sluagh a chur air fogar,  
Le'n docha feidh, &c.

Bi beachdail, smachdail, reusanta,  
Gu duineal, seasmhach, treubhanta,  
Na faic a' choir ga h-eigneachadh,  
'S na eisd ri guth luchd foirneart,  
Na faic a choir, &c.

Bi aoigheil, baigheil, siobhalta,  
Nuair thachras ort an diobarach,  
Biodh bantraichean 'us dilleachdain  
Ro chinnteach as do chomhnadh,  
Biodh bantraichean, &c.

'S bithidh rath, 'us miadh, 'us urram dhuit,  
Gu fialaidh, pailt, 's gu bunaiteach,  
'S bi sith, 'us saimh, 'us subhachas,  
A'd thuineachas an comhnaidh,  
'S bi sith, &c.

In 1854 he was appointed an Attache to Her Majesty's Legation at Washington; but he never joined it. In the following year he obtained a commission as Captain in the Highland Rifle (Ross-shire) Militia. He, however, afterwards retired, but was re-appointed in 1861—became major 1870, and, in 1874, orders having been issued that officers holding appointments both in volunteer and militia regiments could no longer be permitted to hold the double appointments, Sir Kenneth resigned the senior majority in the Highland Rifles to enable him to continue as captain of the Gairloch Company of Volunteers, raised entirely on his own West Coast property, and which he still continues to command.

In 1856, in the twenty-fourth year of his age, he was appointed to the responsible position of Convener of the County of Ross, the duties of which he has since performed "with honour," to use the words of Lord Lovat at the recent Liberal banquet, "mastering the details of the office, and in fact almost undertaking the entire management of the county."

Four years later, in 1860, Sir Kenneth married Miss Eila Frederica, daughter of Walter Frederick Campbell of Islay, a lady who well maintains the characteristics of her house for ability and beauty, as it was so tastefully put by Mr C. Fraser-Mackintosh, M.P., when proposing her health at the recent banquet. On the occasion of their happy union, the Gaelic bards again tuned their lyres, one of his own tenants in Kenlochewe lauding their mutual and well-merited praises in the following strains:—

Chuala mi naigheachd ro thaitneach ri h.eis'neachd,  
Sgeula chaidh aithris am baile Dhun-eidin,  
Sir Coinneach bhi seachnadh ard bhan-tighearnan Shasuinn,  
'Sa posadh ri ainneir, cho maiseach ri te dhiu.

Nighean tighearn Ile tha cinnteach ro uasal,  
Cho fad sa theid firinn a sgrìobhadh mu'n cuairt di,  
Eireachdail, finealta, dìreach, ro-stuama,  
Ailleagan priseil, bho shin i air gluasad.

A bhan-tighearn og aluinn tha'n traths air an tìr so,  
A dh-fhìor fhìil nan armunn bha tamh ann an Ile,  
Na Caimbeulaich laidir, bho chrioch Ar-a-Ghaidheil,  
Toir buaidh air an namhaid 's gach ait anns am bi iad.

Tha cliu air na gaisgich dha'm b-aitreabh an tigh Dige,  
'S priseil an eachdraidh th'air cleachdadh na sinnsear,  
Bu mhoralach, maiseach, an curaidh Sir Eachainn;  
Bha eis'neachd aig fhacal am Baile-na-Rìoghachd.

Sir *Frank*, an duin' uasal, bu shuairce ro choir e,  
Meas aig an t-sluagh air, 's bha 'n tuath air an seol leis,  
Sealgair na'm fuar-bheann, ceum uallach air mointich;  
'S minic a bhuail e na luath's an damh croiceach.

Great rejoicings of a warm and genuine character took place throughout his wide and extensive estates. The enthusiasm of the people were equally demonstrative and sincere on the birth of his heir in 1861.

In 1868 Sir Kenneth was induced to issue an address to the electors of his native county as a candidate for Parliamentary honours on the retirement of Sir James Matheson, Bart., but an address from Mr Alexander Matheson, M.P., appearing in the same paper, and Sir Kenneth finding that he had received early information from his uncle which

enabled him to canvass in advance of Sir Kenneth, the latter at once withdrew in his favour. He arranged a conference of all interested in Highland education, which was held at Inverness, and at which he presided, about a year after the passing of the Education Bill for Scotland through Parliament, and to his services and forethought on that occasion we are primarily and mainly indebted for the favourable concession afterwards made by the Government in favour of the Highlands, by which we were allowed special building grants. He sent the ball a-rolling, and Lochiel and other friends in the House afterwards kicked it successfully to the goal.

On his accession Sir Kenneth continued certain improvements then being carried out on his property—opening up his Gairloch estate by making new roads. By this means he managed to reduce the accumulated arrears on his property, paying for the labour partly in meal, while the balance went to the credit of arrears. The same system was applied to the drainage and improvement of the crofts, and in many cases, where the families were large, very poor, and hopelessly in arrears, he wiped the latter all out in some instances for fifteen and twenty years, and allowed the poor crofters to begin with a clean sheet, in many cases re-valuing and reducing their rents. A general valuation was made and instructions given to the valuers not to value the land too high. The result was carefully examined, and a further reduction made by himself personally, and leases of twelve years given to every crofter on the property. When these leases expired the same process was again gone through, the leases being renewed in every instance, while in many cases the rent was again reduced below that under the old lease. In some cases where no rent could be recovered a croft was divided between two, without any rent whatever. Widows, with young families, got their crofts free of rent until their children grew up, and not a soul was evicted from the estate on any grounds whatever. And in spite of the hard and fast doctrine of our political economists, this generous and enlightened system of estate management has amply rewarded the proprietor, as will be seen from the following figures:—

It appears from the estate books that Sir Kenneth's rental, when he succeeded, was—

From Gairloch ... ..	£3,225	15	2
„ Conan ... ..	1,445	14	6
	<hr/>		
Total ... ..	£4,671	9	8

Of which the sum of £300 was for shooting and angling on the Gairloch property.

