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Title: The Celtic Magazine, Vol. 1, No. 2, December 1875

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Editor: Alexander Mackenzie

Release date: January 15, 2009 [eBook #27815]

Most recently updated: January 4, 2021

Language: English

Credits: Produced by Tamise Totterdell and the Online Distributed Proofreading Team at <https://www.pgdp.net> (This file was produced from images)

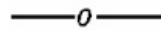
*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE CELTIC MAGAZINE, VOL. 1, NO. 2, DECEMBER 1875 ***

THE CELTIC MAGAZINE.

No. II.

DECEMBER 1875.

THE STATE OF THE OSSIANIC CONTROVERSY.



IN controversy about Ossian, the man on the affirmative side has an immeasurable advantage over all others; and, with an average practical acquaintance with the subject, may exhaust any antagonist. The contents, the connection, and the details; the origin, the tradition, the translation; the poetry, the sentiment, the style; the history, the characters, the *dramatis personæ*; the aspects of nature represented, the customs and manners of the people; the conflicting nationalities introduced, the eventful issues, the romantic incidents; the probable scenes, the subsequent changes; the philosophy and the facts, and multiplied revelations of humanity—all these, and many more such themes inseparably connected with Ossian, if a man rightly understands and believes in them, would enable him to maintain his position in actual controversy, with integrity and ease, for a twelvemonth. The man, on the other hand, who does not believe in the authenticity of Ossian must forego all these advantages in succession, and will reduce himself to straits in an hour. He dare not expatiate or admire, or love, or eulogise, or trust, or credit, or contemplate, or sympathise with anything; or admit a fact, or listen to a word, or look at an argument, on the peril of immediate discomfiture. He must simply shut the book. His only stronghold is denial; his sole logic is assertion; his best rhetoric is abuse; his *ultima ratio* is to create distrust, and to involve both himself and everybody else in confusion. Genius, for example, he declares without hesitation to be trickery; poetry to be bombast; pathos, monotonous moaning; the tenderest human love to be sham; the most interesting natural incidents, contemptible inventions; the plainest statistical information, a deliberate act of theft; the sublimest conceptions of human character, a fudge; the details of human history for three hundred years, a melodramatic, incredible fiction; and what cannot now be found anywhere else recorded, a dream; accidental coincidence he speaks of as detected dishonesty; imaginary resemblance, as guilty adaptation; a style suitable to the subject, as plagiarism; occasional inspiration he calls a lie; translation, a forgery; and the whole, if not a "magnificent mystification," then, in Procurator-Fiscal phrase, a "wilful falsehood, fraud, and imposition." But all this, without proof—and nothing like proof is ever advanced—may be said in an hour, and the argument would remain as it is. Such, in point of fact, has been the sum total of assault, reiterated by every new antagonist with increasing boldness for a century, till reasonable readers have become callous to it, and only ignorant or prejudiced listeners are impressed. To be "hopelessly convinced" by it, is perhaps the latest phase of incredulity; to be edified or enlightened by it is impossible.

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But, besides the advantage of being able to speak with freedom of an author like Ossian, from any natural point of view, an almost infinitely higher advantage still is to be obtained by actually verifying his text; by realising his descriptions, ascertaining his alleged facts, and localising the scenes of his narrative. Whatever is truly grand in Ossian may thus be identified with nature, if it has a counterpart there; and what seems only an imaginary outline at first may be filled up and fixed for ever as among her own still extant properties. A new sense, coherent and intelligible, may thus be imparted to the most familiar figures; and not an allusion to earth or sky, to rock or river, will be lost after such a process. Nay, a certain philosophic significance, amounting to scientific revelation, may be honestly associated with some of his loftiest figures; and what the translator himself apologises for as extravagant, may be thus converted into dreamful intuitions of hidden fact and poetic forecasting of future discoveries. Mr Arnold, in his *Celtic Literature*, seems to glance at such a capacity in Celtic man—"His sensibility gives him a peculiarly near and intimate feeling of nature, and the life of nature; here, too, he seems in a special way attracted by the secret before him, the secret of natural beauty and natural magic, and to be close to it, to half-divine it," p. 108. But Mr Arnold does not seem to include in this capacity the intuitions of natural science, at least not for Ossian; yet nothing can be more certain than that Ossian and his fellow-countrymen enjoyed them.

That verification to such an extent, however, both of facts and localities, and ideas—philosophic or imaginative, in the text of Ossian, was possible, has scarcely hitherto been believed by any one; it has certainly never been attempted. A sort of vagueness in many of his descriptions ill-understood, and a similarity in poetic figures that might be indiscriminately applied; and an occasional apparent conflict or confusion of details seem to have deterred almost all readers from the study we now recommend. But all these difficulties, of verification and interpretation alike, are only on the surface; and not even there, if it has been looked at attentively. Let any intelligent reader, with the poems which refer to Scotland in his hand, survey the Clyde, the Kelvin, and the Carron, and trace the still remaining footsteps of nature and of civilization through distant centuries on their banks, and he will see that Ossian has been there. Let him look steadily even at the cloud-drifts from the Atlantic, as they troop or roll along in a thousand fantastic forms, converging all to a certain inland range, and he will understand that the author of these poems must have seen and studied them so. Let him proceed then to Arran, and he will discover there, if he looks and listens, not only scenes and traditions, and monuments of sepulture, still associated with the names of Oscar and Malvina, Fingal and Ossian—in literal confirmation of what has been stated in the text concerning them; but the only reliable account, by survey and tradition also, of the Fingalian expeditions from Morven to Ireland. Let him then, by direct communication, which is occasionally possible from Arran; or by any circuit he pleases, disembark in the Bay of Larne "with its bosom of echoing woods," as Fingal himself must have done; and there, with *Fingal* and *Temora* in hand, let him survey the entire region between Larne and Belfast. Let him march with his eyes open by the pass of Glenoe, and try to ascend it on the old track—by the "narrow way at the stream of the battle of thousands," round the double-headed rock there by moonlight, or in the misty dawn; and before attempting this, let him look carefully around among the limestone cliffs for any other reasonable opening; and if he does not begin to suspect, at least, that it was here Cuchullin stood, and Calmar fell, against the invading Norse, he must be "hopelessly convinced" to the contrary, indeed. Onwards let him prosecute his journey, looking backwards occasionally to the sea, where the ships of Fingal should be appearing—onwards among marshy Lenas, open Straths, half cultivated Heaths—with an occasional monolith among the enclosures, testifying to what has once been done there; onwards, with his eye now to the ridges on the left—on one of which, below Carneal or thereabouts, the head-quarters of Fingal must have been before the campaigns began—onwards until he touches the source of the Six-Mile-Water above Ballynure; and there, looking steadily westward down the strath where the river winds, let him recall the very words of the text in his hand—"Nor settled from the storm is Erin's sea of war; they glitter beneath the moon, and, low-humming, still roll on the field. Alone are the steps of Cathmor, before them on the heath; he hangs forward with all his arms on Morven's flying host.... They who were terrible were removed: Lubar winds again in their host":—and then ask himself deliberately if the whole scene, with the relative changes of position in the contending armies, the retreat of the one that had been advancing, the pursuit of the other that had been retreating, the recrossing of the stream by both over some of its hundred links, and the temporary pause of battle in that valley, with hosts on either side of the river which now flowed through the ranks of one of them, whilst the other was in retreat up the ridge—could have been more truly described by poet or geographer than it has been in these few words of Ossian? Onward let him proceed, if he pleases, by Ballynure and Ballyclare to Lough Neagh; or let him return again across the valley to the north, in a line at right angles to the road between Larne and Connor. But before he moves from the spot let him glance round for a moment to the south, in the direction of Carrickfergus—"where a valley spreads green behind the hill [literally spreads] with its three blue streams. The sun is there in silence; [that touch is wonderful—no war, as yet, is there] and the dun mountain roes come down." Let him search there at leisure, if he pleases, and he will find the stream of the Noisy Vale, where poor Sulmalla saw the vision of Cathmor's ghost, and "the lake of roes," where Lady Morna died, still Loch Mourne, a little farther east on the mountain. But if this should be inconvenient, then by a step or two forward to the top of the ridge on the right he will come in view of the northern branch of the Six-Mile-Water; and now let him steadily consider what he sees. From east to west before him, lies the Drumadarragh range; between himself and which lies the valley of the Deer Park, intersected by the river, whereabouts, in all probability, the assassination of Oscar took place. Beyond the ridge and through the pass just visible, rises the Glenwherry Water; near the head of which, as has been fully explained, both in "Ossian and the Clyde" and elsewhere, should be found a cave in some rocky cliff, with oaks, or the remains of

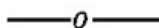
oaks, before it; whilst the river, in its sheltered course or *Cluna*, glides below. "Crommal, with woody rocks and misty top, the field of winds, pours forth to the light blue Lubar's streamy roar. Behind it rolls clear-winding Lavath, in the still vale of deer. A cave is dark in a rock; above it strong-winged eagles dwell; broad-headed oaks before it, sound in Cluna's wind. Within, in his locks of youth, is Ferad-Artho, blue-eyed king, the son of broad-shielded Cairbar, from Ullin of the roes. He listens to the voice of Condan, as grey he bends in feeble light. He listens, for his foes dwell in the echoing halls of Temora. He comes at times abroad, in the skirts of mist, to pierce the bounding roes. When the sun looks on the field, nor by the rock nor stream is he! He shuns the race of Bolga, who dwell in his father's hall." Let him march then to Ferad-Artho's hiding place, across the intervening valley—taking leisurely note, as he goes, of every monolith or cairn on his track; and either up the face of the hill, or through the pass on his right, where the high road now runs, and so on to the hamlet of Maghgerabane; above which, on the Skerry—a gloomy, low-browed, basaltic precipice before him—like a dark porch or portico, in the very face of the rock, halfway up, he will descry the cave in question. He should now cross the Glenwherry at the village, in its grassy gorge, and draw nearer to the portico on the hillside beyond it, keeping a steady look-out for the roots of oaks, for they are still to be discovered there, as he ascends the cliff. Three of them in a row, about twenty feet below the cave, but directly in front of it, although now overwhelmed with ruins, still send up shoots; and two more, a little farther up to the west of it, are equally conspicuous. He will find the cave itself half-ruined already, by the continual fall of basaltic masses from the mountain; and in attempting to scale the rock at the door of the cave, he should be as circumspect as possible, lest a worst thing than the breaking of a bone befalls him. He need not, however, be afraid of "strong-winged eagles," for they are gone; nor need he look for "bounding roes" in the valley, for they are probably exterminated; but he may still look westward on one of the sweetest and stillest vales in the bounds of the Island; and when he remembers that he is now within a few miles of Connor, which is the Temora of Ossian, he will have no difficulty in understanding how Ferad-Artho was brought for shelter and for safety to the cave just above him; or how easily the boy-king could be discovered there by his friends in Fingal's camp to the south, who knew exactly where to find him. Such explorations are but the one-half of what may still be made from the text of Ossian, in this very region; but these will occupy at least three days of a week in summer, and are long enough for present detail in the columns of the *Celtic*. There are other regions however, far beyond Ireland, not so accessible to ordinary tourists, which may be examined nevertheless, with equal certainty by geological survey and geographical report; and to these, on some future occasion, we may take an opportunity of directing the reader's attention.

