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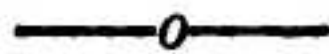
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VOL. V.

HISTORY OF THE MACDONALDS,
AND
THE LORDS OF THE ISLES.

BY THE EDITOR.



I.

To write a full, authentic, and, at the same time, a popular history of this ancient and illustrious family is no easy task. Its earlier annals are much obscured, and it is difficult to decide between the various contradictory accounts given of it by the earlier chroniclers. The researches of Skene, Gregory, and others have, however, made the task much easier, and the result more trustworthy than it could otherwise have been. Gregory's "History of the Western Islands and Isles of Scotland," now scarce, is an invaluable guide, and will be largely taken advantage of in the following pages, down to 1625. The object of that work, to quote the author himself, "is to trace the history of the territories once owned by the great Lords of the Isles, from the time of the downfall of that princely race, in the reign of James IV. of Scotland, until the accession of Charles I. to the throne of Great Britain."

It is not our intention to speculate at length on the different races which are variously stated to have originally occupied the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. Those who desire to enter upon that subject will find various and divergent authorities to consult, which need not here be referred to. In this work we shall get on solid and authentic historical ground as soon as possible, and leave speculation as to the origin and pre-historic annals of the Clan to those who delight in such attractive but generally useless inquiry. Mr Skene holds that the Macdonalds are of Celtic, or at all events of mixed Celtic origin, that is, descended from the Gallgall, or Gaelic pirates, or rovers, who are said to be so described to distinguish them from the Norwegian and Danish *Fingall* and *Dubh-ghall*, or white and black strangers or rovers. He maintains that they are of a purely Pictish descent, not even mixed with the Dalriadic Scots. Gregory says that "the earliest inhabitants of the Western Isles or Ebudes (corruptly Hebrides) were probably a portion of the Albanich, Caledonians, or Picts. In some of the Southern Islands, particularly in Isla, this race must have been displaced or overrun by the Dalriads on their first settle-

ment; so that, at the date of the Scottish conquest the Isles, like the adjacent mainland, were divided between the Picts and the Scots. The change produced in the original population of the Isles, by the influx of the Scots—a cognate Celtic race—was, however, trifling compared with that which followed the first settlement of the Scandinavians in the Isles towards the end of the ninth century." From 880 to about 1100 the Western Isles were under and governed by Norwegian and Danish kings. In 1103 the Islanders took for their king Lagman, the eldest son of Godred Crovan, King of Man. This Prince, after a reign of seven years, abdicated, when the nobility of the Isles applied to Murchad O'Brien, then King of Ireland, to send them over a Prince of his blood to act as Regent during the minority of Olave, surviving son of Godred Crovan who died at Jerusalem, where he went on a pilgrimage, shortly after his abdication of the throne. The Irish King sent them Donald MacTade, who ruled over the Islanders for two years; but he became so obnoxious, by his tyranny and oppression, that the Island Chiefs rose against him, and expelled him; whereupon he fled to Ireland, and never again returned to the Isles. Olave succeeded and reigned for forty years, preserving his kingdom from aggression, and securing a long period of peace within his dominions. This king was known among the Highlanders as Olave the Red. He was succeeded by his son, Godred the Black, whose daughter, Ragnhildis, married Somerled, Prince or Lord of Argyle, from whom sprung the dynasty so well known in Scottish history, and of whom we shall have much to say in the following pages, as the Lords of the Isles.

It is impossible to decide what the elements were of which the inhabitants of the Western Isles were at this period composed; but there appears to be little doubt that a mixture of Scandinavian and Celtic blood was effected in very early times; and the same holds good of the contiguous mainland districts, which, being intersected by various arms of the sea, were also, like the Isles, overrun more or less by the Norwegian and Danish sea rovers; but, in spite of this, history and topography prove beyond question that the Celtic language ultimately prevailed, and that it was very much the same as is spoken in the present day. While there is no doubt at all as to the mixture of races, it is much more difficult to decide to what extent the mixture prevailed; but all the best authorities hold that the Celtic element predominated. It is, however, of much more importance to discover which of the Scandinavian tribes infused the largest portion of northern blood into the population of the Isles. Gregory says that the Irish annalists divided the piratical bands, "which in the ninth and following centuries infested Ireland, into two great tribes, styled by these writers, *Fiongall*, or white foreigners, and *Dubhghall*, or black foreigners. These are believed to represent, the former, the Norwegians, the latter, the Danes; and the distinction in the names given to them is supposed to have arisen from a diversity either in their clothing or in the sails of their vessels. These tribes had generally separate leaders, but they were occasionally united under one king; and, although both were bent, first on ravaging the Irish shores, and afterwards on seizing portions of the Irish territories, they frequently turned their arms against each other. The Gaelic title of *Righ Fiongall*, or King of the Fiongall, so frequently applied to the Lords of the Isles, seems to prove that Olave the Red, from whom they were descended in the female line, was so styled, and that, conse-

quently, his subjects in the Isles, in so far as they were not Celtic, were Fiongall or Norwegians. It has been remarked by one writer,* whose opinion is entitled to weight, that the names of places in the exterior Hebrides, or the long island, derived from the Scandinavian tongue, resemble the names of places in Orkney, Shetland, and Caithness. On the other hand, the corresponding names in the interior Hebrides are in a different dialect, resembling that of which the traces are to be found in the topography of Sutherland, and appear to have been imposed at a later period than the first mentioned names. The probability is, however, that the difference alluded to is not greater than might be expected in the language of two branches of the same race after a certain interval; and that the Scandinavian of the Hebrides was, therefore, derived from two successive Norwegian colonies. This view is further confirmed by the fact, that the Hebrides, although long subject to Norway, do not appear ever to have formed part of the possessions of the Danes.†

We now come to consider more especially the origin of the Macdonalds, at one time, by far the most important, most numerous, and most powerful of the Western Clans. This noble race is undoubtedly descended from Somerled of Argyle, but his origin is involved in obscurity and surrounded with considerable difficulty. Of his father, *Gillebride*, and of his grandfather, *Gilledomnan*, little is known but the names. According to both the Highland and Irish genealogists, Gilledomnan was sixth in descent from Godfrey MacFergus, who in an Irish chronicle is called Toshach of the Isles, and who lived in the reign of Kenneth MacAlpin. Tradition asserts that Godfrey or one of his race was expelled from the Isles by the Danes.‡ which assertion if correct, may apply to the conquest of Harald Harfager, who in all probability dispossessed many of the native Island chiefs. But the Celtic Seanachaidhs are not satisfied with a descent even so remote as Fergus. They trace, through a long line of ancestors, the descent of that chief from the celebrated Irish King, *Conn nan Ceud Cath*, or Conn of the Hundred Battles. So far the account of Somerled's origin according to those who maintain his Scoto-Irish descent. Others have maintained that he was undoubtedly a Scandinavian by male descent. "His name," says Gregory, "is certainly a Norse one§; but then on the other hand, the names of his father and grandfather are purely Celtic; whilst the inter-marriages that must have taken place between the two races in the Isles and adjacent coasts, make it impossible to found any argument on the Christian name alone. Somerled is mentioned more than once in the Norse Sagas, but never in such a way as to enable us to affirm with certainty what the opinion of the Scandinavian writers was as to his origin. He appears to have been known to them as *Sumarlidi Haullds*, and the impression produced by the passages in which he is mentioned is rather against his being considered a Norseman. It is possible, however, as he was certainly descended from a noted individual of the name of Godfrey, that his ancestor may have been that Gofra MacArailt, King of the Isles, who died in 989. But, on the whole, the uni-

* Chalmers' Caledonia, vol. i., p. 266.

† Highlands and Isles, pp. 8-9.

‡ Hugh Macdonald's MS. History of the Macdonalds, written about the end of the seventeenth century.

§ The Norse *Somerled*, and the Gaelic *Somhairle*, are both rendered into the English, *Samuel*.

formity of the Highland and Irish traditions, which can be traced back at least four hundred years, lead to the conclusion that the account first given of the origin of Somerled is correct."

We are informed by the Macdonald genealogists that Gillebride was expelled from his possessions, and that he and his son Somerled were obliged for a long time to conceal themselves in a cave in Morvean, from which circumstance the father is known in tradition as *Gillebride na h'Uamh*, or of the Cave.* From certain circumstances, obscurely hinted at, continues Gregory, it would seem that Gillebride, after the death of Malcolm Ceannmor, had, with the other Celtic inhabitants of Scotland, supported Donald Bane, the brother of Malcolm, in his claim to the Scottish throne, to the exclusion of Edgar, Malcolm's son, and that, consequently, on the final triumph of the Anglo-Saxon party, Gillebride would naturally be exposed to their vengeance in exact proportion to his power, and to the assistance he had given to the other party. His possessions are believed to have been on the mainland of Argyle, but this has not been conclusively ascertained. Somerled when young was drawn from his obscurity, and placed at the head of the men of Morvern, to defend the district from a band of Norse pirates who threatened to ravage it. By his courage and skill Somerled completely defeated them; and, following up his success, he soon after recovered his paternal inheritance

* "Fragment of a Manuscript History of the Macdonalds," written in the reign of Charles II., by Hugh Macdonald, is printed from the Gregory collection in the "Collectanea de Rebus Albanis," pages 282-324. It is often referred to by Gregory in his "Highlands and Isles." It begins as follows:—"Sommerled, the son of Gilbert, began to muse on the low condition and misfortune to which he and his father were reduced, and kept at first very retired. In the meantime, Allin Mac Vich Allin coming with some forces to the land of Morverin for pillage and her ships, intending to retire forthwith to Lochaber, from whence he came. From this Allan descended the family of Lochiel. Sommerled thought now it was high time to make himself known for the defence of his country, if he could, or at least see the same, having no company for the time. There was a young sprout of a tree near the cave which grew in his age of infancy. He plucked it up by the root, and putting it on his shoulder, came near the people of Morverin, desired them to be of good courage and do as he did, and so by this persuasion, all of them having pulled a branch, and putting the same on their shoulder, went on encouraging each other. Godfrey Du had possession of the Isles of the north side of Ardnamurchan from the King of Denmark. Olay compelled the inhabitants of some of these Isles to infest Morverin by landing some forces there. The principal surnames in the country were Macianeses and Macgillivrays, who are the same as the Macinneses. They, being in sight of the enemy, could act nothing without one to command them. At length they agreed to make the first person that should appear to them their general. Who came in the meantime but Sommerled, with his bow, quiver, and sword? Upon his appearance they raised a great shout of laughter. Sommerled enquiring the reason, they answered they were rejoiced at his appearance. They told him that they had agreed to make the first that would appear their general. Sommerled said he would undertake to lead them, or serve as a man otherwise. But if they pitched upon him as their commander, they should swear to be obedient to his commands; so, without any delay, they gave him an oath of obedience. There was a great hill betwixt them and the enemy, and Sommerled ordered his men to put off their coats, and put their shirts and full armour above their coats. So making them go three times in a disguised manner about the hill that they might seem more in number than they really were, at last he ordered them to engage the Danes, saying that some of them were on shore and the rest in their ships; that those on shore would fight but faintly so near their ships. Withal he exhorted his soldiers to be of good courage, and to do as they would see him do. The first whom Sommerled slew he ript up and took out his heart, desiring the rest to do the same, because that the Danes were no Christians. So the Danes were put to the flight; many of them were lost in the sea endeavouring to gain their ships; the lands of Mull and Morverin being freed at that time from their yoke and slavery. After this defeat given to the Danes, Sommerled thought to recover Argyle from those who, contrary to right, had possessed it, being wrung out of the hands of his father unjustly by Macbeath, Donald Bain, and the Danes."

and made himself master of a great portion of Argyle, and thenceforth assumed the title of Lord, Thane, or Regulus of Argyle, and became one of the most powerful chiefs in Scotland.