According to the last Valuation Roll for the County, after excluding the rental of property acquired since his succession, Sir Kenneth has now a rental of—

From Gairloch ... ..	£7,561	5	9
„ Conan ... ..	1,825	9	0
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Total ... ..	£9,386	14	9

Or more than double, in twenty-six years. The advance from the shooting and angling rents is £2,300; from advances of previous rents of five subjects re-let, only £960, the balance being a gross rise in return for judicious outlays and improvements on the property.

This excellent result is still more gratifying when we consider the large number of human beings whose positions have been vastly improved at the same time that their humane and enlightened landlord has reaped a corresponding advantage to himself and to his successors. The number of tenants on the property is as follows :—

			Paying less than £20.	Paying more than £20.	Householders on 99 years' lease.
At Gairloch	...	...	457	35	28
At Conan	...	...	59	11	57
			516	46	85

Or a total of 647 families. If we take each of these to average five souls, you have a population of 3,235 persons, who are obtaining a livelihood mainly from the soil on Sir Kenneth's property. On many of the crofts, however, there are unfortunately two and, in some cases, more families. This also applies to some of the larger farms; while there are many others living on the Gairloch property who live almost entirely by fishing and common labour, and who have only a house with, in some cases, a small garden; making altogether about five thousand human beings, in whom their generous and kindly landlord takes a direct personal interest, and whose position has been greatly improved by his kindly consideration and enlightened management of his property and people.

We shall now shortly refer to a phase of Sir Kenneth's position and actions as a Highlander which has a more special interest for the reader perhaps than what we have already referred to; and we regret that the limited space at our disposal will not admit of our going into the subject so much as we could wish and it deserves. We refer to the position he has always taken up in connection with the Celtic cause—his advocacy of his countrymen's claims in regard to a fair treatment of themselves, their language, and their literature.

When quite a young man, under age, he took a great interest in the various schools then established on his property. In some of these he supported a system of teaching the children to read the Gaelic Scriptures before they were taught English, and when this position was secured a system of translating the New Testament from Gaelic into English and from English into Gaelic on alternate days was adopted, with most beneficial results. The boys who were taught on this system of double translation have, in a great many cases, improved their position in life, while those educated on the parrot system landed and remained at the herring fishing and on their crofts. And whatever the writer, who, when he entered one of these schools, knew not a single word of English, has done or may yet do in connection with the literature of his countrymen, he attributes entirely to the Gairloch system of teaching English by double translation.

In 1850, when only eighteen years of age, Sir Kenneth took a leading part in raising a monument in the Parish Churchyard to William Ross, the Gairloch poet. We find from the inscription that the promoters were "headed by the amiable and accomplished proprietor of Gairloch." The interest and part which he took in the erection last year of a monument to the late John Mackenzie of "The Beauties of Gaelic Poetry" is well known; but it is not known that to him falls a large portion of the



credit for the movement which terminated in that handsome monument. When the writer consulted him on the matter, he not only approved of the proposal, but liberally encouraged it by asking us to put his name down for any sum we pleased, and to hold him responsible for any balance not forthcoming from Mackenzie's Celtic admirers. While this was so highly creditable to Sir Kenneth, the result is equally so to our Highland countrymen, who came forward so handsomely that we had no occasion to fall back upon Sir Kenneth for anything beyond his original subscription. This was most gratifying.

Sir Kenneth presided at the inaugural Meeting of the Gaelic Society of Inverness in 1872, on which occasion he delivered a short address full of sympathy with the cause of his countrymen, and of sound common sense. He holds the position of being the first elected Honorary Chieftain of the Society, a life appointment, limited to seven men who are eligible only for marked Highland patriotism or distinction in Celtic literature. In 1874 he succeeded Cluny as Chief of the Society, on which occasion and repeatedly since he has delivered some excellent speeches which have proved most effectual in educating public opinion on the question treated, and which will be found published in full in the Annual Transactions of the Society. We do not know of a single movement which has taken place in the interest of his brother Highlanders for many years, in which he has not taken an active, intelligent, and sympathetic part.

The manly and gallant contest in which he recently engaged in the County of Inverness, and the gentlemanly manner in which he conducted his part are so fresh in the memory of the reader as to require no detailed reference here. And if anything more were wanted to strengthen the feeling of regret among Highlanders generally that he is not a member of the British Parliament, we think it will be found in the facts of his past career here recorded, and that apart altogether from political considerations. The country cannot spare the public services of such a man; and, though we know that Sir Kenneth's extreme native modesty and personal disinclination to enter into public life have, until recently brought out by the calls of duty, kept him in comparative retirement, he must be sent to Parliament on the earliest possible opportunity in the interest of the race to which he is so proud to belong; and that we trust for his own native county, where his personal worth is so well-known and so fully appreciated.

On the occasion of his defeat in the County of Inverness, the Liberal electors proposed to present him, at the recent Banquet given in his honour in the Highland Capital, with his portrait and a service of plate, but this he respectfully declined.

We could give various instances of the manner in which the lairds of Gairloch—always considerate and kind—have been held in the high esteem of their tenants, but Sir Kenneth, especially on his West Coast property, has secured for himself their esteem, and even affection, in a very marked and unprecedented degree.

The History of the Clan Mackenzie, published last year, is inscribed to him by the author "as a slight but genuine acknowledgment of his excellent qualities as a representative Highland Chief and as a generous and benevolent landlord"—qualities which, as he becomes better known, will be universally acknowledged as his in an eminent degree.