In the meantime, by way of bringing our present argument to a point, would the reader believe that Macpherson, by whose text alone hitherto we have been guided, was himself more ignorant of these very scenes than a school boy; that he never, in fact, saw them, and did not know where, in Scotland or in Ireland, they were to be found? Yet such is the case. Of the Clyde, of which he could not help knowing something, he knew nevertheless very little—yet not much less than some of our modern geologists; but of localities on the Clyde, or between the Forth and the Clyde, as described in Ossian, he knew nothing. The Kelvin, in like manner, as an Ossianic river, was utterly unknown to him; he does not even attempt to translate its name. All that pertains to Arran, and still so distinctly traceable there by the help of his own text in *Berrathon*—for which Gaelic no longer exists—he transfers in his ignorance to the wilds of Morven. As for Ireland, all that he knows, or seems to know, is that Ullin is Ulster; but the very scenes which are most conspicuous in Ulster he transfers to Leinster—from Antrim, for example, to Meath; and the rest to some undistinguishable point between Londonderry and Armagh. He brings Sulmalla and her forefathers from Wales instead of Wigtonshire, into Wicklow instead of Ardglass; and he lands both Swaran and Cuchullin and Fingal in Lough Foyle apparently, instead of in the Bay of Larne or Belfast? In such circumstances, of what use is it for critics any longer to go on squabbling over Gaelic editions, collecting and collating mediæval Gaelic ballads, and asserting with hopeless fatuity that he was the author of these poems, or that he stole them from the Irish? The Irish themselves are as ignorant of the subject as he is; and yet in spite of all this ignorance on his part and theirs, the text of his translation has received on every page of it the unequivocal countersign of Nature, which can neither be forged nor forfeited. Taking all which into account, does it not now begin to be plain to unprejudiced readers that the whole of this Ossianic controversy has been hitherto on wrong ground; and that if the truth of it is to be arrived at, at all, it must be removed to other ground—from questionable MSS. and mediæval ballads, to the region of facts and the domain of reality? We do not assert that the sort of facts now adduced by us, and elsewhere systematised and elaborated, are the only facts, or the only kind of facts to be considered in such a controversy; but we do assert that their importance is supreme, and that they have never hitherto been admitted in the controversy. It is to facts however, and to facts like these, that the attention of Ossianic students ought now to be directed; and at every step, if we are not greatly deceived, they will multiply and reiterate their testimony in so decided a fashion, that it will be impossible for any critic, or for any collector in the world, to disregard or dispose of them. All farther serious controversy on the subject, in short, is destined to be of this character—common-sense and practical; and the sooner we prepare ourselves, as honest enquirers, to engage in it after this fashion and in this spirit, the better.

P. HATELY WADDELL.

THE HIGHLAND CEILIDH.

BY ALASTAIR OG.



WE are in a west coast village or township, cut off from all communication with the outer world, without Steamers, Railways, or even Roads. We grow our own corn, and produce our beef, our mutton, our butter, our cheese, and our wool. We do our own carding, our spinning, and our weaving. We marry and are taken in marriage by, and among, our own kith and kin. In short, we are almost entirely independent of the more civilized and more favoured south. The few articles we do not produce—tobacco and tea,—our local merchant, the only one in a district about forty square miles in extent, carries on his back, once a month or so, from the Capital of the Highlands. We occasionally indulge in a little whisky at Christmas and the New Year, at our weddings and our balls. We make it too, and we make it well. The Salmon Fishery Acts are, as yet, not strictly enforced, and we can occasionally shoot—sometimes even in our gardens—and carry home, without fear of serious molestation, the monarch of the forest. We are not overworked. We live plainly but well, on fresh fish, potatoes and herring, porridge and milk, beef and mutton, eggs, butter, and cheese. Modern pickles and spices are as unknown as they are unnecessary. True, our houses are built not according to the most modern principles of architecture. They are, in most cases, built of undressed stone and moss (*coinneach*), thatched with turf or divots, generally covered over with straw or ferns held on by a covering of old herring nets, straw, and rope, or *siaman*.

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The houses are usually divided into three apartments—one door in the byre end leading to the whole. Immediately we enter we find ourselves among the cattle. A stone wall, or sometimes a partition of clay and straw separates the byre from the kitchen. Another partition, usually of a more elegant description, separates the latter from the *Culaist* or sleeping apartment. In the centre of the kitchen a pavement of three or four feet in diameter is laid, slightly raised towards the middle, on which is placed the peat fire. The smoke, by a kind of instinct peculiar to peat smoke, finds its way to a hole in the roof called the *falas*, and makes its escape. The fire in the centre of the room was almost a necessity of the good old *Ceilidh* days. When the people congregated in the evening, the circle could be extended to the full capacity of the room, and occasionally it became necessary to have a circle within a circle. A few extra peats on the fire would, at any time, by the additional heat produced, cause an extension of the circle, and at the same time send its warming influences to the utmost recesses of the apartment. The circle became extended by merely pushing back the seats, and this arrangement became absolutely necessary in the houses which were most celebrated as the great *Ceilidh* centres of the district.

The *Ceilidh* rendezvous is the house in which all the Folk-lore of the country, all the old *sgeulachdan* or stories, the ancient poetry known to the bards or *Seanachaidhean*, and old riddles and proverbs are recited from night to night by old and young. All who took an interest in such questions congregated in the evening in these centres of song and story. They were also great centres of local industry. Net-making was the staple occupation, at which the younger members of the circle had to take a spell in turn. Five or six nets were attached in different corners of the apartment to a chair, a bedstead or post set up for the purpose, and an equal number of young gossipers nimbly plied their fingers at the rate of a pound of yarn a day. Thus, a large number of nets were turned out during the winter months, the proceeds of which, when the nets were not made for the members of the household, went to pay for tobacco and other luxuries for the older and most necessitous members of the circle.

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With these preliminary remarks we shall now introduce the readers of the *Celtic Magazine* to the most famous *Ceilidh* house in the district, and ask them to follow us from month to month while we introduce the principal members of the celebrated circle. We shall make each re-appear in these pages to repeat their old stories, recite old poems, never published elsewhere, propound riddles, and in this way we shall be able to lay before our readers a vast amount of the legends, clan feuds, and traditional family history, connected with the Highlands, a large amount of unpublished poetry, *duans*, riddles, proverbs, and Highland customs. It will be necessary to give a great part in the original Gaelic, especially the poetry; but translations of the legends, riddles, and proverbs, will be given when convenient.

The house is such as we have above described. The good-man is bordering upon five-score. He is a bard of no mean order, often delighting his circle of admiring friends with his own compositions, as well as with those of Ossian and other ancient bards. He holds a responsible office in the church, is ground-officer for the laird as well as family bard. He possesses the only Gaelic New Testament in the district. He lives in the old house with three sons whose ages range from 75 to 68, all full of Highland song and story, especially the youngest two—John and Donald. When in the district, drovers from Lochaber, Badenoch, and all parts of the Highlands find their way to this noted *Ceilidh* house. Bards, itinerants of all sorts, travelling tinkers, pipers, fiddlers, and mendicants, who loved to hear or tell a good story, recite an old poem or compose a modern one—all come and are well received among the regular visitors in the famous establishment. As we proceed, each of the strangers and local celebrities will recite their own tales, not only those of their own districts but also those picked up in their wanderings throughout the various parts of the country.

It was a condition never deviated from, that every one in the house took some part in the

evening's performance, with a story, a poem, a riddle, or a proverb. This rule was not only wholesome, but one which became almost a necessity to keep the company select, and the house from becoming overcrowded. A large oak chair was placed in a particular spot—"where the sun rose"—the occupant of which had to commence the evening's entertainment when the company assembled, the consequence being that this seat, although one of the best in the house, was usually the last occupied; and in some cases, when the house was not overcrowded, it was never taken up at all. In the latter case the one who sat next to it on the left, had to commence the evening's proceedings.

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It was no uncommon thing to see one of the company obliged to coin something for the occasion when otherwise unprepared. On one occasion the bard's grandson happened to find himself in the oak chair, and was called upon to start the night's entertainment. Being in his own house he was not quite prepared for the unanimous and imperative demand made upon him to carry out the usual rule, or leave the room. After some hesitation, and a little private humming in an undertone, he commenced, however, a rhythmical description of his grandfather's house, which is so faithful that, we think, we cannot do better than give it here, although chronologically it should be given further on. The picture was complete, and brought down the plaudits of the house upon the "young bard" as he was henceforth designated.

TIGH MO SHEANAIR.

An cuala sibh riamh mu'n tigh aig I—r
'S ann air tha'n deanamh tha ciallach ceart
'S iomadh bliadhua o'n chaidh a dheanamh
Ach 's mor as fhiach e ged tha e sean
Se duine ciallach chuir ceanna-crioch air
'S gur mor am pianadh a fhuair a phears
Le clachan mora ga'n cuir an ordugh,
'S *Sament* da choinntich ga'n cumail ceart.

Tha dorus mor air ma choinneamh 'n-otraich
'Us cloidhean oir air ga chumail glaist
Tha uinneag chinn air ma choinneamh 'n teintean
'Us *screen* side oirre 'dh-fhodar glas;
Tha'n ceann a bhan deth o bheul an fhalais
A deanamh baithach air son a chruidh
'S gur cubhraidh am faladh a thig gu laidir
O leid, na batha 'sa ghamhuinn duibh.