Smibert agrees generally with the better known writers already quoted, and considers it probable, from many concurrent circumstances, that while the Macdonalds were wholly Celtic fundamentally, they had the blood of the Irish Celts commingled in their veins with that of the Pictish Celts. The term Gall-gael applied to them by early writers, signifying strangers or Piratical Gaels, seems to him to prove that from the first they dwelt in the Isles or sea coasts of the west, and severed them broadly from the Norse pirates, who at the same time visited our western shores. "The Gall-gael appear to be clearly distinguishable from the primitive or Dalriadic Scots" who issued from Ireland, and originally peopled a considerable portion of Argyle, then termed Dalriada. "The sires of the Macdonalds arrived, in all likelihood, at a somewhat later epoch, fixing themselves more peculiarly in the Isles of the western coasts; though, when the Scots overturned the kingdom of the southern and eastern Picts in the ninth century, and shifted more or less extensively to the richer territories then acquired, the Gall-gael seem to have also become the main occupants of Argyle and the surrounding mainland. From that period they are closely identified with the proper northern and north-western Gaelic Picts, with whom they, beyond doubt, formed connections freely. The interests of both were henceforth nearly the same; and for many successive centuries they struggled conjointly against the growing and adverse power of the Scottish monarchy of the Lowlands."

Of this view of "the descent of the Siol Cuinn (the special name given from an early chief, named Conn of the Hundred Battles, to the ancestors of the Macdonalds) it may at all events be said that there would be some difficulty in offering a more rational and intelligible one, and it may be justified by various and strong arguments. The early and long-continued hostility which they displayed towards the Scots will not admit of their being considered as a pure Scoto-Dalriadic tribe. On the other hand, their constant community of interests with the Gaelic Picts of the north and north-west goes far to prove a close connection with these, and a liberal intermixture of blood, though it does not altogether justify us in ascribing their descent wholly and primarily to that native and purely Celtic source. "Other facts indeed point strongly to an Irish original. Among such facts may be reckoned the repeated references of the Macdonald race, to Ireland for aid, in all times of peril and difficulty, for many consecutive centuries. From the Somerleds of the eleventh, down to Donald (called the Bastard) in the sixteenth century, the kings and chiefs of the house are again and again recorded as having visited that island and sought assistance as from undoubted relatives. Nor did they do so vainly, the Macquarries, for example, being almost certainly among such introduced auxiliaries. Moreover the line and range of their early possessions lead us directly towards Ireland. The Isle of Man was long one of their chief holdings, while Bute, Arran, and Islay, with Cantire, were among their first Scottish seats, all being in the track of Irish rovers or emigrants. Again the heads of the Macdonalds themselves seem to have entertained opinions as to their descent only explicable on the same supposition. Sir James Macdonald, writing in 1615, speaks of his family as

having been 'ten hundred years kindly Scotsmen under the Kings of Scotland.' . . . 'On the whole, the conclusion reasonably to be drawn from these and similar circumstances is, that the direct founders of the Macdonald race came primarily from Ireland at some very early period of the annals of the Dalriad-Scots; and that they were left (or made themselves) the successors of that people in place and power in the west of Scotland, at the precise time when the overthrow of the southern Picts drew their Dalriadic conquerors further inland. That the Siol Cuinn, or Race of Conn, then became deeply and inseparably blended in regard of blood, as well as of interests with the native northern Gael, is a farther conclusion equally consistent with facts and probability."

"The almost natural division between the Highlands and the Lowlands, conjoined with the remembrances which must long have existed of Pictish greatness, ever urged the inhabitants of the former region of all sections and descriptions to unite for the maintenance of its independence against the encroaching Lowlanders. Besides, the ties betwixt the Scots and the Gaelic Picts were broken up at a very early period. The former entirely lost their Pictish dialect, spoken in Bede's time, and became otherwise thoroughly *saxonised*. On the contrary, the Highlanders, whether natives or immigrants, Gaelic or Erse, were from first to last, of the same primary Celtic stock; and, accordingly, it was but natural that all of them should have combined against the Lowlanders as against a common foe, and should, in short, have been blended in the course of time into one people, and that people the Gael of Scotland." The same writer proceeds to say that various other clans of less note are implicated in the question of the origin of the Macdonalds as well as themselves; and he candidly admits, though personally disposed in favour of the Irish origin, that it is certainly enveloped in considerable difficulties. He then goes on to point out in reply to those who consider an Irish origin "degrading," that such parties appear to forget that whatever Ireland may have been since, that to the ancient western world it was the very cradle of religion and the nursery of civilisation. He asserts that undoubted evidences exist of the advanced state of the Irish people at a time when the Celts of Britain were comparatively in a state of barbarism. To belong to a race "which sent forth Columba, and through him originated an Iona, with all its concomitant blessings, might satisfy the pride of birth of even the haughtiest families." The settlement of the Saint in Iona would appear, he thinks, to confirm the supposition that the immigrants of the sixth century, which he thinks were accompanied by Saint Columba, and with which the ancestors of the Macdonalds came over from Ireland, only obtained possession at first of some of the smaller islands, and that they held little of the mainland until the tenth, eleventh, or twelfth centuries, after the removal further south of the Dalriadic-Scots.

Summing up the views of other writers on this subject, particularly of those above quoted, the editor of Fullarton's "History of the Highland Clans" assumes that the clan governed by Somerled formed part of the Gall-gael, that their independent kings must in all probability have been his ancestors; and, therefore, that the names of these kings should be found in the old genealogies of Somerled's family. "But this appears scarcely to be the case. The last king of the Gall-gael was Suibne, the son of Kenneth, who died in the year 1034; and, according to the manu-

script of 1450, an ancestor of Somerled, contemporary with this petty monarch, bore the same name, from which it may be presumed that the person referred to in the genealogy and manuscript is one and the same individual. The latter, however, calls Suibne's father Nialgusa; and in the genealogy there is no mention whatever of a Kenneth. But from the old Scottish writers we learn that at this time there was such a Kenneth, whom they call Thane of the Isles, and that one of the northern maormors also bore the same name, although it is not very easy to say what precise claim either had to be considered as the father of Suibne. There is also a further discrepancy observable in the earlier part of the Macdonald genealogies, as compared with the manuscript; and besides, the latter, without making any mention of these supposed kings, deviates into the misty region of Irish heroic fable and romance. At this point, indeed, there is a complete divergence, if not contrariety, between the history as contained in the Irish annals and the genealogy developed in the manuscript; for, whilst the latter mentions the Gall-gael under their leaders as far back as the year 856, the former connect Suibne by a different genealogy with the Kings of Ireland. The fables of the Highland and Irish Sennachies now become connected with genuine history. The real descent of the chiefs was obscured or perplexed by the Irish genealogies, and previously to the eleventh century neither these genealogies nor even that of the manuscript of 1450 can be considered as of any authority whatever. It seems somewhat rash, however, to conclude, as Mr Skene has done, that the Siol Cuinn, or descendents of Conn, were of native origin. This exceeds the warrant of the premises, which merely carry the difficulty a few removes backward into the obscurity of time, and there leave the question in greater darkness than ever."

Skene, in his "Highlanders of Scotland," writing of the "Siol Cuinn," says:—"This tribe was one far too distinguished to escape the grasping claims of the Irish Sennachies, and accordingly it appears to have been among the very first to whom an Irish origin was imputed; but later antiquaries, misled by the close connection which at all times existed between the Macdonalds and the Norwegians of the Isles, have been inclined rather to consider them as of Norwegian origin. Neither of these theories, however, admit of being borne out either by argument or authority. The followers of the Irish system can only produce a vague tradition in its support against the manifest improbability of the supposition that a tribe possessing such extensive territories in Scotland should have been of foreign origin, while history is altogether silent as to the arrival of any such people in the country." The writer then points out that it has been proved that the Irish traditions in Scotland were of a comparatively modern origin, and that the Norwegian origin of the race has been assumed without solid reasons, mainly from the fact that the Danish and Norwegian pirates ravaged the western shores of Scotland, and brought its inhabitants under subjection, when the conquered Gaels, to some extent, adopted the piratical and predatory habits of their conquerors. The traditions of the Macdonalds themselves, he says, tend to show that they could not have been of foreign origin. The whole of the Highlands, and especially the districts possessed by the Gall-gael, were inhabited by the Northern Picts, at least as late as the eleventh century. In the middle of the twelfth the Orkneyinga Saga terms Somerled and his sons, who were the

chiefs of the tribe, the Dalveria Aett, or Dalverian family—a term, according to Skene, “ derived from Dala, the Norse name for the district of Argyle, and which implies that they have been for some time indigenous in the district ; and this is confirmed in still stronger terms by the Flatey-book, consequently the Macdonalds were either the descendants of these Pictish inhabitants of Argyle, or else they must have entered the county subsequently to that period. But the earliest traditions of the family uniformly bear that they had been indigenous in Scotland from a much earlier period than that. Thus, James Macdonell, of Dunluce, in a letter written to King James VI., in 1596, has this passage—‘ Most mightie and potent prince recomend us unto your hieness with our service for ever, your grace shall understand that our forbears hath been from time to time* your servants unto your own kingdome of Scotland.’ Although many other passages of a similar nature might be produced, these instances may suffice to show that there existed a tradition in this family of their having been natives of Scotland from time immemorial ; and it is therefore scarcely possible to suppose that they could have entered the country subsequently to the ninth century. But besides the strong presumption that the Macdonalds are of Pictish descent, and formed a part of the great tribe of the Gall-gael, we fortunately possess distinct authority for both of these facts. For the former, John Elder includes the Macdonalds among the ‘ ancient stoke,’ who still retained the tradition of a Pictish descent, in opposition to the later tradition insisted on by the Scottish clergy, and this is sufficient evidence for the fact that the oldest tradition among the Macdonalds must have been one of a Pictish origin. The latter appears equally clear from the last mention of the Gall-gael in which they are described as the inhabitants of Argyle, Kintyre, Arran, and Man ; and as these were at this period the exact territories which Somerled possessed, it follows of necessity that the Macdonalds were the same people.”

In another part of his valuable and rare work, Skene says that “ we are irresistibly driven to the conclusion, that the Highland Clans are not of a different or foreign origin, but they are a part of the original nation who have inhabited the mountains of Scotland as far back as the memory of man or the records of history can reach—that they were divided into several great tribes possessing their hereditary chiefs ; and that it was only when the line of these chiefs became extinct, and Saxon nobles came in their place, that the Highland Clans appeared in the peculiar situation and character in which they were afterwards found.” And he then proceeds :—“ This conclusion to which we have arrived at by these general arguments is strongly corroborated by a very remarkable circumstance ; for, notwithstanding that the system of an Irish or Dalriadic origin of the Highland Clans had been introduced as early as the beginning of the fifteenth century, we can still trace the existence in the Highlands, even as late as the sixteenth century, of a still older tradition than that contained in the MS. of 1450 ; a tradition altogether distinct and different from that one, and one which not only agrees in a singular manner with the system developed in this work, but which also stamps the Dalriadic tradition as the invention of the Scottish Monks, and accounts for its introduction. The first proof of the existence of this tradition, which I

* The expression of “ from time to time,” when it occurs in ancient documents, always signifies from time immemorial.

shall bring forward, is contained in a letter dated 1542, and addressed to King Henry VIII. of England by a person designating himself 'John Elder, Clerk, a Reddshanks.' It will be necessary to premise that the author uses the word '*Yrische*' in the same sense in which the word *Erse* was applied to the Highlanders, his word for Irish being differently spelt. In that letter he mentions the '*Yrische lords of Scotland commonly callit REDD SCHANKES, and by historiagraphouris PICTIS.*' He then proceeds to give an account of the Highlanders; he describes them as inhabiting Scotland 'befor the incummynge of Albanactus Brutus second sonne,' and as having been 'gyauntes and wylde people without ordour, civilitie, or maners, and *spake none other language but Yrische;*' that they were civilized by Albanactus, from whom they were 'callit Albonyghe.' And after this account of their origin he adds, 'which derivacion the papistical curside spiritualitie of Scotland *will not heir* in no maner of wyse nor confesse that ever *such a kyng, namede Albanactus reigned ther,* the which derivacion all the Yrische men of Scotland, which be the *auncient stoke,* cannot, nor will not denye. But our said bussheps drywithe Scotland and theme selves from a certain lady namede Scota (as they alledge) came out of Egipte, a maraculous hote cuntretti, to secreate hirsself emonges theame in the cold ayre of Scotland, *which they can not afferme by no probable auncient author.*' From the extracts which have been made from *this* curious author, continues Skene, it will at once be seen that there was at that time in Scotland *two* conflicting traditions regarding the origin of the Reddschankes or Highlanders, the one supported by the Highlanders of the *more auncient stoke,* the other by the 'curside spiritualitie of Scotland;' and from the indignation and irritation which he displays against the 'bussheps,' it is plain that the latter tradition was gaining ground, and must indeed have generally prevailed. The last tradition is easily identified with that contained in the MS. of 1450 and consequently there must have existed among the purer Highlanders a still older tradition by which their origin was derived from the 'Pictis.' The existence of such a tradition in Scotland at the time is still further proved by Stapleton's translation of the venerable Bede, which was written in 1550. In that translation he renders the following passage of Bede, '*Cugus monasterium in cunctis pene sept entrionalium Scottorum et omnium Pictorum monasteriis non parvo tempore arcem tenebat,*' as follows:—'The house of his religion was no small time the head house of all the monasteries of the northern Scottes, and of the Abbyes of all the REDDSCHANKES.' It would be needless to multiply quotations to show that the Highlanders were at that time universally known by the term Reddshankes."

Our author says that in regard to this, the oldest tradition which can be traced in the country, that it accords with the conclusions at which he had arrived otherwise by a strict and critical examination of all the ancient authorities on the subject, and forms a body of evidence regarding the true origin of the Highlanders of Scotland to which the history of no other nation can exhibit a parallel; and he points out that while the authority of John Elder proves that the tradition of the descent of the Highlanders existed before the Irish or Dalriadic system was introduced, we can at the same time learn from him the origin of the later system and the cause of its obtaining such universal belief. The first trace of the Dalriadic system is to be found in the famous letter addressed

to the Pope in 1320 by the party who stood out for the independence of Scotland against the claims of Edward I. To this party the clergy belonged, while those who supported Edward I. believed in the more ancient tradition on which he founded his claim, and which included a belief in their descent from the Picts. The question of the independence of Scotland was thus to a considerable extent, most unfortunately, placed by the two parties, on the truth of their respective traditions, and "it is plain that as the one party fell, so would the tradition which they asserted; and the final supremacy of the independent party in the Highlands, as well as in the rest of Scotland, and the total ruin of their adversaries, must have established the absolute belief in the descent of the Highlanders, as well as the kings and clergy of Scotland, from the Scots of Dalriada." But in spite of all this, John Elder's letter proves that, notwithstanding the succession of false traditions which prevailed in the Highlands at different periods, traces of the ancient and probably correct one were to be found as late as the middle of the sixteenth century.

What is true of the Highlanders generally must be more or less true of individual clans, and of none more so than of the Macdonalds, to whom we must now return. From all these authorities, though a little conflicting in some of their opinions, there seems to be no difficulty in coming to the conclusion, that whether Somerled, at a remote period, descended from some of the Scoto-Irish immigrants to the Western Isles, or not, the date of such descent is so far back, and his ancestors, if not of them, were so mixed up with the original Celtic Picts who, in those remote ages, inhabited the Isles and North-west Highlands that the Macdonalds and their immediate progenitor, Somerled of the Isles, may be fairly described as of native Highland origin; and that with at least as much accuracy as Her Majesty of the United Kingdom when she is, notwithstanding her continental connections, justly described as of native British descent.

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VOL. V.

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BY THE EDITOR.



II.

FROM the death of Suibne to the accession of Gillebride, father of Somerled, little or nothing is known of the ancestors of the Macdonalds. Gillebride was expelled from his possessions in the Scottish Highlands by the Danes and the Fiongalls, whereupon he took refuge in Ireland, and afterwards prevailed upon the descendants of Colla, to assist him in an attempt to obtain possession of his ancient inheritance in Scotland. Four or five hundred of these joined him and accompanied him to Alban, but he was unsuccessful and failed to secure his object. It was only after this, that Somerled for the first time, comes into notice. He appears to have been of a very different temper to his father. At first he lived in retirement, musing in silent solitude, over the ruined fortunes of his family. He, when a favourable opportunity presented itself, as already stated, placed himself at the head of the people of Morven; attacked the Norwegians, whom, after a long and desperate struggle, he expelled from the district; and ultimately made himself master, in addition to Morven, of Lochaber and Argyle. When David the First, in 1135, expelled the Norwegians from Man, Arran, and Bute, Somerled obtained a grant of those islands from the king. "But finding himself unable to contend with the Norwegians of the Isles, whose power remained unbroken, he resolved to recover by policy what he despaired of acquiring by force of arms;" and, with this view, he succeeded in obtaining, about 1140, the hand of Ragnhildis, daughter of Olave, surnamed the Red, then the Norwegian King of the Isles. The following curious account relating how Somerled secured the daughter of Olave the Red, is recorded in the Macdonald MS. :—“Olay encamped at Loch Storna, Sommerled came to the other side of the loch, and cried out if Olay was there, and how he fared? Olay replied that he was well. Ther said Sommerled, I come from Sommerled, Thane of Argyle, who promises to assist you conditionally, in your expedition provided you bestow your daughter on him. Olay answered that he would not give him his daughter, and that he knew he himself was the man; but that he and his men should follow him in his expedition. So

Sommerled resolved to follow Olay. There was at that time a foster-brother of Olay's, one Maurice MacNeill, in Olay's company, who was a near friend of Sommerled; and when Sommerled brought his two galleys near the place where Olay's ship lay, this Maurice aforesaid came where he was, and said that he would find means by which he might come to get Olay's daughter. So, in the night time, he bored Olay's ship under water with many holes, and made a pin for each hole, overlaying them with tallow and butter. When they were up in the morning and set to sea, after passing the point of Ardnamurchan, Olay's ship sprung a leak, casting the tallow and butter out of the holes by the ship tossing on the waves, and beginning to sink, Olay and his men cried for help to Sommerled. Maurice replied that Sommerled would not save him unless he bestowed his daughter upon him. At last, Olay being in danger of his life, confirmed by an oath that he would give his daughter to Sommerled, who received him immediately into his galley. Maurice went into Olay's galley and fixed the pins in the holes which he had formerly prepared for them, and by these means they landed in safety. From that time the posterity of Maurice are called MacIntyres (or wright's sons) to this day. On this expedition Olay and Sommerled killed MacLier, who possessed Strath within the Isle of Skye. They killed Godfrey Du, or the Black, by putting out his eyes, which was done by the hermit MacPoke, because Godfrey Du had killed his father formerly. Olay, surnamed the Red, killed MacNicoll in North Uist likewise. Now Sommerled marrying Olay's daughter, and becoming great after Olay's death, which death, with the relation and circumstances thereof, if you be curious to know, you may get a long account of it in Camden."

On this point Gregory says, "It appears by no means improbable, too, that Sommerled, aware of his own power and resources, contemplated the conquest of a portion, at least, of the Isles, to which he may have laid claim through his remote ancestor, Godfrey. On these or similar grounds, Olave the Red, King of Man and the Isles, was naturally desirous to disarm the enmity, and to secure the support of the powerful Lord of Argyle, whose marriage with Ragnhildis, the daughter of Olave, about 1140—the first authentic event in the life of Somerled—seems to have answered this purpose. Of this marriage, which is lamented by the author of the 'Chronicle of Man,' as the cause of the ruin of the whole kingdom of the Isles, the issue was three sons—Dugall, Reginald, and Angus." In a footnote Gregory informs us that in regard to Somerled's sons, he follows "the Orkneyinga Saga, p. 383, which is very explicit, and is a better authority than the Chronicle of Man," which latter, adds a fourth son, Olave. In Skene and in the "History of the Highland Clans," he is said to have had another son, Gillecillum, by a previous marriage, while in Findon's supplementary sheet he is said to have a son, Somerled, from whom the MacIans of Ardnamurchan, and another Gillies, the latter obviously the Gillecillum of Skene and of Kethe's "Highland Clans," who, it is said, obtained Kintyre.

Olave the Red, Somerled's father-in-law, was, in 1154, assassinated by his nephews, the sons of Harald, who made a claim to the half of the kingdom of the Isles. His son, Godred the Black, was at the time in Norway, but hearing of his father's death, he immediately returned to the Isles, where he was received with acclamation and great rejoicings by the

inhabitants as their king. He apprehended and executed the murderers of his father. He had gone to Ireland to take part in the Irish wars, early in his reign; but afterwards returned to Man, and became so tyrannical, thinking no one could resist his power, that he soon alienated the insular nobility—one of whom, Thorfinn, the most powerful of the Norwegian nobles, sent word to Somerled requesting him to send his son, Dugall, then a child, who, being Godred's nephew, he proposed to make King of the Isles. The ambitious Somerled readily entered into the views of Thorfinn, who, having obtained possession of Dugall, carried him through all the Isles, except the Isle of Man, and compelled the inhabitants to acknowledge him as their king, at the same time taking hostages from them for their fidelity and allegiance. One of the Island Chiefs, Paul Balkason by name, and by some called the Lord of Skye, refused to comply with Thorfinn's demand, and, escaping secretly, he fled to the Court of Godred in the Isle of Man, and informed him of what had just taken place in the Isles, and of the intended revolution. Hearing this, Godred roused himself and collected a large fleet, with which he proceeded against the rebels, who, under the command of Somerled, with a fleet of eighty galleys, met him, and a bloody but indecisive battle ensued. This engagement was fought on the night of the Epiphany, and though neither could claim the victory, next morning a treaty was entered into, by which Godred ceded to the sons of Somerled, what were afterwards called the Southern Isles, thus dividing the sovereignty of the Isles and establishing them into two principalities. By this convention he retained for himself the North Isles and the Isle of Man, those south of Ardnamurchan becoming nominally the possessions of the sons of Somerled, but in reality of that warlike Chief himself, as his sons were all minors, he being naturally their guardian and protector. In spite of all these insular proceedings, and the changes of their possessions between themselves and among the immediate and resident chiefs, or native kings, the allegiance of all the Isles to Norway still continued intact. It is somewhat peculiar that Kintyre, a part of the mainland, should always have been included with what was called the South Isles; but it is explained as follows in a footnote by Gregory:—"The origin of this was a stratagem of Magnus Barefoot. After that Prince had invaded and conquered the Isles, he made an agreement with Malcolm Canmor, by which the latter was to leave Magnus and his successors in peaceable possession of all the Isles which could be circumnavigated. The King of Norway had himself drawn across the narrow isthmus between Kintyre and Knapdale, in a galley, by which he added the former district to the Isles." This anecdote has been doubted by some, but it appears in Magnus Berfaet's Saga, a contemporary work; and it is certain that, as late as the commencement of the seventeenth century, Kintyre was classed by the Scottish Government as one of the South Isles."