Tha catha 's culaist ga dheanamh dubailt
'S gur mor an urnais tha anns an tigh
Tha seidhir-ghairdean da dharach laidir
'Us siaman bàn air ga chumail ceart,
Tha lota lair ann, da ghrèbhail cathair
'S cha chaith 's cha chnamh e gu brath n' am feasd
Tha carpad mor air da luath na moine
'S *upstairs* ceo ann le cion na *vent*.

Tha sparan suithe o thaobh gu taobh ann
'Us ceangail luibte gan cumail ceart
Tha tuthain chaltuinn o cheann gu ceann deth
'Us maide slabhraidh 's gur mor a neart,
Tha lathais laidir o bheul an fhail air,
Gu ruig am falas sgur mor am fad,
Tha ropan siamain 'us pailteas lion air
'S mar eil e dionach cha 'n eil mi ceart.

On one occasion, on a dark and stormy winter's night, the lightning flashing through the heavens, the thunder clap loud and long, the wind blowing furiously, and heavy dark ominous clouds gathering in the north-west, the circle had already gathered, and almost every seat was occupied. It was the evening of the day of one of the local cattle markets. Three men came in, two of them well-known drovers or cattle buyers who had visited the house on previous occasions, the other a gentleman who had, some time previously, arrived and taken up his quarters in the district. No one knew who he was, where he came from, or what his name was. There were all sorts of rumours floating amongst the inhabitants regarding him; that he had committed some crime, and escaped from justice; that he was a gentleman of high estate, who had fallen in love with a lowly maiden and run away to spite his family for objecting to the alliance; and various other surmises. He was discovered to be a gentleman and a scholar, and particularly frank and free in his conversation with the people about everything except his own history and antecedents, and was a walking encyclopædia of all kinds of legendary lore connected with the southern parts of the country. His appearance caused quite a flutter among the assembled rustics. He was, however, heartily welcomed by the old bard and members of the circle, and was offered a seat a little to the left of the oak arm chair. It was soon found that he was a perfect master of Gaelic as well as English. It was also found on further acquaintance, during many subsequent visits, that he never told a story or legend without a preliminary introduction of his own, told in such a manner as to add immensely to the interest of the tale.

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"*Coinnichidh na daoine ri cheile ach cha choinnich na cnuic*"—(Men will meet each other, but hills will never meet), said *Ruairidh Mor a Chnuic*, who, on this occasion, found himself in the Oak Chair. "Very true," said the next man to the left. "*Cuiridh an teanga snaim nach t-fhuasgail an fhiacail*"—(The tongue will tie a knot which the tooth cannot loosen). "Let some one give us a story." "*Cha robh sgialach nach robh briagach*"—(He who is a good story-teller is also a good retailer of lies), says Callum a Ghlinne, or Malcolm of the Glen, an excellent story-teller when he liked. "I'll give you a riddle though, and perhaps we may get a *sgeulachd* from the stranger, the gentleman, on my left," "*An rud nach eil 's nach robh, 's nach bi' sin do laimh 'us chi thu e*"—(What is not, never was, and never will be, stretch forth your hand and you'll see it). This was soon answered by the younger members—"Bar na meur uileadh an aon fhad"—(The points of the fingers the same length). It now comes the turn of the romantic stranger, who shall in these pages be known as "Norman of the Yacht." He was in no way put out, consented; and immediately began the Legend, of which, and his introductory remarks, the following is a translation:—

THE SPELL OF CADBOLL.

In olden days the east coast of Scotland was studded with fortresses, which, like a crescent chain of sentinels, watched carefully for the protection of their owners and their dependents. The ruins remain and raise their hoary heads over valley and stream, river bank and sea shore, along which nobles, and knights, and followers "boden in effeyre-weir" went gallantly to their fates; and where in the Highlands many a weary drove followed from the foray, in which they had been driven far from Lowland pastures or distant glens, with whose inhabitants a feud existed. Could the bearded warriors, who once thronged these halls awake, they would witness many a wonderful change since the half-forgotten days when they lived and loved, revelled, and fought, conquered, or sustained defeat. Where the bearer of the Crann-tara or fiery cross once rushed along on his hasty errand, the lightning of heaven now flashes by telegraphic wires to the farthest corners of the land. Through the craggie passes, and along the level plains, marked centuries ago with scarce a bridle path, the mighty steam horse now thunders over its iron road; and where seaward once swam the skin *curach*, or the crazy fleets of diminutive war galleys, and tiny merchant vessels with their fantastic prows and sterns, and carved mast-heads, the huge hull of the steam propelled ship now breasts the waves that dash against the rugged headlands, or floats like a miniature volcano, with its attendant clouds of smoke obscuring the horizon.

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The Parish of Fearn in Easter Ross contains several antiquities of very distant date. One of these shattered relics, Castle Cadboll, deserves notice on account of a singular tradition regarding it, once implicitly credited by the people—namely, that although inhabited for ages no person ever died within its walls. Its magical quality did not, however, prevent its dwellers from the suffering of disease, or the still more grievous evils attending on debility and old age. Hence many of the denizens of the castle became weary of life, particularly the Lady May, who lived there centuries ago, and who being long ailing, and longing for death, requested to be carried out of the building to die.

Her importunity at length prevailed; and according to the tradition, no sooner did she leave it than she expired.

Castle Cadboll is situated on the sea shore, looking over the broad ocean towards Norway. From that country, in the early ages of Scottish history, came many a powerful Jarl, or daring Vikingr, to the coasts, which, in comparison with their own land, seemed fertile and wealthy. There is a tradition of a Highland clan having sprung from one of those adventurers, who with his brother agreed that whoever should first touch the land would possess it by right.

The foremost was the ultimate ancestor of the tribe; his boat was almost on shore, when the other, by a vigorous stroke, shot a-head of him; but ere he could disembark, the disappointed competitor, with an exclamation of rage, cut off his left hand with his hatchet, and flinging the bloody trophy on the rocks, became, by thus "first touching Scottish ground," the owner of the country and founder of the clan. The perfect accuracy of this story cannot now be vouched for; but it is an undeniable fact that the clan MacLeod have successfully traced their origin to a Norwegian source; and there is a probability that the claim is correct from the manifestly Norwegian names borne by the founders of the Clan *Tormod* and *Torquil*, hence the *Siol Tormod*—the race of Tormod—the MacLeods of Harris; and the *Siol Torquil*, the race of *Torquil*—MacLeods of Lewis—of whom came the MacLeods of Assynt, one of whom betrayed Montrose in 1650, and from whom the estates passed away in the end of the seventeenth century to the Mackenzies.

The MacLeods of Cadboll are cadets of the house of Assynt. But to what branch the Lady May of the legend belonged it is difficult to decide, so many changes having occurred among Highland proprietors.

The cliffs of this part of Ross-shire are wild and precipitous, sinking with a sheer descent of two hundred feet to the ocean. The scenery is more rugged than beautiful—little verdure and less foliage. Trees are stunted by the bitter eastern blast, and the soil is poor. Alders are, however, plentiful, and from them the parish has derived its name of Fearn. There is a number of caves in the cliffs along the shore towards Taret, where the promontory is bold, and crowned with a lighthouse, whose flickering rays are now the only substitute for the wonderful gem which was said of yore to sparkle on the brow of one of these eastern cliffs,—a bountiful provision of nature

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for the succour of the wave-tossed mariner.

During the reign of one of the early Stuart kings, *which* is of little moment, Roderick MacLeod ruled with a high and lordly hand within the feudal stronghold of Cadboll. He was a stout and stern knight, whose life had been spent amidst the turmoil of national warfare and clan strife.

Many a battle had he fought, and many a wound received since first he buckled on his father's sword for deadly combat. Amid the conflicting interests which actuated each neighbouring clan—disagreement on any one of which rendered an immediate appeal to arms, the readiest mode of solving the difficulty—it is not to be wondered at that Cadboll, as a matter of prudence, endeavoured to attach to himself, by every means in his power, those who were most likely to be serviceable and true. MacLeod had married late in life, and his wife dying soon after, while on a visit to her mother, left behind her an only daughter, who was dear as the apple of his eye to the old warrior, but, at the same time, he had no idea of any one connected with him having any freedom of will or exercise of opinion—save what he allowed—nor did he believe women's hearts were less elastic than his own, which he could bend to any needful expedient. About the period our story commences the Lady May was nearly eighteen years of age, a beautiful and gentle girl, whose hand was sought by many a young chief of the neighbouring clans; but all unsuccessfully, for the truth was she already loved, and was beloved, in secret, by young Hugh Munro from the side of Ben Wyvis.

The favoured of the daughter was not the choice of her father, simply because he was desirous to secure the aid of the Macraes, a tribe occupying Glenshiel, remarkable for great size and courage, and known in history as "the wild Macraes." The chief—Macrae of Inverinate, readily fell in with the views of MacLeod, and as the time fixed for his marriage with the lovely Lady May drew nigh, gratified triumph over his rival Munro, and hate intense as a being of such fierce passions could feel, glowed like a gleaming light in his fierce grey eyes.

"Once more," he said, "I will to the mountains to find him before the bridal. There shall be no chance of a leman crossing my married life, and none to divide the love Inverinate shall possess entire. By my father's soul, but the boy shall rue the hour he dared to cross my designs. Yes, rue it, for I swear to bring him bound to witness my marriage, and then hang him like a skulking wild cat on Inverinate green."

It was nightfall as he spoke thus. Little he knew that at the same moment Hugh Munro was sitting beneath the dark shadows of the alder trees, which grew under the window of the little chamber where May MacLeod was weeping bitterly over the sad fate from which she could see no way of escape. As she sat thus the soft cry of the cushat fell upon her ears. Intently she listened for a few moments, and when it was repeated stepped to the window and opened it cautiously, leaning forth upon the sill. Again the sound stole from among the foliage, and May peered down into the gloom, but nothing met her gaze save the shadows of the waving branches upon the tower wall.

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"It is his signal," she whispered to herself as the sound was repeated once more. "Ah me! I fear he will get himself into danger on account of these visits, and yet I cannot—I cannot bid him stay away."

She muffled herself in a dark plaid, moved towards the door, opened it cautiously, and listening with dread, timidly ventured down to meet her lover.

"I must and will beg him to-night to stay away in future" continued she, as she tripped cautiously down the narrow winding stair—"and yet to stay away? Ah me, it is to leave me to my misery; but it must be done, unkind as it may be, otherwise he will assuredly be captured and slain, for I fear Macrae suspects our meetings are not confined to the day and my father's presence."

After stealing through many dark passages, corridors, and staircases, in out-of-the-way nooks, she emerged into the open air, through a neglected postern shadowed by a large alder, opposite the spot from which the sound proceeded.

Again she gazed into the shadow, and there leaning against a tree growing on the edge of the crag she saw a tall slender figure. Well she knew the outlines of that form, and fondly her heart throbbed at the sound of the voice which now addressed her.

"Dearest," said the young Munro in a low tone, "I thought thou wouldst never come. I have been standing here like a statue against the trunk of this tree for the last half-hour watching for one blink of light from thy casement. But it seems thou preferrest darkness. Ah May, dear May, cease to indulge in gloomy forebodings."

"Would that I could, Hugh," she answered sadly. "What thoughts but gloomy ones can fill my mind when I am ever thinking of the danger you incur by coming here so often, and thinking too of the woeful fate to which we are both destined."

"Think no more of it" said her lover in a cheerful tone. "We have hope yet."

"Alas, there is no hope. Even this day my father hath fixed the time for—to me—this dreaded wedding? And thou Hugh, let this be our last meeting—*Mar tha mi!* our last in the world. Wert thou caught by Inverinate, he so hates thee, he would have thy life by the foulest means."

"Fear not for that dearest. And this bridal! Listen May, before that happen the eagle will swoop down and bear thee away to his free mountains, amid their sunny glens and bosky woods, to love

thee darling as no other mortal, and certainly none of the Clan-'ic-Rathmhearlaich has heart to do."

"Ah me!" sighed May, "would that it could be so. I cannot leave my father until all other hope is gone, and yet I fear if I do not we are fated to be parted. Even this may be the last time we may meet. I warn thee, Hugh, I am well watched, and I beg you will be careful. Hush! was that a footfall in the grove below the crag?" and she pointed to a clump of trees at some distance under where they were standing, and on the path by which he would return.

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"By my troth it may be so," said he. "Better, dear May, retire to your chamber and I shall remain here till you bid me good night from your window."

Again they listened, and again the rustling met their ears distinctly. It ceased, and the maiden bidding her mountain lover a fond good night, ascended to her chamber, while he disdaining to be frightened away by sound, moved to his former position below the alder tree. Seating himself at its root, with his eyes fixed on the window, in a voice low but distinct, he sang to one of the sweet sad lays of long ago, a ditty to his mistress, of which the following paraphrase will convey an idea:—

"Oh darling May, my promised bride,
List to my love—come fly with me,
Where down the dark Ben Wyvis side
The torrent dashes wild and free.
O'er sunny glen and forest brake;
O'er meadow green and mountain grand;
O'er rocky gorge and gleaming lake—
Come,—reign, the lady of the land.

Come cheer my lonely mountain home,
Where gleams the lake, where rills dance bright;
Where flowers bloom fair—come dearest come
And light my dark and starless night.
One witching gleam from thy bright eye
Can change to halls of joy my home!
One song, one softly uttered sigh,
Can cheer my lone heart—dearest come."

The moment the song ceased the fair form of May MacLeod appeared at the casement overhead, she waved a fond farewell to her mountain minstrel and closed the window; but the light deprived of her fair face had no charm for him—he gazed once more at the pane through which it beamed like a solitary star, amid the masses of foliage, and was turning away when he found a heavy hand laid on his shoulder.

"Stay," exclaimed the intruder in a deep stern voice, whose tone the young chief knew but too well. "Thou hast a small reckoning to discharge ere thou go, my good boy. I am Macrae."

"And I," answered the other, "am Hugh Munro, what seek'st thou from me?"

"That thou shalt soon know, thou skulking hill cat," answered Macrae throwing his unbuckled sword belt and scabbard on the ground and advancing with extended weapon.

"Indeed! then beware of the wild cat's spring," Munro promptly replied, giving a sudden bound which placed him inside the guard of his antagonist, whose waist he instantly encircled within his sinewy arms with the design of hurling him over the crag on which they stood. The struggle was momentary. Munro, struck to the heart with Macrae's dagger, fell with May's loved name on his lips, while Macrae, staggering over the height in the act of falling, so wounded himself by his own weapon as to render his future life one of helpless manhood and bitter mental regret.

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MacLeod was soon after slain in one of the many quarrels of the time, while his daughter May, the sorrowing heiress of the broad lands of Cadboll, lived on for fifty years one long unrelieved day of suffering.

Fifty years! Alas for the mourner—spring succeeded winter, and summer spring, but no change of season lightened May MacLeod's burden! Fifty years! year by year passing away only brought changes to those who lived under her gentle sway, and among the dependents of her home; youth passed into age, young men and maidens filled the places of the valued attendants of her girlhood; but the Lady—solitary—still a mourner, in her feudal tower grew old and bent, thin and wan, and still in her heart the love of her youth bloomed fresh for her betrothed.

And then disease laid hold of her limbs—paralyzed—unable to move, she would fain have died, but the spell of Cadboll was on her—death could not enter within its walls.

Sickness and pain, care and grief, disappointment, trust betrayed, treachery and all the ills which life is heir to, all might and did enter there. Death alone was barred without.

Sadly her maidens listened to her heart breaking appeals, to the spirit of Munro, her unwed husband, the murdered bridegroom of her young life, to come to her aid from the land of shadows and of silence. They knew her story of the fifty years of long ago, and they pitied and grieved with her, wondering at the constancy of her woman's heart.

Still more sadly did they listen to her appeals to be carried out from the castle to the edge of the precipice where the power of the spell ceased, there to look for, meet and welcome death; but they knew not the story of the spell, and they deemed her mad with grief.

Terrified at last by her appeals to the dead, with whom she seemed to hold continual conversation, and who seemed to be present in the chamber with them, though unseen, and partly, at length, worn out with her unceasing importunities, and partly to gratify the whim, as they considered it, of the sufferer, tremblingly they agreed to obey her requests and to carry her forth to the edge of the cliff. A frightened band, they bore the Lady May, lying on her couch, smiling with hope and blessing them for thus consenting. Over the threshold, over the drawbridge, her eyes fixed on the heavens, brightened as they proceeded. Hope flushed with hectic glow upon her pale suffering face, grateful thanks broke from her lips. Hastening their steps they passed through the gate, wound along the hill side, and as the broad expanse of ocean with the fresh wind curling it into wavelets burst upon the sight, a flash of rapture beamed on her countenance; a cry of joy rushed from her pallid lips—their feeble burden grew heavier. A murmur of welcoming delight was uttered to some glorious presence, unseen by the maidens, and all became hushed eternally. The Lady May lay on her couch a stiffening corpse. The spell of Cadboll had been broken at last. A MacLeod inhabited it no more, and decay and ruin seized on the hoary pile of which now scarcely a vestige remains to tell of the former extent and feudal strength of Castle Cadboll.

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(To be continued.)

THE OLD CLAYMORE.

—o—

This is the claymore that my ancestors wielded,
This is the old blade that oft smote the proud foe;
Beneath its bright gleam all of home hath been shielded,
And oft were our title-deeds signed with its blow.
Its hilt hath been circled by valorous fingers;
Oft, oft hath it flashed like a mountaineer's ire,
Around it a halo of beauty still lingers
That lights up the tale which can ever inspire.

The Highland Claymore! The old Highland Claymore,
Gleams still like the fire of a warrior's eye,
Tho' hands of the dauntless will grasp it no more—
Disturb it not now, let it peacefully lie.

It twinkled its love for the bold chieftain leading,
It shone like a star on the moon-lighted heath;
As lightning in anger triumphantly speeding
Its keen edge hath swept on the pinions of death:
Wild-breathing revenge o'er the corse of a kinsman,
Dark-vowing their ancient renown to maintain;
Its sheen hath been dimmed by the lips of brave clansmen,
Unwiped till the foe was exultingly slain.

The Highland Claymore! The old Highland Claymore, &c.

It baffled the Norseman and vanquished the Roman,
'Twas drawn for the Bruce and the old Scottish throne,
It victory bore over tyrannous foemen,
For Freedom had long made the weapon her own.
It swung for the braw Chevalier and Prince Charlie,
'Twas stained at Drummossie with Sassenach gore:
It sleeps now in peace, a dark history's ferlie,
Oh! ne'er may be wakened the Highland Claymore.

The Highland Claymore! The old Highland Claymore, &c.

WM. ALLAN.

SUNDERLAND.

1ST OCTOBER 1621 TO 17TH APRIL 1637.

The volume examined ranges over the above period, and contains a great variety of matter, some of little or no interest now; and, of course, in such Records there is, as might be expected, a great deal of sameness; we have, therefore, as set forth above, made some extracts of what we considered the most interesting and curious.

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QUARRELSOME NEIGHBOURS.

Our first extract is one of common occurrence, and similar ones might be picked out of almost every second page. Alexander Cumming and James Cumming, both burgesses of Inverness, quarrel. Mutual friends became security for each that they shall keep the peace and do one another no harm, under the penalty of 300 merks. In some instances the penalty is larger, and in others smaller, just according to the circumstances of the individuals:—

"The Head Burgh Court of Inverness after Michaelmas, held within the Tolbooth of the same by James Cuthbert of Easter Drakies, Provost, Andrew Fraser, Wm. Paterson, elder, Bailies, conjunctly and severally, the 1st day of October, the year of 1621 years, the suits called, the Court fenced and affirmed as use is: That day, Wm. Gray in Inverness is become acted surety, cautioner and lawburrows for Alexander Cumming, burgess there, that James Cumming, burgess of the said burgh, shall be harmless and skaithless of the said Alexander, in his body, goods and gear, in all time coming, otherwise than by order of Law and Justice, under the pain of 300 merks money, and the said Alexander is become acted for his said cautioner's relief, whereupon took Act of Court."

(Signed) "JAMES DUFF, Clerk."

"That day William Robertson, elder, burgess of Inverness, is become acted surety, cautioner and lawburrows for James Cumming, that Alexander Cumming shall be harmless and skaithless of him, in all time coming otherwise than by order of Law and Justice in his body, goods and gear, under the pain of 300 merks money, and the said James is become acted for his cautioner's relief, whereupon, &c.