About two years after the above-named treaty was entered into, for some cause not clearly ascertained, Somerled invaded the Isle of Man with a fleet of fifty-three galleys, and after routing Godred, laid the island waste. Whether the invasion was in consequence of some infringement of the convention of two years previously, or in consequence of the insatiable ambition of Somerled, it is impossible to say, but the power of the King of Man was shattered so much, that he was obliged to pay a

visit to his rival in Norway, and to seek his assistance. He, however, did not return until after the death of Somerled in 1164, from which Gregory thinks it may be inferred that the latter had succeeded in extending his sway over the whole of the Isles.

Meanwhile Somerled was not idle. Malcolm IV. was now King of Scotland, and to him Somerled had early made himself obnoxious, by espousing the cause of his nephews, the sons of Wymund, or Malcolm Mac-Heth, to whom, on his first appearance, Somerled gave his sister in marriage, which unmistakably shows the opinion he held of the justice of Malcolm's claim to the Earldom of Moray, while it suited the Government to detain him for a time in prison, as an alleged imposter, though his claim seems now, on minute and careful inquiry by the best authorities, to be considered well founded. The enormous power and high position ultimately attained by this Island Chief may be inferred from the fact that he was enabled on one occasion to bring his contest with the King to a termination by a solemn treaty, afterwards considered so important as to form an epoch from which Royal Charters were regularly dated. He is again very soon in arms against the King, having joined the powerful party who determined to depose him and place the Boy of Egremont on the throne. He first infested various parts of the coast, and afterwards, for some time, carried on a vexatious predatory war. The attempt to depose Malcolm soon failed; but the King, convinced that the existence of an independent Chief like Somerled, was incompatible with the interests of the central Government and the maintenance of public order, requested the Island Chief to resign his possessions into the King's hands, and to hold them in future as a vassal from the Crown. This, Somerled declined to do, and boldly declared war against Malcolm himself, who prepared to carry out his intention against the Island King, by invading his territories with a powerful army called together for the purpose. Emboldened by his previous successes, Somerled determined to meet the Scottish King with a numerous army from Argyle, Ireland, and the Isles; and having collected them together, he sailed up the Clyde with one hundred and sixty galleys, and landed his followers near Renfrew, threatening, as the Chroniclers inform us, to subdue the whole of Scotland. He there met the Royal army under the command of the High Steward of Scotland, by whom his army was defeated, and he himself and one of his sons, "Gillecolane"* (Gillecallum or Malcolm) were slain. The remaining portion of his followers dispersed. "Sommerled being envied by the rest of the nobility of Scotland for his fortune and valour, King Malcolm being young, thought by all means his kingdom would suffer by the faction, ambition, and envy of his leading men, if Sommerled's increasing power would not be crushed. Therefore, they convened and sent an army to Argyle, under the command of Gilchrist, Thane of Angus, who, harrassing and ravaging the country wherever he came, desired Sommerled to give up his right of Argyle or abandon the Isles. But Sommerled, making all the speed he could in raising his vassals and followers, went after them; and, joining battle, they fought fiercely on both sides with great slaughter, till night parted them. Two thousand on Sommerled's side, and seven thousand on Gilchrist's side, were slain in the field. Being wearied, they parted, and marched off at the dawn of day, turning their

* Hailes Annals, ad Annum 1164.

backs to one another. After this when the King came to manhood, the nobles were still in his ears, desiring him to suppress the pride of Sommerled, hoping, if he should be crushed, they should or might get his estate to be divided among themselves, and at least get him expelled the country. Sommerled being informed hereof, resolved to lose all, or possess all, he had in the Highlands; therefore, gathering together all his forces from the Isles and the Continent, and shipping them for Clyde, he landed in Greenock. The King came with his army to Glasgow in order to give battle to Sommerled, who marched up the south side of the Clyde, leaving his galleys at Greenock. The King's party quartered at Renfrew. Those about him thought proper to send a message to Sommerled, the contents of which were, that the King would not molest Sommerled for the Isles, which were properly his wife's right; but as for the lands of Argyle and Kintyre, he would have them restored to himself. Sommerled replied that he had as good a right to the lands upon the Continent as he had to the Isles; yet those lands were unjustly possessed by the King, MacBeath, and Donald Bain, and that he thought it did not become His Majesty to hinder him from the recovery of his own rights, of which his predecessors were deprived by MacBeath, out of revenge for standing in opposition to him after the murder of King Duncan. As to the Isles, he had an undoubted right to them, his predecessors being possessed of them by the goodwill and consent of Eugenius the First, for obligations conferred upon him; that when his forefathers were dispossessed of them by the invasion of the Danes, they had no assistance to defend or recover them from the Scottish King, and that he had his right of them from the Danes; but, however, he would be assisting to the King in any other affairs, and would prove as loyal as any of his nearest friends, but as long as he breathed, he would not condescend to resign any of his rights which he possessed to any; that he was resolved to lose all or keep all, and that he thought himself as worthy of his own, as any about the King's Court. The messenger returned with this answer to the King, whose party was not altogether bent upon joining battle with Sommerled. Neither did the King look much after his rain, but, as the most of kings are commonly led by their councillors, the King himself being young, they contrived Sommerled's death in another manner. There was a nephew of Sommerled's, Maurice MacNeill, his sister's son, who was bribed to destroy him. Sommerled lay encamped at the confluence of the river Pasley into Clyde. His nephew taking a little boat, went over the river, and having got private audience of him, being suspected by none, stabbed him, and made his escape. The rest of Sommerled's men, hearing the death and tragedy of their leader and master, betook themselves to their galleys. The King coming to view the corpse, one of his followers, with his foot, did hit it. Maurice being present, said, that though he had done the first thing most villanously and against his conscience, that he was unworthy and base so to do; and withal drew his long Xiam, stabbed him, and escaped by swimming over to the other side of the river, receiving his remission from the King thereafter, with the lands which were formerly promised him. The King sent a boat with the corpse of Sommerled to Icollumkill at his own charges. This is the report of twenty writers in Icollumkill, before Hector Boetius and Buchanan were born. . . . Sommerled was a well tempered man, in body

shapely, of a fair piercing eye, of middle stature, and quick discernment.”*

Gregory, from the well-known character of the celebrated Chief, is disposed to believe in the account which says “that he was assassinated in his tent by an individual in whom he placed confidence, and that his troops, thus deprived of their leader, returned in haste to the Isles.” He does not, however, adopt that part of it which states that Sommerled was buried in Icolmkill. “Modern enquiries,” he says, “rather lead to the conclusion that he was interred at the Church of Sadale, in Kintyre, where Reginald, his son, afterwards founded a monastery.”

A recent writer, who claims descent for the Macdonalds from Fergus Mor, son of Eirc, “who, about the year 506, permanently laid the foundation of the Dalriadic Kingdom of Scotland,” sums up the character of Somerled thus—The family of Fergus Mor continued to maintain a leading position in Scotland, supplying with few exceptions, the line of Dalriadic kings, and many of the more powerful of its thanes, or territorial lords. Of the latter, the most historical, and, it may be truly added, the most patriotic, was a great thane of Argyle, who appeared in the twelfth century, called *Somhairle* among his Celtic kinsmen, but better known as Somerled, which was the Norwegian form of his name. During the tenth and eleventh centuries, frequent settlements were made by Norwegian colonists among the Celtic population of the Highlands and Isles of Scotland. Although, however, the evils of Northern rapacity and oppression were keenly felt, the Celtic element continued to predominate even during the most disastrous periods. At length a deliverer arose in Somerled, who was the son of a Celtic father, and a fair-haired, blue-eyed Norwegian mother. Few, if any, military leaders have left their marks more broadly or distinctly in Scottish history than he. This fact stands clearly out not only from the records of his career, preserved in authentic chronicles, but perhaps even more strikingly in the circumstantial traditions respecting him, which still exist in Argyleshire and the Isles. These traditions when compared with the well-authenticated records of his life, appear like the fragments of some history that had been written of him, but is now lost, and hence they serve to supplement attractively the curt and dry details of the old chronicles. Many of these traditions refer to the youthful days of Somerled, who appears to have grown up an indolent and handsome giant. His father, Gillebride, regarded with contempt the seemingly unwarlike nature of his youngest son, who occupied himself in hunting and fishing, whilst his brothers trained themselves to engage, as opportunities offered, in deadly conflict with their Norwegian oppressors. Somerled’s indolent and pleasant time, however, was soon destined to end. His father, being driven from the hills and glens of Argyle, was compelled to conceal himself in a cave in Morven, and from that moment Somerled began to take serious counsel regarding the position of affairs with his youthful companions of the chase. He found them ready, and equally prepared to hunt the wild boar, or assault the dreaded Norsemen. Somerled’s very nature thenceforward was entirely changed; he became a new man; the indolent dreamer was suddenly absorbed in the delights of stratagem and battle. He spoiled like the eagle, and had no joy so great as when in the act of rending the prey. His little band gathered strength as he went, and under his eye dealt

* Macdonald MS, ; printed in the “Collectanea de Rebus Albanicis.”

blow after blow on the bewildered enemy, until the Norsemen, whether soldiers or settlers, quickly abandoned garrisons and settlements in Argyle. They crowded into the Hebridean Islands, whither Somerled pursued them, capturing the Islands in detail, killing or expelling the invaders, and firmly establishing once more the old Celtic authority. Thus, on the ruin of the Norwegian power, Somerled built up his Island throne, and became not only the greatest thane of his family, but the founder of that *second* line of Island rulers, who, for nearly a period of four centuries, were occasional and formidable rivals of the Scottish kings.*

We have seen that Somerled, by Elfrica or Rachel, daughter of Olave the Red, King of Man, had three sons, first, Dugall, ancestor of the Macdougalls of Lorn and Dunolly; second, Reginald, from whom all the branches of the Clan Donald with whom we have specially to deal in the following history; and third, Angus, who succeeded to Bute, and was killed in Skye with his three sons in 1210. One of the sons of the latter, James, had a daughter, Jane, who married Alexander, son of Walter, High Steward of Scotland, in right of whom he claimed Bute and Arran.

Besides the three sons of his marriage with Rachel, daughter of Olave the Red, Somerled had other sons, who seemed to have shared with their brothers, according to the then prevalent custom of gavel kind, the mainland possessions held by the Lord of Argyle; whilst the sons descended of the house of Man divided amongst them, in addition, the South Isles, as ceded by Godred in 1156. He is said by some authorities to have been twice married, and that Gillicolane, or Malcolm, and other sons, were by the first marriage.