"The Justice and Burgh Court of the Burgh of Inverness, held [as above] the 25th day of October the year of God 1621 years, the suits called, the Court lawfully fenced and affirmed as use is."

RESULTS OF DRUNKEN ROW.

We have here rather a curious mode of challenge. The parties cut a quantity of straw, each taking a half, and then retire to the Dempster Gardens to test their strength. Forms of challenge vary much. There is the gentlemanly way of throwing down one's glove or gauntlet, the biting of one's thumb as in Romeo and Juliet, and boys have their modes as well as their elders. We remember a common one in Inverness some twenty-five years ago, was to count an opponent's buttons, those of his waistcoat, and then slap him in the face. Another mode was, if any two were egged on to try their strength, the one gave the other what was called *fuge*. This was done in the following way:—A friend or second of one of the opponents said, 'Will you fight him?' The answer, of course, was 'Yes.' The friend then stretched out his right arm and said 'Spit over that.' This being done, he was requested to follow up this procedure by giving his antagonist *fuge*, or a blow. The combatants, after either of the above formalities, retired with their respective friends to some unfrequented spot as the Barnhill or Longman, and there had a fair open set-to. No unfair advantage was permitted, and after a few rounds the affair was over, and the parties became friends again, or the trial of strength was adjourned to be renewed at some future period. Unfortunately, however, for some of us boys if our then teacher got a hint of what was going on, which, somehow or other, he invariably did, then all concerned, both onlookers and combatants, got a good flogging right round.

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It will be observed that the Magistrates of those days, who then had far more extensive powers than now, dealt in a very summary manner with the murderer. The Heading-hill was the elevated part of Muirfield. Burt, a century later, gives a graphic account of an execution he once witnessed there:—

"Thou, John Williamson Skinner, art indicted for the cruel slaughter and murder of the late Murdo M' Ay vic David Robe in Culloden, which you committed yester-night, being the 24th of October instant, upon the fields of Easter Dempster within this Burgh, after you being drinking in William M' Andrew Roy, his house, boasted, and gave evil speeches to the said late Murdo appealed (*i.e.*, challenged) him to the singular combat, and cut a quantity of straw and delivered the one-half thereof to him, and put the other part thereof in your purse, which was found with thee, whereupon you passed forth immediately out of the said house and took thy sword and targe with thee and followed the said late Murdo to the said field, where thou onbeset (set on) him, and with thy drawn sword sticked and struck him in the belly, whereof he departed this present life immediately thereafter, you being taken with red hand, remain yet incarcerated therefor: Wherethrough you have not only committed cruel murder and slaughter, but also been offering of singular combat, express against his Majesty's Laws and Acts of Parliament, which

you cannot deny, and therefore you ought to die.

"That day the said John Williamson being accused on the said dittay in judgment, by Finlay M' Ay vic David Robe and James M' Ay vic David Robe, brothers to the said late Murdo, denied the same, therefore desired the same to be remitted to the trial and cognition of an assize, as he who was panelled, whereupon, &c.

"Names of the Assize—John Cuthbert of Auld Castle-hill, Chancellor; James Waus; James Cuthbert, elder; William Robertson, elder; Alexander Paterson; James Cuthbert in Merkinch; Andrew Fraser, merchant; Thomas Robertson, David Watson, Alexander Taylor, James Cuthbert Jamesson, Patrick Anderson, Jasper Cuthbert, Robert Neilson, Thomas M' Noyiar, William Gray, Robert Moncreiff, William M' Conchie, merchant; William Stevenson, Francis Bishop, James Stewart:

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"That day the foresaid hail persons of assize being all sworn in judgment and admitted, and after trial and cognition taken by them of the said crime, have all in one voice convicted and filed the said John Williamson to be the doer thereof; pronounced by the mouth of John Cuthbert of Auld Castle-hill, Chancellor of the Assize, whereupon, &c.

"That day the judges ordain the said John Williamson to be taken to the Heading-hill and there to be headed, and to sunder the head from the shoulders, for the said slaughter committed by him. Doom given thereon and ordain his hail goods and gear to be escheated. Whereupon, &c.

"That day, thou William Reid M' Andrew Roy in Inverness, art indicted for the art and part, and counsel, of the cruel slaughter or murder of the late Murdo M' Ay vic David Robe in Culloden, upon the 24th day of October instant, where thou with John Williamson Skinner, thy accomplice, drinking with him in your own house in Inverness, first boistit (boasted) the said late Murdo, and thereafter appealed him to the singular combat, and cut straw to that effect, thou thereafter, with the said John Williamson, passed immediately furth and followed the said late Murdo to the field called Easter Dempster, where thou and the said John Williamson beset the said late Murdo, and thou took and held him while the said John Williamson struck him, like as thou also with a knife you struck him in the womb, of the which strikes (blows) the said late Murdo immediately deceased, which you cannot deny, and therefore thou ought to die.

"That day the said William Reid M' Andrew Roy, being accused on the said dittay in judgment by Finlay M' Ay vic David Robe and James M' Ay vic David Robe, brothers to the said late Murdo, denied the same, therefore desired to be remitted to the trial and cognition of an assize. Whereupon, &c. [Names of the Assize as above set forth.]

"That day the foresaid hail persons of Assize being all sworn in judgment, and admitted, and after trial and cognition taken by them of the said crime, have all in one voice absolved and made free the said William Reid M' Andrew Roy, pronounced by the mouth of John Cuthbert of Auld Castle-hill, Chancellor of the Assize in judgment. Whereupon, &c.

"That day the judges absolve the said William Reid M' Andrew Roy from the said crime. Whereupon took Act of Court and instruments.

(Signed) "JAMES DUFF, Clerk."

SOLEMNITIES CONNECTED WITH THE ADMISSION OF BURGESSES.

Burgesses, two hundred years ago, had great privileges within Burgh and had likewise proportionate duties to perform. Many cases like the following have come under notice. In some instances the sums paid are larger, and in some much smaller. Sometimes, however, a person is admitted a burghess without fee, because of the usefulness of his trade or profession, and occasionally as now the honour was conferred on some one of high rank or reputation.

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It will be noticed that the newly admitted burghess is to maintain and defend the true religion *presently preached* within this kingdom. Almost every newly elected burghess had to treat the Magistrates and Town Council to cake and wine, and sometimes to something more substantial, and also to give certain fees to the burgh officers.

"The Burgh Court of the Burgh of Inverness, holden within the Tolbooth of the same by James Cuthbert of Easter Drakies, Provost; Duncan Forbes, Andrew Fraser, notary; and William Paterson, elder; bailies of the said burgh, the last day of October, the year of God 1621 years, the suits called, the Court lawfully fenced and affirmed, as use is:—

"That day John Paterson, merchant, gave in his petition desiring him to be admitted free burghess and guild brother of this burgh, and having tried his conversation have thought him meet to be in their society, and for the sum of ten merks money paid by him to James Duff, clerk, in their names, and as collector thereof, therefore have admitted, nominated, and created the said John Paterson free burghess and guild brother of this burgh of Inverness, with power to him to use, haunt and exercise all manner of liberty and freedom as becometh a free burghess and guild brother of this burgh use to do, in all time coming, who has given the great solemn oath, the holy evangelist touched, that he shall maintain and defend the true religion presently preached within this kingdom, and that he shall be faithful and true to the Crown and his Majesty's Acts and Statutes, and that he shall be obedient to the Provost, Bailies, and Council of Inverness, keep their Acts and Statutes, and that he shall defend them and the liberty of the said burgh with his

person, goods and gear, and that he shall scot and lot, watch and ward with them and the neighbours thereof, and that he shall not hail nor conceal their hurt nor harm, and that he shall not purchase no Lordships in their contrar (in opposition to them), wherein if he does in the contrar, these presents to be null, as if they had never been granted, upon the which the Provost in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, put the guild ring on his five fingers of his right hand, and created the said John free burgess and guild brother, with all ceremonies requisite. Whereupon, &c."

The buying of Lordships or lands without the knowledge of, or in opposition to the wish and interest of the community was a heinous sin, and the guilty party was always disburgessed, which then meant ruin.

THE STAMPING OF LEATHER.

Inverness, from an early period, was noted for trade in hides and leather. Before the opening up of the ready facilities now afforded twixt the West Coast and the south by steamboats and railways, the Highland Capital was the chief outlet for all the produce of the Western Isles and North Highlands, and consequently dealt largely in an export and import trade. The export consisted chiefly of fish, tanned hides, leather, and gloves; while the imports were wines, groceries, iron, ammunition, &c. This trade was, as a rule, with foreign parts, and principally with the Netherlands. Indeed, in early times because of the feuds twixt England and Scotland, the latter was on a much more friendly footing with Spain, France, the low countries, and Denmark than she was with the sister country, and hence probably the old song—

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Oh, have you any broken pots,
Or any broken branders?
For I'm a tinker to my trade,
I'm newly come from Flanders!

Leather and tanned hides were exciseable, and hence the following appointments:—

"At Inverness the 2d day of the month of November, A.D. 1621, in presence of James Cuthbert, Provost; William Paterson and Duncan Forbes, bailies:—That day Mr Samuel Falconer of Kingcorth, and Alex. Forbes, servitor to my Lord Duke of Lennox, commissioners appointed by a noble Lord, John Lord Erskine, for establishing keepers of the seal for sealing and stamping of leather and tanning of hides; by these presents have nominated and appointed Andrew Fraser, notary, burgess of Inverness, keeper of the said stamp and seal, within the burgh of Inverness and bounds thereabout following, to wit—from the shire of Nairn at the east, to the height of Strathglass at the west, including the priory of Beaully therein, with the lands and bounds of Urquhart, Glenmoriston, and Badenoch, Abertarff, Stratherrick, Strathdearn, Strathnairn; who has accepted the same and given his oath *pro fidei administratione*, and to be accountable to the said noble Lord or his deutes for the same as law will, and this present commission to stand to the Feast of Whitsunday next to come 1622 years allenary. Whereupon took Act of Court.

(Signed) "JAMES DUFF, Clerk."

"That day the said Mr Samuel Falconer of Kingcorth, and the said Alex. Forbes, servitor to my Lord Duke of Lennox, commissioners appointed by a noble Lord, John Lord Erskine, for establishing keepers of the seal for sealing and stamping of leather and tanned hides, by these presents have nominated Robert Dunbar, Tutor of Avoch, keeper of the said stamp and seal within the haill bounds, lands and parishes of the diocese and commissariat of Ross (the priory of Beaully only excepted), who has accepted the same and given his oath *pro fidei administratione*, and to be accountable to the said noble Lord or his deutes for the same as law will, and this present commission to stand to the Feast and Term of Whitsunday next to come, 1622 years allenary. Whereupon the said Alex. Forbes asked and took Act of Court.