It has never been disputed that this Somerled was the immediate ancestor of the family of Macdonald. The period immediately succeeding his death is historically very obscure. "A second Somerled is found apparently holding his place, and many of his possessions, during the first twenty years of the succeeding, or thirteenth century. This must either have been a son or a grandson of the other—most probably the latter, since Gillicolam, apparently the son of the elder Somerled by a first marriage, fell with him at Renfrew, and in all likelihood left the offspring, which bore the grandsire's name. This is the most feasible way in which the existence and the rule of the second Somerled can well be explained,"† The author of the Macdonald MS., in the Transactions of the Iona Club, who, however, cannot always be depended upon for accuracy, says that "after Sommerled, his son Sommerled succeeded him as Thane of Argyle; Reginald his brother, the Isles; Dugall, Lorn; and Gillies, had Kintyre, by the disposition of their father. Sommerled pretended that the people of Cowal and Lennox harried his lands of their store and cattle, and therefore made incursions on them, of which they complained to the King. Furthermore, he would have the lands which were left by his father to his brethren at his own disposal. The King sent the Earl of March with a considerable body of men against him, who was so favourable that he advised, at a private conference, that since he lost his affection for his brethren, by seizing on those lands which their father left them, he could not stand out against the King and them, and therefore that it was best

* "An Historical Account of the Macdonells of Antrim," by the Rev. George Hill, editor of the "Montgomery Manuscripts."

† Smibert's Highlanders.

he should go along with him, and he would procure for him the King's pardon and favour ; so he did, and was pardoned by the King. Shortly thereafter he died, leaving two sons, John and Maolmory, who were both young. Of this John are descended the MacEans of Ardnamurchan. He was buried at Icollumkill. Reginald, his brother, became Tutor to John." Gregory says nothing about this second Somerled, but, at page 67, he correctly traces the MacIans of Ardnamurchan from John *Shrangach*, younger son of Angus Mor of Isla. The editor of Fullarton's "Highland Clans" considers the existence of this second Somerled "very doubtful." Skene, however, believes in his existence. At this time of day it is impossible to settle the point ; but it is really of very little importance whether he existed or not, for even if he did there is no question as to his successors having become extinct soon after his own death.

Dougal, admitted by all the best authorities to have been Somerled's eldest son by the second marriage, succeeded to the Southern Isles and part of Argyle, if the Norse Sagas and native writers are to be credited, but his exact position has never been clearly defined. The records of the time are most confusing and obscure, but all are agreed that two or three of his line succeeded him, and there is no doubt whatever that his main line terminated in two heiresses—the daughters of "King Ewin," who, according to Skene, married, the eldest, the Norwegian King of Man ; and the other, Alexander of the Isles, a descendant of Reginald. Gregory does not go at any length into this part of the history of the Island Chiefs—that of the immediate descendants of Somerled prior to the great expedition of Haco, King of Norway—beyond saying that "from King Dugall sprung the great House of *Argyle and Lorn*, patronymically Macdugall,* which, at the time of Haco's expedition, was represented by Dugall's grandson, Ewin, commonly called King Ewin, and sometimes erroneously King John," but Skene informs us, that the failure of the male descendants of Dugall in the person of Ewin, had the effect of dividing this great clan into three, the heads of each of which held their lands of the Crown. These were the Clan Rory, Clan Donald, and Clan Dugall, "severally descended from three sons of these names, of Reginald, the second son of Somerled by his second marriage." The Clan Dugall is generally, and, we believe, more correctly held to be descended from Dugall, the eldest son of Somerled himself, but our present object does not require to go into the discussion of that question, as we have only to do with the descendants of Donald, who was undoubtedly a son of Reginald, son of Somerled, Thane of Argyle.

Somerled was succeeded in his territories of Isla, Kintyre, and part of Lorn, by his son.

II. REGINALD, who assumed the title of Lord of the Isles, or received it from his followers ; for at that time, whatever chief supported either party, when the possessions of Somerled were subdivided among his sons, was called by his supporters, King of the Isles. And we find that both Dugall and Reginald were styled Kings of the Isles at the same time that Reginald, the son of Godred the Black, was called King of Man and the Isles ; and in the next generation mention is made in a Norse chronicle of three Kings of the Isles, all of the race of Somerled existing at one and the same time. From this Gregory infers "that the word king as used

* This family used generally the territorial surname of "de Ergadia," or "of Argyle."

by the Norwegians and their vassals in the Isles, was not confined, as in Scotland, to one supreme ruler, but that it had with them an additional meaning, corresponding either to prince of the blood-royal or to magnate. Many Seannachies or genealogists in later times, being ignorant of, or having overlooked this distinction, have, by means of the expression King of the Isles, been led to represent those whom they style the direct heirs or successors of Somerled, through his son Reginald, and who alone, according to them, bore the royal title, as holding a rank very different from what they actually did."

A most important change came over the fortunes of this family in 1220, when King Alexander the Second led an army into the district of Argyle, and for the first time annexed it decisively to the Crown ; and, according to Smibert, expelled the second Somerled, who died soon after. Alexander, determined upon breaking up the kingdom of the Western Isles, and so reduce the power of its insular chiefs, confirmed in their possession on the Western shores all those who agreed to submit to his authority and consented to hold their lands direct from the Crown of Scotland. In place of those who still held out, he invited families from the adjoining tribes, and planted and confirmed them in the lands of the ancient possessors. It is about this period that Highland families first commenced to assume surnames, and about the time of this division of the territories of Argyle, that we find mentioned for the first time such names as the Macgregors, Macnaughtons, Macneils, Clan Chattan, and Lamonts. At the same time, Argyle, which extended much further inland than the present county does, was formed into a Sheriffship—the hereditary appointment being in favour of the ancestors of the present House of Argyle. The whole of Ergadia Borealis, or North Argyle, was at the same time granted to the Earl of Ross for services rendered to the King.

From Reginald, King of the Isles, sprang two great families, that of *Isla* descended from his son Donald, and therefore patronymically styled Macdonald ; and that of *Bute* descended from his son Ruari, and therefore patronymically styled Macruari.* It appears that most of the descendants of Somerled had for a century after his death a divided allegiance, holding part of their lands, those in the Isles, from the King of Norway ; their mainland domains, at the same time being held of the King of Scotland. The latter, whose power was now gradually increasing, could not be expected long to allow the Isles to remain dependent on Norway without making an effort to conquer them. The first footing obtained by the Scots in the Isles was, apparently, soon after the death of Somerled, when the Steward of Scotland seized the Isle of Bute. That island seems after this to have changed masters several times, and, along with Kintyre, to have been a subject of dispute between the Scots and Norwegians, whilst in the course of these quarrels the family of the Steward strengthened their claim by marriage in the following manner :—We have seen that Angus MacSomerled (who is supposed to have been Lord of Bute) and his three sons, were killed in 1210 ; nor does it appear that Angus had any other male issue. James, one of these sons, left a daughter and heiress, Jane, married to Alexander, the son and heir of Walter the High Steward of Scotland, who, in her right, claimed the Isle of Bute, and,

* Both the Macdonalds and Macruaries used the territorial surnames of de Yla, or "of Isla," and "de Indulis," or "of the Isles."

perhaps, Arran also.* This claim was naturally resisted by Ruari, the son of Reginald, till the dispute was settled for a time by his expulsion, and the seizure of Bute and Arran by the Scots. It has been maintained by some writers, among them the editor of Fullarton's Clans, that Ruari was the eldest son of Reginald. Others hold that Donald was the eldest; and it is impossible now to say which is the correct view; but this is of less consequence, as it has been conclusively established that Ruari's descendants terminated in the third generation in a female, Annie, who married John of Isla, great-grandson of Donald of Isla, Ruari's brother, and direct ancestor of all the existing branches of the Macdonalds. Thus, the succession of the ancient House of Somerled fell indisputably to the descendants of Donald, son of Reginald, and grandson to the illustrious Somerled, Lord of Argyle, who became the most powerful, and whose territories were the most extensive, of all the Highland Clans, indeed at one time they were equal to all the others put together.

Roderick followed the instincts of his Norwegian ancestors and became a desperate pirate, whose daring incursions and predatory expeditions fill the annals of the period. He had two sons, Allan and Dugall, who settled down among their relatives of the west. Dugall joined Haco in his expedition against the Isles, and, in return for his services, obtained a considerable addition to his previous possessions, including the possessions of his brother Allan, called "Rex Hebudem," and died in 1268 without issue. Allan succeeded his father, but left no legitimate male issue, when his possessions went to his only daughter Christina, who resigned her lands to the king, and had them re-conveyed to her to strengthen her position against the claim of her natural brother, Roderick, who, however, appears to have come into possession probably on the death of his sister, as his lands are forfeited in the reign of Robert Bruce, in consequence of the share he took in the Soulis conspiracy of 1320. His lands were, however, restored to his son Ranald, who also had lands from William, Earl of Ross, in Kintail,† in connection with which he became embroiled with that powerful Chief; a feud ensued, which resulted in Ranald's death. In 1346 David II. summoned the Scottish Barons to meet him at Perth, when Ranald MacRuari made his appearance with a considerable retinue and took up his quarters in the monastery of Elcho, a few miles from the city; whereupon the Earl of Ross, who also attended in obedience to the King's orders, determined to be revenged on his vassal, and, entering the convent about the middle of the night, he killed Ranald and seven of his principal followers. Leaving no succession, his lands fell to his sister Annie, who, as already stated, married, and carried her lands along with her to John of Isla, of whom hereafter. According to Gregory, these lands comprised also the Isles of Uist, Barra, Eigg, Rum, and the Lordship of Garmoran (also called Garbhchrioch),

* "In the traditions of the Stewarts, this lady's grandfather is called Angus Mac-Rorie, which, as I conceive, is an error for Angus MacSorlie—the latter being the way in which MacSomerled (spelt MacSomhairle) is pronounced in Gaelic. That there was about this time a matrimonial alliance between the house of Stewart and that of Isla, is probable from a dispensation in 1342, for the marriage of two individuals of these families, as being within the forbidden degrees—Andrew Stewart's Hist. of the Stewarts—p. 433."—Footnote in Gregory.

† Charter of King David, 4th July 1342; and Robertson's Index, p. 48 David II.; also Origines Parochiales Scotiæ.

which "comprehends the districts of Moydert, Arasaig, Morar, and Knoydart," being the original possessions of the family in the North.* A charter was granted to the Bishop of Lismore, 1st January 1507 [Mag. Sig. L. xiv. No. 405], confirming two evidents made by Reginald in his lifetime, in which he is described as the son of Somerled, qui se Regem Insularum nominavit Lord of Ergyle and of Kintyre, founder of the monastery of Sagadull (Sadale), of the lands of Glensagadull, and twelve marks of the lands of Ballebeain, in the Lordship of Kintyre, and of twenty marks of the lands of Cosken in Arran, to the said abbey. He made very ample donations to the monastery of Paisley, that he, and Fonia his wife, might be entitled to all the priviledges of brotherhood in the convent.† Of the principal events in the life of Reginald very little is known, and what can be ascertained is not free from uncertainty, for he was contemporary with Reginald, the Norwegian King of Man and the Isles, which makes it impossible to distinguish between the recorded acts of the two. Reginald was, however, without doubt designated "dominus insularum," and sometimes "Rex insularum," or King of the Isles, as well as "dominus de Ergile and Kintyre," under which title he grants certain lands as above to the Abbey of Saddell which he had founded in Kintyre. The author of "The Historical Account of the Macdonalds of Antrim," says at page 10, that Ranald, "although a younger son, became in reality the representative of the family, being not only popular in Scotland, but respected on the coasts of Ulster, where he appeared sometimes as peace-maker among the Northern Irish chieftains. If, however, he bore his character on the Irish coast, his sons occasionally came on a very different mission. At the year 1211, the Annals of the Four Masters and the Annals of Loch Ce, inform us that Thomas Mac-Uchtry (of Galloway) and the sons of Ragnall, son of Somhairle, came to Doire Chollum-Chille (Derry) with seventy ships, and the town was greatly injured by them. O'Domhnaill and they went to Inis Eoghain, and they completely destroyed the country.