(Signed) "JAMES DUFF, Clerk."

AN ILLEGAL PROCEEDING AND ITS PUNISHMENT.

"10th April 1622.—In presence of James Cuthbert, Provost; Andrew Fraser and Duncan Forbes, bailies of said burgh—

"That day John Cuthbert Johnson being accused by Catherine Dunbar, spouse to Francis Brodie, for the riot committed by him this day,—viz., she being in her own booth, opposite the cross, in the morning doing her lawful business, the said John came to the booth door, closed and locked the door and enclosed her and her servants therein, and carried the keys thereof with him, and thereafter immediately he passed to the dwelling-house of the said Catherine, and there closed four doors, and took away the keys with him, whereby she was constrained to cause break up the booth door, and to let her and her servants forth, to her great prejudice.

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"That day compeared the said John Cuthbert and confessed the premises, alleging he did the same upon presumption and information, that she was taking some goods, gear, and plenishing furth of the said booth privily, which pertained to the late William Cuthbert his brother, which he remits to the Judge's Interlocutor.

"That day the foresaid judges ordain the said John Cuthbert to remain in ward, aye and until they take order with him, and discern him, in like manner, to come to the booth and deliver the keys to the said Catherine Dunbar; and, in like manner, to come to her house, and there to deliver the other four keys, and to confess his offence, and ordain him to pay for his riot, committed by him, to the Town's Treasurer, fifty pounds money, and to remain in ward until he pay the same. Whereupon took Act of Court.

(Signed) "JAMES DUFF, Clerk."

A DRUNKEN, PUGNACIOUS, AND DISORDERLY TAILOR.

It will be observed that he is not held responsible for his conduct *during* drunkenness. The punishment is certainly severe, and he must have been an incorrigible individual if the "thief's hole" did not suffice, as from later accounts it was such a nuisance that on more than one occasion a cart load of peats had to be burnt therein to make the place *sweet*:—

"9th July, A.D. 1622.—In presence of William Paterson, senior, one of the bailies of the burgh of Inverness:—That day Thomas Paterson, tailor in Inverness, is become acted, in the Burgh Court books thereof, voluntarily, of his own free motive and will, that if ever he offend any person or persons within this burgh, either by word, work, or deed, before or after drunkenness, that he shall be taken to the thief's hole within the Tolbooth of Inverness, and there to remain for the space of twenty days, and thereafter to be taken to the Cross, and there to be punished as a public offender, and to be banished out of the said burgh for ever; and if ever he be found in the said burgh after his banishment, in that case to be taken to the Water of Ness, and to duck him there, and thereafter to put him in ward until he die. Whereupon Robert Sinclair asked and took Act.

(Signed) "JAMES DUFF, Clerk."

CURIOUS PUNISHMENT FOR THE ABUSE OF THE CONSTITUTED AUTHORITIES.

"At Inverness the 2d day of the month of September, A.D. 1622, in presence of James Cuthbert, Provost; Andrew Fraser, William Robertson, senior, and William Paterson, senior, bailies of said burgh:—That day the foresaid judges discern and ordain Anton Anderson for the back-biting and slandering of Andrew Fraser, bailie; and Alexander Logan, notary, for saying to them that the said persons have sold him to his contrar (opposite) party by seeking out of his decret; and also for boasting (threatening) and menacing of the said persons, is decerned in twenty merks money; and likewise shall come to the Cross by ten hours on Saturday, in presence of the magistrates, conveyed by the officers from his own house, and there shall confess in presence of the haill people his offence, as likewise shall come two several Sundays in white suits; and last thereof, shall come down in presence of the haill congregation and confess his fault, and to remain in ward until he obtain pardon for the same, under the pain of two hundred pounds.

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(Signed) "JAMES DUFF, Clerk."

AN UNFORTUNATE AND ILL-MATCHED COUPLE.

It would seem that the heinousness of the misdemeanour was increased because of the presence of strangers. The probable punishment of the female would be the ducking-stool, which, to the terror of all beholders, occupied a prominent position about the centre of the Bridge Street, on the right hand going towards the bridge from the Cross:—

"That day John Christie and Janet Robertson, his spouse, for their riots committed by them on one another, these divers years bygone in back-biting, slandering, and abusing of one another with vile speeches, and in dinging (hitting), hurting, and bleeding of one another, and specially upon the last day of August last by passed, ye both enterit (attacked) one another, on the High King's Causey in presence of divers strangers, and there the said John Christie dang (hit) his said spouse, torrit (tore) her head, and kust (cast) her churge (cap) in the mire, and cast herself in the mire and tramped her with his feet; and likewise she in the meantime took her said spouse by the gorgit (throat), and in the craig (neck), most odious to be seen; therefore the said John, for his fault, is decerned in twenty pounds money, and to amit (lose) his liberty for one year, and in case he be found to commit the like fault in any time coming, to pay forty pounds money *toties quoties*, and in like manner remit the punishment of the said Janet Robertson for drunkenness and misbehaviour to the censure of the kirk. Whereupon, &c."

ALEX. FRASER.

(To be Continued.)

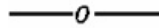
MR H. L. ROLFE, the celebrated Irish painter, has just finished a large natural history picture, entitled "A Border Feud." The scene is laid on a Scotch loch. An otter has succeeded in taking a salmon, which it has just commenced to devour; an eagle is flying away, having been

disappointed of its prey. This last effort of Mr Rolfe's is the most successful which has yet appeared from his studio.

THE Christian Knowledge Society is bringing out a revised edition of their Gaelic translation of the Book of Common Prayer.

ON THE DRUIDICAL CHANTS PRESERVED IN THE CHORUSES OF POPULAR SONGS IN ENGLAND, SCOTLAND, IRELAND, AND FRANCE.

By CHARLES MACKAY, LL.D., F.S.A., *Author of the Gaelic Etymology of the English and Lowland Scotch, and the Languages of Western Europe.*



THE learned Godfrey Higgins informs us in his *Anacalypsis* that "every word in every language has originally had a meaning, whether a nation has it by inheritance, by importation, or by composition." He adds that it is evident if we can find out the original meaning of the words which stand for the names of objects, great discoveries may be expected. The Duke of Somerset, in our day, expresses the same truth more tersely when he says that "every word in every language has its pedigree."

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All who are acquainted with the early lyrical literature of England and Scotland, preserved in the songs and ballads of the days immediately before and after Shakspeare, must sometimes have asked themselves the meaning of such old choruses as "*Down, down, derry down,*" "*With a fal, la, la*" "*Tooral, looral,*" "*Hey, nonnie, nonnie,*" and many others. These choruses are by no means obsolete, though not so frequently heard in our day as they used to be a hundred years ago. "*Down, down, derry down,*" still flourishes in immortal youth in every village alehouse and beershop where the farm labourers and mechanics are accustomed to assemble. One of the greatest living authorities on the subject of English song and music—Mr William Chappell—the editor of the *Popular Music of the Olden Time*, is of opinion that these choruses, or burdens, were "mere nonsense words that went glibly off the tongue." He adds (vol. i., page 223), "I am aware that '*Hey down, down, derry down,*' has been said to be a modern version of '*Ha, down, ir, deri danno,*' the burden of an old song of the Druids, signifying, Come let us haste to the oaken grove (Jones, *Welsh Bards*, vol. i., page 128), but this I believe to be mere conjecture, and that it would now be impossible to prove that the Druids had such a song." That Mr Chappell's opinion is not correct, will, I think, appear from the etymological proofs of the antiquity of this and other choruses afforded by the venerable language which was spoken throughout the British Isles by the aboriginal people for centuries before the Roman invasion, and which is not yet extinct in Wales, in Ireland, in the Isle of Man, and in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland.

Julius Cæsar, the conqueror of Gaul and Britain, has left a description of the Druids and their religion, which is of the highest historical interest. That system and religion came originally from Assyria, Egypt, and Phœnicia, and spread over all Europe at a period long anterior to the building of Rome, or the existence of the Roman people. The Druids were known by name, but scarcely more than by name, to the Greeks, who derived the appellation erroneously from *drus*, an oak, under the supposition that the Druids preferred to perform their religious rites under the shadows of oaken groves. The Greeks also called the Druids Saronides, from two Celtic words *sar* and *dhuine*, signifying "excellent or superior men." The Celtic meaning of the word "Druid" is to enclose within a circle, and a Druid meant a prophet, a divine, a bard, a magician; one who was admitted to the mysteries of the inner circle. The Druidic religion was astronomical, and purely deistical, and rendered reverence to the sun, moon, and stars as the visible representatives of the otherwise unseen Divinity who created man and nature. "The Druids used no images," says the Reverend Doctor Alexander in his excellent little volume on the Island of Iona, published by the Religious Tract Society, "to represent the object of their worship, nor did they meet in temples or buildings of any kind for the performance of their sacred rites. A circle of stones, generally of vast size, and surrounding an area of from twenty feet to thirty yards in diameter, constituted their sacred place; and in the centre of this stood the cromlech (crooked stone), or altar, which was an obelisk of immense size, or a large oblong flat stone, supported by pillars. These sacred circles were usually situated beside a river or stream, and under the shadow of a grove, an arrangement which was probably designed to inspire reverence and awe in the minds of the worshippers, or of those who looked from afar on their rites. Like others of the Gentile nations also, they had their 'high places,' which were large stones, or piles of stones, on the summits of hills; these were called carns (cairns), and were used in the worship of the deity under the symbol of the sun. In this repudiation of images and worshipping of God in the open air they resembled their neighbours the Germans, of whom Tacitus says that from the greatness of the heavenly bodies, they inferred that the gods could neither be inclosed within walls, nor assimilated to any human form; and he adds, that 'they consecrated groves and forests, and called by the names of the gods that mysterious object which they behold by mental adoration

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alone.'

"In what manner and with what rites the Druids worshipped their deity, there is now no means of ascertaining with minute accuracy. There is reason to believe that they attached importance to the ceremony of going thrice round their sacred circle, from east to west, following the course of the sun, by which it is supposed they intended to express their entire conformity to the will and order of the Supreme Being, and their desire that all might go well with them according to that order. It may be noticed, as an illustration of the tenacity of popular usages and religious rites, how they abide with a people, generation after generation, in spite of changes of the most important kind, nay, after the very opinions out of which they have risen have been repudiated; that even to the present day certain movements are considered of good omen when they follow the course of the sun, and that in some of the remote parts of the country the practice is still retained of seeking good fortune by going thrice round some supposed sacred object from east to west."

But still more remarkable than the fact which Doctor Alexander has stated, is the vitality of the ancient Druidic chants, which still survive on the popular tongue for nearly two thousand years after their worship has disappeared, and after the meaning of these strange snatches and fragments of song has been all but irretrievably lost, and almost wholly unsuspected. Stonehenge, or the *Coir-mhor*, on Salisbury Plain, is the grandest remaining monument of the Druids in the British Isles. Everybody has heard of this mysterious relic, though few know that many other Druidical circles of minor importance are scattered over various parts of England, Scotland, and Ireland. In Scotland they are especially numerous. One but little known, and not mentioned by the Duke of Argyll in his book on the remarkable island of which he is the proprietor, is situated between the ruins of the cathedral of Iona and the sea shore, and is well worthy of a visit from the thousands of tourists who annually make the voyage round the noble Isle of Mull, on purpose to visit Iona and Staffa. There is another Druidic circle on the mainland of Mull, and a large and more remarkable one at Lochnell, near Oban, in Argyllshire, which promises to become as celebrated as Stonehenge itself, combining as it does not only the mystic circle, but a representation, clearly defined, of the mysterious serpent, the worship of which entered so largely into all the Oriental religions of remote antiquity. There are other circles in Lewis and the various islands of the Hebrides, and as far north as Orkney and Shetland. It was, as we learn from various authorities, the practice of the Druidical priests and bards to march in procession round the inner circle of their rude temples, chanting religious hymns in honour of the sunrise, the noon, or the sunset; hymns which have not been wholly lost to posterity, though posterity has failed to understand them, or imagined that their burdens—their sole relics—are but unmeaning words, invented for musical purposes alone, and divested of all intellectual signification.

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The best known of these choruses is "*Down, down, derry down*," which may either be derived from the words *dun*, a hill; and *darag* or *darach*, an oak tree; or from *duine*, a man; and *doire*, a wood; and may either signify an invitation to proceed to the hill of the oak trees for the purposes of worship, or an invocation to the men of the woods to join in the Druidical march and chant, as the priests walked in procession from the interior of the stone circle to some neighbouring grove upon a down or hill. This chorus survives in many hundreds of English popular songs, but notably in the beautiful ballad "The Three Ravens," preserved in *Melismata* (1611):—

There were three ravens sat on a tree,
Down-a-down! hey down, hey down.
They were as black as black might be,
With a down!
Then one of them said to his mate,
Where shall we now our breakfast take,
With a down, down, derry, derry, down!

A second well-known and vulgarised chorus is "*Tooral looral*," of which the most recent appearance is in a song which the world owes to the bad taste of the comic muse—that thinks it cannot be a muse until it blackens its face to look like a negro:—

Once a maiden fair,
She had ginger hair,
With her *tooral looral lá, di, oh!*
And she fell in love
Did this turtle dove
And her name was Dooral,
Hoopty Dooral! *Tooral looral*, oh my!

This vile trash contains two Celtic or Gaelic words, which are susceptible of two separate interpretations. *Tooral* may be derived from the Celtic *turail*—slow, sagacious, wary; and *Looral* from *luathrail* (pronounced *laurail*)—quick, signifying a variation in the time of some musical composition to which the Druidical priests accommodated their footsteps in a religious procession, either to the grove of worship, or around the inner stone circle of the temple. It is also possible that the words are derived from *Tuath-reul* and *Luath-reul* (*t* silent in both instances), the first signifying "North star," and the second "Swift star;" appropriate invocations in the mouths of a priesthood that studied all the motions of the heavenly bodies, and were the astrologers as well as the astronomers of the people.

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A third chorus, which, thanks to the Elizabethan writers, has not been vulgarised, is that which

occurs in John Chalkhill's "Praise of a Countryman's Life," quoted by Izaak Walton:—

Oh the sweet contentment
The countryman doth find.
High trolollie, lollie, lol: High trolollie, lee,

These words are easily resolvable into the Celtic; *Ai!* or *Aibhe!* Hail! or All Hail! *Trath*—pronounced *trah*, early, and *la*, day! or "*Ai, trã, là, là, là*"—"Hail, early day! day," a chorus which Moses and Aaron may have heard in the temples of Egypt, as the priests of Baal saluted the rising sun as he beamed upon the grateful world, and which was repeated by the Druids on the remote shores of Western Europe, in now desolate Stonehenge, and a thousand other circles, where the sun was worshipped as the emblem of the Divinity. The second portion of the chorus, "*High trolollie lee*," is in Celtic, *Ai tra la, la, li*, which signifies, "Hail early day! Hail bright day!" The repetition of the word *la* as often as it was required for the exigencies of the music, accounts for the chorus, in the form in which it has descended to modern times.

"*Fal, la, là*," a chorus even more familiar to the readers of old songs, is from the same source. Lord Bathurst, afterwards Earl of Dorset, wrote, in 1665, the well-known ballad, commencing:—

To all you ladies now on land,
We men at sea indite,
But first would have you understand
How hard it is to write.
With a *fal, la, là*, and a *fal la, là*,
And a *fal, la, la, la, là*.

Fal is an abbreviation of *Failte!* welcome! and *là* as already noted signifies a day. The words should be properly written *Failte! la! la!* The chorus appears in the "Invitation to May," by Thomas Morley, 1595:—

Now is the month of Maying,
When merry lads are playing,
Fal, la, là!
Each with his bonnie lass,
Upon the greeny grass,
Fal, la, là!

The Celtic or Druidical interpretation of these syllables is, "Welcome the day."

"*Fal, lero, loo*," appears as a chorus in a song by George Wither (1588-1667):—

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There was a lass—a fair one
As fair as e'er was seen,
She was indeed a rare one,
Another Sheba queen.
But fool, as I then was,
I thought she loved me true,
But now alas! she's left me,
Fal, lero, lero, loo.

Here *Failte*, as in the previous instance, means welcome; *lear* (corrupted into *lero*), the sea; and *luaidh* (the *d* silent), praise; the chorus of a song of praise to the sun when seen rising above the ocean.

The song of Sir Eglamour, in Mr Chappell's collection, has another variety of the *Failte* or *Fal, la*, of a much more composite character:—

Sir Eglamour that valiant knight,
Fal, la, lanky down dilly!
He took his sword and went to fight,
Fal, la, lanky down dilly!

In another song, called "The Friar in the Well," this chorus appears in a slightly different form:—

Listen awhile and I will tell
Of a Friar that loved a bonnie lass well,
Fal la! lál, la, la, lál! Fal la, langtre down dilly!

Lan is the Gaelic for full, and *dile* for rain. The one version has *lanky*, the other *langtre*, both of which are corruptions of the Celtic. The true reading is *Failte la, lan, ri, dun, dile*, which signifies "Welcome to the full or complete day! let us go to the hill of rain."

Hey, nonnie, nonnie. "Such unmeaning burdens of songs," says Nares in his Glossary, "are common to ballads in most languages." But this burden is not unmeaning, and signifies "Hail to the noon." *Noin* or noon, the ninth hour was so called in the Celtic, because at midsummer in our northern latitudes it was the ninth hour after sunrise. With the Romans, in a more southern latitude, noon was the ninth hour after sunrise, at six in the morning, answering to our three o'clock of the afternoon. A song with this burden was sung in England in the days of Charles the Second:—

I am a senseless thing, with a hey!

Men call me a king, with a ho?
For my luxury and ease,
They brought me o'er the seas,
With a heigh, nonnie, nonnie, nonnie, no!

Mr Chappell cites an ancient ballad which was sung to the tune of *Hie dildo, dil*. This also appears to be Druidical, and to be resolvable into *Ai! dile dun dile!* or "Hail to the rain, to the rain upon the hill," a thanksgiving for rain after a drought.

Trim go trix is a chorus that continued to be popular until the time of Charles the Second, when Tom D'Urfrey wrote a song entitled "Under the Greenwood Tree," of which he made it the burden. Another appears in Allan Ramsay's Tea-table Miscellany:—

The Pope, that pagan full of pride,
He has us blinded long,
For where the blind the blind does guide,
No wonder things go wrong.
Like prince and king, he led the ring
Of all inquitie.
Hey trix, trim go trix!
Under the greenwood tree.

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In Gaelic *dream* or *dreim* signifies a family, a tribe, the people, a procession; and *qu tric*, frequently, often, so that these words represent a frequent procession of the people to the hill of worship under the greenwood tree.

In Motherwell's "Ancient and Modern Minstrelsy," the ballad of Hynd Horn contains a Celtic chorus repeated in every stanza:—

Near Edinburgh was a young child born,
With a *Hey lilli lu*, and a *how lo lan!*
And his name it was called young Hynd Horn,
And the birk and the broom bloom bonnie.

Here the words are corruptions of *aidhe* (Hail); *li*, light or colour; *lu*, small; *ath*, again; *lo*, day-light; *lan*, full; and may be rendered "Hail to the faint or small light of the dawn"; and "again the full light of the day" (after the sun had risen).

In the Nursery Rhymes of England, edited by Mr Halliwell for the Percy Society, 1842, appears the quatrain:—

Hey dorolot, dorolot,
Hey dorolay, doralay,
Hey my bonnie boat—bonnie boat,
Hey drag away—drag away.

The two first lines of this jingle appear to be a remnant of a Druidical chant, and to resolve themselves into,

Aidhe, doire luchd—doire luchd,
Aidhe doire leigh, doire leigh.

Aidhe, an interjection, is pronounced Hie; *doire*, is trees or woods; *luchd*, people; and *leigh*, healing; and also a physician, whence the old English word for a doctor, a leech, so that the couplet means

Hey to the woods people! to the woods people!
Hey to the woods for healing, to the woods for healing.

If this translation be correct, the chorus would seem to have been sung when the Druids went in search of the sacred mistletoe, which they called the "heal all," or universal remedy.

There is an old Christmas carol which commences—

Nowell! Nowell! Nowell! Nowell!
This is the salutation of the Angel Gabriel.