He married a sister of Thomas Randoll, Earl of Moray, and by her had—

1. Donald of Islay, his heir, from whom the Macdonalds took their name, and

2. Roderick, or Ruari, of Bute, whose succession and possessions we have already described, and whose issue terminated in Annie, who married John of Isla. According to the Macdonald MS. he had two other sons, Angus,* who had a son, Duncan, of whom the Robertsons, or Clann Donnachaidh of Athol, "and MacLulichs, who are now called in the low country Pittulichs." He had another son, John Maol, or Bald, who, according to the same authority, went to Ireland, and "of whom descended the Macdonalds of Tireoin" (Land of John or Tyrone (?).)

Reginald died in the 54th year of his age, and was succeeded by his eldest son.

(To be Continued.)

* Highlands and Isles, p. 27.

† Douglas's Wood's Peerage, Highlands and Isles, p. 5.

‡ Major Mackenzie in his Mackenzie Genealogies, supplementary sheet, calls this Angus a natural son.

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HISTORY OF THE MACDONALDS, AND THE LORDS OF THE ISLES.

BY THE EDITOR.



III.

III. DONALD "DE ISLA," or, of the Isles, from whom the Macdonalds derive their name. The share of his father's possessions which appears to have fallen to him comprised South Kintyre and Islay; but it is certain that he also came into possession, as head of the house, of his brother Roderick's lands, by themselves a very extensive patrimony. A period of great importance in the history of this distinguished family has now been reached, and it is disappointing to find how little is recorded of the career of this famous chief who had no small share in the most important events in the early part of the thirteenth century. Indeed it is quite impossible that he could have done otherwise, for though the ancient autocratic authority of the Clan over others was never recovered by the race of Somerled after the partition by Alexander II. of the great district of Argyle, the ultimate union of all the claims and rights of this ancient and potent house in the line of Donald raised the family and its chief anew, to a pitch of power and eminence in Scotland almost unequalled by any other family in the kingdom, certainly unequalled in the Western Isles. Donald, like all the Western chiefs, after the treaty of succession agreed to as the result of the battle of Largs, held his possessions directly from the Scottish King, and ever since his successors remained subjects of the Scottish crown, in spite of many successive rebellions on their part, invariably instigated by the English Government, to establish their independence in the Isles, and embarrass the Scots. Hugh Macdonald informs us that Donald succeeded his father "in the Lordship of the Isles and Thaneship of Argyle;" that he went to Denmark, and took with him many of the ancient Danes of the Isles, such as "the Macduffies, and Macnagills;" that his uncle Dugall accompanied him; and that his own rights, and the peculiar rights he had to the Isles through his grandmother, daughter of Olave the Red, were then renewed to him by Magnus, King of Denmark. "After this, he and his uncle Dugall became enemies, so that at last he was forced to kill Dugall. After this King Alexander (King of Scotland) sent Sir William Rollock as messenger to him to Kin-

tyre, desiring to hold the Isles of him, which he had now from the King of Denmark. Donald replied that his predecessors had their rights to the Isles from the Crown of Denmark, which were renewed by the present King thereof, and that he held the Isles of his Majesty of Denmark, before he renounced his claim to his Majesty. Sir William said that the King might grant the superiority of the Isles to whom he pleased. Donald answered to this that Olay the Red, and Godfrey the Black's father, from whom he had the most of the Isles, had the Isles by their conquest, and not from the King of Denmark or Scotland, so that he and Sir William could not end the debate in law or reasoning. Donald being advised by wicked councillors, in the dawning of the day surprised Sir William and his men. Sir William, with some of his men, were killed. He banished Gillies (his wife's father) out of the Isles to the glens of Ireland, where some of his offspring remain until this day. He killed Gillies' young son, called Callum Alin. He brought the MacNeills from Lennox to expel Gillies out of Kintyre. After this he went to Rome, bringing seven priests in his company, to be reconciled to the Pope and Church. These priests declaring his remorse of conscience for the evil deeds of his former life, the Pope asked if he was willing to endure any torment that the Church was pleased to inflict upon him? Donald replied that he was willing, should they please to burn him in a caldron of lead. The Church, seeing him so penitent, dispensed with him. Some writers assert that he had his rights from the Pope of all the lands he possessed in Argyle, Kintyre, and the rest of the continent. After he returned home, he built (rebuilt or enlarged) the monastery of Saddell in Kintyre, dedicating (it) to the honour of the Virgin Mary. He mortified 48 merks lands to that monastery, and the Island of Heisker to the Nuns of Iona. He died at Shippinage in the year 1289, and was buried at Icolumkill.*

He imitated the liberality of his father to the Church, particularly to the monks of Paisley, to whom he gave ample testimony of his charity and goodwill, on the condition that "ille uxor sua, heredes sui, et homines sui, participes sint in perpetuum, omnium bonorum quæ in domo de Paslet, et in toto ordine Cluniacensi fient, tam in orationibus, quam in ceteris divinis servitiis." In the document he is designated "Dovenaldus, filius Reginaldi, filius Somerledi."† He left two sons.—

1. *Angus Mor MacDonald*, his heir.

2. *Alexander*, according to Douglas, ancestor of the MacAlisters of Loup, and of the Alexanders of Menstrie, Earls of Stirling. This is corroborated by an old genealogical tree of the Macdonalds in our possession. He was also progenitor of Clann Alastair of Kintyre, and was married to a daughter of Lorn.

Donald of the Isles died, as already stated, in 1289, and was succeeded by his eldest son,

IV. **ANGUS MOR MACDONALD**, who was Chief at the time of Haco's expedition to the Western Isles in 1266, and who immediately joined him on his arrival with his fleet, and assisted him throughout the war, though it appears, in consequence of the treaty which was afterwards ar-

* *Collectanea de Rebus Albanicis*, pp. 288-9.

† *Wood's Douglas's Peerage*, vol. ii., p. 6.

ranged between the Kings of Scotland and Norway, that he did not suffer for his conduct, either in person or property. In 1284 he appeared at the convention at which the Maiden of Norway was declared heiress to the Crown of Scotland, on which occasion his support seems to have been purchased by a grant of Ardnamurchan. He confirmed his father's and grandfather's grants to the Abbey of Saddell, and granted further lands himself by four separate charters.* He also made a donation to the convent of Paisley of half a mark of silver "de domo suo proprio, et de singulis domibus per omnes terras suas de quibus fumum exit unum denari, singulis annis in perpetuum in puram elemosynam." He also gave the monastery of the same place the patronage of the Church of Kilkerran, in Kintyre, "pro salute animæ, Domini sui Alexandri Regis Scoticæ illustris, et Alexandri, filii ejus, etiam pro salute sua propria, et heredum suorum."† A letter is addressed, in 1292, "to Anegous, the son of Dovenald of the Isles, and Alexander, his eldest son, respecting their comporting themselves well and faithfully to the King of England."‡

Writing of the descendants of Somerled about this period, Gregory says that of these "there were, in 1285, three great noblemen, all holding extensive possessions in the Isles as well as on the mainland, who attended in that Scottish Parliament by which the crown was settled on the Maiden of Norway. Their names were Alexander de Ergadia of Lorn (son of Ewin of Lorn), Angus, the son of Donald, and Allan, the son of Ruarie. From the nature of the treaty, in 1266, it is obvious that these individuals were vassals of the King of Scotland for all their possessions, and not merely for what they held on the mainland, as some have supposed. It is further clear that, at this time, none of the three bore the title of Lord of the Isles, or could have been properly so considered; and it is equally certain that the first individual whom we find assuming the style of Lord of the Isles, in its modern signification, possessed all those Isles, and very nearly all those mainland estates, which, in 1285, were divided among three powerful noblemen of the same blood. But of this hereafter. From the preceding remarks, it will readily be perceived that the boasted independence of the modern Lords of the Isles is without historical foundation. Prior to 1266, the Isles were subject to Norway; at that date the treaty of cession transferred them to Scotland."§

Angus Mor, who, according to Hugh Macdonald, "was of a very amiable and cheerful disposition, and more witty than any could take him from his countenance," resided for a portion of his life-time at the Castle of Ardhornish. He married a daughter of Sir Colin Campbell of Glenurchy, with issue—

1. *Alexander*, his heir.

2. *Angus Og*, who succeeded his brother Alexander.

He died in 1300, and was succeeded by his eldest son,

V. ALEXANDER MACDONALD of the Isles, who married one of the daughters and co-heiress of Ewen de Ergadia, the last of the male descendants of Dugall of Lorn, and by her he received a considerable ac-

* Skene's Highlanders.
‡ Douglas's Peerage.

† Chantulary Lereuax, 186-187 b.
§ Western Highlands and Isles, p. 23.

quisition to his already extensive territories ; but having joined John Stewart, Lord of Lorn, in his opposition to Robert the Bruce, he naturally became a partner in the consequent collapse and ruin of that great family and chief. After the defeat of the Lord of Lorn at Lochow, Bruce proceeded against Alexander of the Isles ; crossed over the isthmus of Tarbet, and laid siege to Castle Sweyn, where Alexander usually resided. The Island Chief proved as little able to resist the power of Bruce as the Lords of Lorn had previously been, and he was compelled to surrender to the King, who immediately imprisoned him in Dundonald Castle, where he ultimately died. His possessions were forfeited to the Crown, and afterwards given to his brother Angus Og.

He is designated "Alexander de Insulis Scotiæ, filius Angusii, filius Dovenaldi," in a letter addressed to him during the life of his father, wherein he is directed to keep the peace within his bounds of the Isles, till the meeting of the Parliament of Scotland, on the day of St Thomas the Martyr 1292. He is also designed in the same style in a confirmation of a donation of the Church of Kilkerran to the monastery of Paisley, to which Robert, Earl of Carrick, and Robert Bruce, his son and heir, are witnesses.

He died in 1303, and was succeeded by his brother,

VI. ANGUS OG MACDONALD, who, fortunately for himself and his clan, sided with the Bruce from the outset of his bold attempt to free his native land from the English Edwards. After the disastrous defeat at Methven, and the subsequent skirmish with the Lord of Lorn at Tyn-drum, the valiant Bruce was obliged to fly with his life, whereupon Angus of the Isles received and sheltered him in his castle of Saddell, Cantire, and, in August 1306, in his more secure Castle of Dunaverty, until, with Macdonald's aid, he retired some time after for safer refuge to the Island of Rathlin, on the north coast of Ireland, then possessed by the family of the Isles. From this period Angus Og attached himself to the party of Bruce, and took an important share in all the subsequent enterprises, which terminated in the final defeat of the English at Bannockburn, and established for ever the independence of Scotland. Here Angus commanded the reserve, composed of 5000 Highlanders, led, under Angus of the Isles, by sixteen of their own immediate chiefs. On this memorable occasion Angus and his Highlanders did such good service that, as a permanent mark of distinction for the gallantry and effect with which they plied their battle-axes, Bruce assigned to Angus and his descendants the honourable position of the right flank of the Royal army on all future occasions. He first joined him in 1286, and his loyalty never faltered, even when the fortunes of the King appeared most hopeless. He had previously assisted him in his attack on Carrick, when "the Bruce wan his father's hale," and continued to support him in all his toils and dangers, until these were crowned and rewarded by the great victory at Bannockburn. It was thus natural that the Chief of the Isles, having shared in the misfortunes of the great Deliverer of his country, should, when success crowned their efforts, also share in the advantages secured by the victors. The extensive possessions of the Comyns and their allies, the Lords of Lorn, having been forfeited, were now at the disposal of the King, and he bestowed upon Angus the Lordship of Lochaber, which had

formerly belonged to the Comyns, as also the lands of Duror and Glencoe, and the Islands of Mull, Jura, Coll, Tiree, which had formed part of the possessions of the family of Lorn. Bruce was quite alive to the danger of raising up such a powerful vassal as Angus Og of the Isles to a position of such power and influence by adding so much to his already extensive territories, and thus raising up to a higher pinnacle of power an opponent and a dangerous rival even to the Crown itself; but the services rendered by the Island Chief in Bruce's greatest need could not be overlooked, and so, believing himself quite secure in his attachment during his life, he made him these extensive grants, the only condition made by him to neutralize in any way their effects, being the erection of the Castle of Tarbet in Kintyre, which was to be occupied by the King's troops as a Royal stronghold, within the territories of the Island Chief. He had a charter from David II. "of the Isle of Isla, Kintyre, the Isle of Gythy (? Gigha), Dewre (Jura), the Isle of Coluynsay, and the twenty-four mark land of Moror, near the lands of Mule." He had a daughter named Fyngole, as appears from a papal dispensation, dated 19th Kal. Februarii 1342, permitting John Stewart and Fyngole, "*filia nobilis viri Angusii de Insulis*," to marry, notwithstanding their being within the fourth degree of consanguinity.

According to Hugh Macdonald's MS., Robert Bruce was entertained by Angus for a whole half-year at Saddell, and he repeatedly sent his galleys with men to Ireland, and sent Edward Bruce across on various occasions, and furnished him with necessaries for his expedition. He brought 1500 men from Ireland, who fought with him at a place called Brarich, near Lcchow. He was a minor when his father died. When he arrived at the age of 22 years "he was proclaimed Lord of the Isles and Thane of Argyle and Lochaber," but was much opposed on his first entry into his possessions "by Macdougall of Lorn, on account of the Island of Mull, to which he pretended right." Gregory, referring to this period, sums up the changes which took place and the results which followed thus:—In the series of struggles for Scottish independence, which marked the close of the thirteenth and the opening of the fourteenth centuries, the Lords of Lorn, who were closely connected by marriage with the Comyn and Balliol party, naturally arrayed themselves in opposition to the claims of Bruce. On the other hand, the houses of Isla and of the North Isles supported with all their power the apparently desperate fortunes of King Robert I., and thus, when he came to be firmly seated on the throne, had earned the gratitude of that Prince, in the same proportion as the family of Lorn, by the inveteracy of their hostility, had provoked his resentment. On the forfeiture of Alexander, Lord of Lorn, and his son and heir, John, their extensive territories were granted by Bruce to various of his supporters; and, amongst others, to Angus Oig, *i.e.*, Junior, of Isla, and to Roderick, or Ruari MacAlan, the bastard brother and leader of the vassals of Christina, the daughter and heiress of Alan MacRuari of the North Isles. The Isles of Mull (the possession of which had, for some time past, been disputed betwixt the Lords of Isla and Lorn), Jura, Coll, and Tiree, with the districts of Duror and Glencoe, fell, in this way, to the share of Angus Oig. Lorn proper, or the greatest part of it, was bestowed on Roderick MacAlan, to whom his sister, Christina gave, at the same time, a large portion of her inheritance in

Garmoran and the North Isles. The Lordship of Lochaber, forfeited by one of the powerful family of Comyn, seems to have been divided between Angus Oig and Roderick. The former likewise obtained, in this reign, the lands of Morvern and Ardnamurchan, which seem previously to have been in the hands of the crown. But while Bruce thus rewarded his faithful adherents, he was too sensible of the weakness of Scotland on the side of the Isles, not to take precautionary measures against the possible defection of any of the great families on that coast, who might with ease admit an English force into the heart of the kingdom. He procured from Angus Oig, who was now apparently the principal crown vassal in Kintyre, the resignation of his lands in that district, which were immediately bestowed upon Robert, the son and heir of Walter the High Steward, and the Princess Marjory Bruce. At the same time, the fortifications of the Castle of Tarbert, between Kintyre and Knapdale, the most important position on the coast of Argyleshire, were greatly enlarged and strengthened, and the custody of this commanding post was committed to a Royal garrison. Following out the same policy in other places, the keeping of the Castle of Dunstaffnage, the principal messuage of Lorn, was given by Bruce, not to Roderick MacAlan, the "High Chief of Lorn," but to an individual of the name of Campbell, who was placed there as a royal constable. Towards the end of Bruce's reign, Roderick MacAlan of Lorn and the North Isles, was forfeited of all his possessions for engaging in some of the plots which, at that period, occupied the attention and called forth the energies of that celebrated king. On this occasion, it is probable that Angus Oig, whose loyalty never wavered, received further additions to his already extensive possessions; and before King Robert's death the house of Islay was already the most powerful in Argyle and the Isles.*

Angus Og married Margaret, daughter of Guy O'Cathan of Ulster, the "tocher" being, according to the Seannachaidh already quoted, "seven score men out of every surname under O'Kaine." Among these, it is said, came twenty-four chiefs, who became the heads of clans or septs. Of that number, Hugh Macdonald mentions "the Munroes, so called because they came from the Innermost Roe-water in the county of Derry, their names being formerly O'Millans; the Roses of Kilraack, the Fairns, Dingwalls, Glasses, Beatons, so now called, but improperly, that being a French name, whereas they are Irish, of the tribe of O'Neals, and took the name (of Beaton) from following the name of Beda. Our Highland Shenakies say that Balfour Blebo, and these Beatons that came from France, went formerly from Ireland, but for this they have no ground to go upon. The MacPhersons, who are not the same with the MacPhersons of Badenoch, but are of the O'Docharties in Ireland; the Bulikes in Caithness, of whom is the laird of Tolingail; and many other surnames, which, for brevity, we pass over, many of whom had no succession." It is impossible to vouch for the accuracy of a great part of Macdonald's MS., for the author of it was such an out-and-out patriot, that he scrupled not to write anything calculated to glorify his chief and name, apparently not caring much whether it was true or not. Some of his stories, however are far too interesting to be passed by; but when not otherwise sup-

* West Highlands and Isles, pp. 24-26.

ported the reader must just take them for what they are worth.* The following is one which is altogether too good, giving, as it does, a version of the origin of the Macleans, the ceremony of proclaiming the Lords of the Isles; and the manner in which justice was administered in those days in the Western Isles:—"Now Angus Ogg being at Ardhorinish in Morvein, in the time of Lent, Macdougall sent the two sons of Gillian in message to him. To know of these, viz, the sons of Gillian, I will tell you from whence they came, viz, John of Lorn, commonly called John Baccach, went off to harry Carrick in Galloway, the property of Robert Bruce, afterwards King Robert, and there meeting with one Gillian by name, son of Gilleusa, son of John, son of Gilleusa-More, he came to John Baccach of Lorn in quest of better fortune. Macdougall gave him a spot of land in the Isle of Sael, called Bealachuain. He had three sons, Hector, of whom descended the family of Lochbuy, and was the oldest; Lachlin (of) whom descended the family of Duairt, and the rest of the name; and a natural son, John, of whom others of the name descended. Now in the Scots language they were called Maclean, from that Gillian that made the first fortune there; but the ancient Scots called them MacGillian. The two sons of Gillian, as related above, were sent ambassadors to Macdonald at Ardhorinish, where, at the time, he held his Lent, as the custom of the time then was. They, after landing, had some conference with Macdonald about the Isle of Mull. Macdonald, denying any of his proper right of lands to Mac, desired MacFinnon, who was master of his household, to use the gentlemen kindly, and to cause them dine alone. MacFinnon caused set before them bread and gruthim, consisting of butter and curds mixed together, which is made in harvest, and preserved until time of Lent. The gruthim was so brittle, that it was not easily taken up with their long knives. Macdonald, coming up at the same time, and perceiving the men at meat in that posture, desired to give them some other sort of meat. MacFinnon replied that if they could not eat that meat as it was, they should put on the nabs of hens, with which they might gather it up easily; which reproachful answer touched the sons of Gillian nearly. Macdonald being that same day to cross the Sound of Mull to Aros, to solemnise the festival of Pasch there, he took

* The editor of the *Collectanea de Rebus Albanicis* adds the following note at the end of the MS.—This MS. History of the Lords of the Isles, now for the first time printed, is a very favourable specimen of the productions of the ancient Sennachies. Full of traditional anecdotes, in general wonderfully accurate, they furnish a curious addition to the history of the Scottish Highlands. The Genealogical accounts of the various families contained in these MSS. is, however, frequently full of errors, principally intentional, and arising from the prejudices and active partizanship of the Sennachy, who being always devoted to one particular family, shared his patron's animosity against the Clans with whom he was at feud, and his jealousy of the other families of his own Clan, between whom there existed a rivalry. The Sennachy seldom scrupled to subvert his patron's jealousies, by perverting the history of their families, and this, he, in general, accomplished either by actually perverting the Genealogy, or by an extensive bastardising of the heads of the family, probably proceeding upon a principle not unknown to the present day, that a fact, however notoriously false, if perseveringly asserted for a certain length of time, will at length be received as true. The writer of this MS. was a staunch adherer of the Slate family, and therefore his statements, with regard to the Clans with whom the Clan Donald were at feud, and to the rival branches of that great Clan must be received with great caution. The bastardising of Dugall, reputed to be the progenitors of the MacDougalls, is a good illustration of the above remarks, for there is no doubt whatever that he was the eldest legitimate son of Somerled, by his marriage with the daughter of Olave the Red.

a small boat for himself, leaving MacFinnon behind with his great galley and carriage, and the rest of his men. When MacFinnon went to the shore to follow Macdonald, the sons of Gillian, taking the opportunity of revenge, and calling MacFinnon aside, stabbed him, and straight with his galley and their own men followed Macdonald across the Sound, who was not aware of them, thinking it was MacFinnon with his own galley that followed him, till they leaped into the boat wherein he was, and after apprehending him, made him prisoner, and brought him to Dunstafnage in Lorn. They remained without. Macdougall being, in the meantime, at dinner, who, hearing of their arrival, and that Macdonald was prisoner with them, said he was glad Macdonald was safe, and was very well pleased to have him his prisoner; but that Gillian's children were very bold in their attempt, and that he would, through time, bridle their forwardness and insolence. There was a young son of Macdougall's hearing what his father had said. This boy, fostered by Gillian and his son, coming out to meet them, told what his father said of them. They being perplexed, and musing what to do in this so precarious an affair, thought best to have their recourse to Macdonald, and told him that all men knew that they were of no power or capacity to apprehend him, but by accident; as it fell out; and seeing it was so, that he knew if he pleased to do them any good, and forgive them their former crime, he was more in power than their former master; that they would join with him, go along with him, and deliver him from the present danger. So taking Macdonald to his own galley again, Macdougall neither seeing him or them, they went for Mull, taking the Lord of the Isles upon his word, as they might.