Mr Halliwell, in his Archaic Dictionary, says "Nowell was a cry of joy, properly at Christmas, of joy for the birth of the Saviour." A political song in a manuscript of the time of King Henry the Sixth, concludes—

Let us all sing nowelle,
Nowelle, nowelle, nowelle, nowelle,
And Christ save merry England and spede it well.

The modern Gaelic and Celtic for Christmas is *Nollaig*—a corruption of the ancient Druidical name for holiday—from *naomh*, holy, and *la*, day, whence "Naola!" the burden of a Druidical hymn, announcing the fact that a day of religious rejoicing had arrived for the people.

A very remarkable example of the vitality of these Druidic chants is afforded by the well-known political song of "*Lilli Burlero*" of which Lord Macaulay gives the following account in his History of England:—

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"Thomas Wharton, who, in the last Parliament had represented Buckinghamshire, and who was already conspicuous both as a libertine and as a Whig, had written a satirical ballad on the administration of Tyrconnel. In his little poem an Irishman congratulates a brother Irishman in a barbarous jargon on the approaching triumph of Popery and of the Milesian race. The Protestant heir will be excluded. The Protestant officers will be broken. The great charter and the prayers who appeal to it will be hanged in one rope. The good Talbot will shower commissions on his countrymen, and will cut the throats of the English. These verses, which were in no respect above the ordinary standard of street poetry, had for burden some gibberish which was said to have been used as a watchword by the insurgents of Ulster in 1641. The verses and the tune caught the fancy of the nation. From one end of England to the other all classes were constantly singing this idle rhyme. It was especially the delight of the English army. More than seventy years after the Revolution a great writer delineated with exquisite skill a veteran who had fought at the Boyne and at Namur. One of the characteristics of the good old soldier is his trick of whistling Lilliburllero. Wharton afterwards boasted that he had sung a king out of three kingdoms. But, in truth, the success of Lilliburllero was the effect and not the cause of that excited state of public feeling which produced the Revolution."

The mysterious syllables which Lord Macaulay asserted to be gibberish, and which in this corrupt form were enough to puzzle a Celtic scholar, and more than enough to puzzle Lord Macaulay, who, like the still more ignorant Doctor Samuel Johnson, knew nothing of the venerable language of the first inhabitants of the British Isles, and of all Western Europe, resolve themselves into *Li! Li Beur! Lear-a! Buille na la*, which signify, "Light! Light! on the sea, beyond the promontory! 'Tis the stroke (or dawn) of the day!" Like all the choruses previously cited, these words are part of a hymn to the sun, and entirely astronomical and Druidical.

The syllables *Fol de rol* which still occur in many of the vulgarest songs of the English lower classes, and which were formerly much more commonly employed than they are now, are a corruption of *Failte reul!* or welcome to the star! *Fal de ral* is another form of the corruption which the Celtic original has undergone.

The French, a more Celtic people than the English, have preserved many of the Druidical chants. In Beranger's song "Le Scandale" occurs one of them, which is as remarkable for its Druidic appositeness as any of the English choruses already cited:—

Aux drames du jour,
Laissons la morale,
Sans vivre à la cour
J'aime le scandale;
Bon!
Le farira dondaine
Gai!
La farira dondé.

These words resolve themselves into the Gaelic *La! fair! aire! dun teine!* "Day! sunrise! watch it on the hill of fire (the sacred fire)"; and *La! fair! aire! dun De!* "Day! sunrise! watch it on the hill of God."

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In the Recueil de Chanson's Choiesies (La Haye, 1723, vol. i., page 155), there is a song called Danse Ronde, commencing *L'autre jour, pres d'Annette* of which the burden is *Lurelu La rela!* These syllables seem to be resolvable into the Celtic:—*Luadh reul! Luadh!* (Praise to the star! Praise!); or *Luath reul Luath* (the swift star, swift!); and *La! reul! La!* (the day! the star! the day!).

There is a song of Beranger's of which the chorus is *Tra, la trala, tra la la*, already explained, followed by the words—*C'est le diabh er falbala*. Here *falbala* is a corruption of the Celtic *falbh la!* "Farewell to the day," a hymn sung at sunset instead of at sunrise.

Beranger has another song entitled "Le Jour des Morts," which has a Druidical chorus:—

Amis, entendez les cloches
Qui par leurs sons gemissants
Nous font des bruyans reproches
Sur nos rires indecents,
Il est des ames en peine,
Dit le pretre interessé.
C'est le jour des morts, mirliton, mirlitaine.
Requiscant in pace!

Mir in Celtic signifies rage or fuss; *tonn* or *thonn*, a wave; *toinn*, waves; and *tein*, fire; whence those apparently unmeaning syllables may be rendered—"the fury of the waves, the fury of the fire."

Tira lira la. This is a frequent chorus in French songs, and is composed of the Gaelic words *tiorail*, genial, mild, warm; *iorrach*, quiet, peaceable; and *là*, day; and was possibly a Druidical chant, after the rising of the sun, resolving itself into *Tiorail-iorra la*, warm peaceful day!

Rumbelow was the chorus or burden of many ancient songs, both English and Scotch. After the Battle of Bannockburn, says Fabyan, a citizen of London, who wrote the "Chronicles of England," "the Scottes inflamed with pride, made this rhyme as followeth in derision of the English:—

"Maydens of Englande, sore may ye mourne
For your lemans ye 've lost at Bannockisburne,
With *heve a lowe!*
What weeneth the Kyng of Englande,
So soone to have won Scotlande,
With *rumbylowe!*"

In "Peebles to the Play" the word occurs—

With heigh and howe, and *rumbelowe*,
The young folks were full bauld.

There is an old English sea song of which the burden is "with a rumbelowe." In one more modern, in Deuteromelia 1609, the word dance the rumbelow is translated—

Shall we go dance to round, around,
Shall we go dance the round.

Greek—*Rhombos*, *Rhembo*, to spin or turn round.

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The word is apparently another remnant of the old Druidical chants sung by the priests when they walked in procession round their sacred circles of Stonehenge and others, and clearly traceable to the Gaelic—*Riomball*, a circle; *riombalach*, circuitous; *riombalachd*, circularity.

The perversion of so many of these once sacred chants to the service of the street ballad, suggests the trite remark of Hamlet to Horatio:—

To what base uses we may come at last!
· · · · · ·
Imperial Cæsar, dead and turned to clay,
May stop a hole to keep the winds away.

The hymns once sung by thousands of deep-voiced priests marching in solemn procession from their mystic shrines to salute with music and song, and reverential homage, the rising of the glorious orb which cheers and fertilises the world, the gift as well as the emblem of Almighty Power and Almighty Love, have wholly departed from the recollection of man, and their poor and dishonoured relics are spoken of by scholars and philosophers, as trash, gibberish, nonsense, and an idle farrago of sounds, of no more philological value than the lowing of cattle or the bleating of sheep. But I trust that all attentive readers of the foregoing pages will look upon the old choruses—so sadly perverted in the destructive progress of time, that demolishes languages as well as empires and systems of religious belief—with something of the respect due to their immense antiquity, and their once sacred functions in a form of worship, which, whatever were its demerits as compared with the purer religion that has taken its place, had at least the merit of inculcating the most exalted ideas of the Power, the Love, and the Wisdom of the Great Creator.

ON VISITING *DRUIM-A LIATH*, THE BIRTH- PLACE OF DUNCAN *BAN MACINTYRE*.

—o—

The homes long are gone, but enchantment still lingers,
These green knolls around, where thy young life began,
Sweetest and last of the old Celtic singers,
Bard of the *Monadh-dhu'*, blithe *Donach Bàn!*

Never mid scenes of earth, fairer and grander,
Poet first lifted his eyelids on light;
Free mid these glens, o'er these mountains to wander,
And make them his own by the true minstrel right.

Thy home at the meeting and green interlacing
Of clear-flowing waters and far-winding glens,
Lovely inlaid in the mighty embracing
Of sombre pine forests and storm-riven Bens.

Behind thee these crowding Peaks, region of mystery,
Fed thy young spirit with broodings sublime;
Each cairn and green knoll lingered round by some history,
Of the weird under-world, or the wild battle-time.

Thine were Ben-Starrav, Stop-gyre, Meal-na-ruadh,
Mantled in storm-gloom, or bathed in sunshine;
Streams from Corr-oran, Glash-gower, and Glen-fuadh
Made music for thee, where their waters combine.

[Pg 66]

But over all others thy darling Bendorain
Held thee entranced with his beautiful form,
With looks ever-changing thy young fancy storing,
Gladness of sunshine and terror of storm—

Opened to thee his heart's deepest recesses,
Taught thee the lore of the red-deer and roe,
Showed thee them feed on the green mountain cresses,
Drink the cold wells above lone Doire-chro.

How did'st thou watch them go up the high passes
At sunrise rejoicing, a proud jaunty throng?
Learn the herbs that they love, the small flow'rs, and hill grasses,
And made them for ever bloom green in thy song.

Yet, bard of the wilderness, nursling of nature,
Would the hills e'er have taught thee true minstrel art,
Had not a visage more lovely of feature
The fountain unsealed of thy tenderer heart?

The maiden that dwelt by the side of Maam-haarie,
Seen from thy home-door, a vision of joy,
Morning and even the young fair-haired Mary
Moving about at her household employ.

High on Bendoa and stately Ben-challader,
Leaving the dun deer in safety to bide,
Fondly thy doating eye dwelt on her, followed her,
Tenderly wooed her, and won her thy bride.

O! well for the maiden that found such a lover,
And well for the poet, to whom Mary gave
Her fulness of love until, life's journey over,
She lay down beside him to rest in the grave.

From the bards of to-day, and their sad songs that dark'n
The day-spring with doubt, wring the bosom with pain,
How gladly we fly to the shealings and harken
The clear mountain gladness that sounds in thy strain.

On the hill-side with thee is no doubt or misgiving,
But there joy and freedom, Atlantic winds blow,
And kind thoughts are there, and the pure simple living
Of the warm-hearted folk in the glens long ago.

The muse of old Maro hath pathos and splendour,
The long lines of Homer majestic'lly roll;
But to me Donach Bàn breathes a language more tender,
More kin to the child-heart that sleeps in my soul.

J. C. SHAIRP.

ST ANDREWS.

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DECEMBER 1875 ***

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