“For he gave four score merks lands to Hector the oldest brother, and to Lachlin the youngest he gave the chamberlainship of his house, and made MacFinnon thereafter marshall of his army. Now, these made up the surname of Maclean, for they never had a rigg of land but what they received from Macdonald; to the contrary of which I defy them, or any other, to produce any argument; yet they were very thankful for the good done them afterwards. When the Macdonalds were in adversity, which happened by their own folly, they became their mortal enemies, as may be seen in the sequel of this history. Angus Ogg of the Isles was a personable, modest man, affable, and not disaffected either to king or state. He created Macguire, or Macquarry, a thane. He had a natural son, John, by Dougall MacHenry's daughter, she being her father's only child. This John, by his mother, enjoyed the lands of Glencoe, of whom descended the race of the Macdonalds. He had his legitimate son, John, who succeeded him, by O'Kain's daughter. He had not many children that came to age. He had a daughter married to Maclean, and that by her inclination of yielding. Angus died at Isla, and was interred at Icolumbkill. I thought fit to annex the ceremony of proclaiming the Lord of the Isles. At this the Bishop of Argyle, the Bishop of the Isles, and seven priests, were sometimes present, but a bishop was always present, with the chieftains of all the principal families, and a *Ruler of the Isles*. There was a square stone, seven or eight feet long, and the tract of a man's foot cut thereon, upon which he stood, denoting that he should walk in the footsteps and uprightness of his predecessors, and that he was installed by right in his possessions. He was clothed in a white habit,

to show his innocence and integrity of heart, that he would be a light to his people, and maintain the true religion. The white apparel did afterwards belong to the poet by right. Then he was to receive a white rod in his hand, intimating that he had power to rule, not with tyranny and partiality, but with discretion and sincerity. Then he received his forefather's sword, or some other sword, signifying that his duty was to protect and defend them from the incursions of their enemies in peace or war, as the obligations and customs of his predecessors were. The ceremony being over, mass was said after the blessing of the bishop and seven priests, the people pouring their prayer for the success and prosperity of their new created lord. When they were dismissed, the Lord of the Isles feasted them for a week thereafter; gave liberally to the monks, poets, bards, and musicians. You may judge that they spent liberally without any exception of persons. The constitution or government of the Isles was thus:—Macdonald had his council at Island Finlaggan, in Isla, to the number of sixteen, viz., four Thaners, four Armins, that is to say, lords or sub-thaners, four bastards (*i.e.*), squires, or men of competent estates, who could not come up with Armins or Thaners, that is, freeholders, or men that had their lands in factory, as Macgee of the Rinds of Isla, MacNicoll in Portree in Sky, and MacEachern, Mackay, and MacGillevrays, in Mull, Macillemaoel or MacMillan, &c. There was a table of stone where this council sat in the Isle of Finlaggan; the which table, with the stone on which Macdonald sat, were carried away by Argyle with the bells that were at Icolmkill. Moreover, there was a judge in every Isle for the discussion of all controversies, who had lands from Macdonald for their trouble, and likewise the eleventh part of every action decided. But there might still be an appeal to the Council of the Isles. MacFinnon was obliged to see weights and measures adjusted; and MacDuffie, or MacPhie of Colonsay, kept the records of the Isles.”

Angus Og died at Islay about 1329, and was buried at Icolmkill.

By his wife, Margaret, daughter of Guy O'Cathan, he had an only son and successor. He had also a natural son, John *Fraoch*, by a daughter of Dougall MacHenry, the leading man in Glencoe, progenitor of the Macdonalds of Glencoe.

He was succeeded by his only lawful son.

THE
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VOL. V.

HISTORY OF THE MACDONALDS,
AND
THE LORDS OF THE ISLES.

BY THE EDITOR.

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IV.

VII. JOHN MACDONALD of Isla, first Lord of the Isles, who played a most important part in the turbulent age in which he lived. He is admitted by all authorities to have been one of the most able and sagacious chiefs of his time, and, by his diplomacy and alliances; more than by the sword, he raised the clan to a position of splendour and power which they have not attained to since the days of Somerled. In his time Scotland was divided and harrassed by various claimants to the crown, the principal of whom were the second Bruce and Edward Baliol. John of the Isles sided with the latter, more probably with the object of recovering, and maintaining intact, the ancient possessions of his house, than for any preference he entertained for Baliol and his English supporters. The Island chiefs had always, more or less, claimed to be independent of the Scottish kings, and naturally enough it appeared to John of the Isles that to aid Baliol against Bruce would be the most effective means of strengthening his family pretensions. He was perfectly satisfied that the Scottish king would not admit the claim to independence of any competitor within his realm; whereas Baliol, not only entertained his pretensions, but actually confirmed him "as far as in him lay," not only to the vast territories already possessed by him, but to an extensive addition, granting him by charter, in 1355, the lands of Mull, Skye, Islay, Gigha, Kintyre, Knapdale, and other large possessions. For these favours John bound himself and his heirs to become lieges to the Baliols; for he well knew that even if they succeeded to establish their claim to the crown he would be practically independent in the Western Isles, and could at any time re-assert his old pretensions. He, however, visited England in 1338, and was well received by Edward III., to whom, it is said, he acknowledged vassalage. John and the Regent had some disputes about the lands granted by Robert the Bruce to Angus Og of the Isles, which was the main cause of the Island chief being thrown into the arms of Baliol's party, who, in addition to the lands above-mentioned, also granted him

the Wardship of Lochaber, until the heir of Athol, at the time only three years of age, attained his majority. These territories had been previously forfeited by his ancestors on the accession of Robert Bruce; and the grant to John of the Isles was confirmed by Edward III. on the 5th of October 1336. In spite of all this, however, and the great advantages to Baliol of securing the support of a powerful chief like John of the Isles, the Regent was ultimately successful in freeing Scotland from the dominion and pretensions of the English and their unpatriotic tool, Edward Baliol; and established the independence of his own country.

In 1341 the Steward sent to France for David II., to commence his personal reign in Scotland; but the Island chief was too powerful to suffer materially in person or property for his disloyalty. Indeed, King David on his return deemed it the wisest policy to attach as many of the Scottish barons to his party as possible; and with this view he concluded a treaty with John of the Isles, by which a temporary peace was secured between them, and in consequence of which the Insular Chief was, for the first time during his whole rule, not in active opposition to the Scottish king. Gregory, referring to these transactions, says that "on the return of David II. from France, after the final discomfiture of Baliol and his supporters, John of the Isles was naturally exposed to the hostility of the Steward and the other nobles of the Scottish party, by whose advice he seems to have been forfeited, when many of his lands were granted to one of his relations, Angus MacIan, progenitor of the house of Ardnamurchan. This grant, however, did not take effect; and such was the resistance offered by John and his kinsman, Reginald or Ranald, son of Roderick MacAlan (who had been restored, in all probability, by Baliol, to the lands forfeited by his father), and so anxious was David at the time to bring the whole force of his kingdom together in his intended wars with England, that he at length pardoned both these powerful chiefs, and confirmed to them the following possessions:—To John he gave the Isles of Isla, Gigha, Jura, Scarba, Colonsay, Mull, Coll, Tiree, and Lewis, and the districts of Morvern, Lochaber, Duror, and Glenco; to Ranald the Isles of Uist, Barra, Egg, and Rum, and the Lordship of Garmoran, being the original possessions of his family in the North. By this arrangement, Kintyre, Knapdale, and Skye, reverted to their former owners, and Lorn remained in the hands of the crown, whilst it is probable that Ardnamurchan was given as a compensation to Angus MacIan." The Lordship of Garmoran comprehended the districts of Moidart, Arisaig, Morar, and Knoydart, on the mainland. Not long after this Ranald, son of Rory of the Isles, and last male representative of Roderick of Bute, grandson of Somerled of the Isles, was, in 1346, murdered, as already stated, at Perth by the Earl of Ross, from whom he held lands in Kintail; and, leaving no issue, his sister Amy, who married John of the Isles, in terms of the grant in his favour by David II., became her brother's heir, when her husband, uniting her possessions to his own, assumed henceforth the style of *Dominus Insularum*, or Lord of the Isles. The first recorded instance of the assumption of this title by John of Isla, is in an indenture with the Lord of Lorn, in 1354. "Thus was formed," continues Gregory, "the modern Lordship of the Isles, comprehending the territories of the Macdonalds of Isla, and the Macruaries of the North Isles, and a great part of those of the Macdougalls of Lorn; and although the representative of

the latter family was nominally restored to the estates of his ancestors on the occasion of his marriage with a niece of the king, yet he was obliged to leave the Lord of the Isles in possession of such portion of the Lorn estates as had been granted to the latter by David in 1344. The daughter and heiress of John de Ergadia, or Macdugall, the restored Lord of Lorn, carried Lorn proper to her husband, Robert Stewart, founder of the Rosyth family, by whom the Lordship was sold to his brother, John Stewart of Innerneath, ancestor of the Stewarts, Lord of Lorn."

This acquisition of territory added immensely to the power and influence of the Lord of the Isles, and though he was at the time on friendly terms with King David, the Government became concerned as to the consequences of permitting the ancient territories of Somerled to become again united in the person of such an able and already powerful chief as the Lord of the Isles. They therefore determined to place every obstacle in his way, and refused to acknowledge him as the rightful heir to Ranald MacRuari of the Isles, and his wife Amy dying soon after, advantage was taken of her death to refuse him a title to her lands, while the Government even went the length of asserting that the marriage with the Lord of the Isles, on which his claim was founded, had been irregular, and therefore could not be recognised. This naturally aroused the ire of the great chief; he was again in opposition, and in the ranks of the Baliol party; but the English king having had to direct his attention to the war with France, a treaty was entered into between the Scottish king and the former before his opposition could produce any consequences detrimental to the Government of Scotland.

Shortly after this a very extraordinary change took place in the character and position of the different factions in Scotland which had the effect once more of detaching the Lord of the Isles from the English interest, and of inducing him to take his natural position among the barons who stood out for the independence of Scotland. Skene puts the state of parties at this period and the ultimate result in a remarkably clear and concise form, and says—Previously to the return of David II, from captivity in England in 1357, the established Government and the principal barons of the kingdom had, with the exception of those periods when Edward Baliol had gained a temporary success, been invariably hostile to the English claims, while it was merely a faction of the nobility, who were in opposition to the Court, that supported the cause of Baliol and of English supremacy. John, from the natural causes arising from his situation, and urged by the continued policy of the Government being directed towards the reduction of his power and influence, was always forced into opposition to the administration, for the time, by which this policy was followed, and when the opposing faction consisted of the adherents of the English interest, the Island lord was naturally found among them, and was thus induced to enter into treaty with the King of England. On the return of David, however, the situation of parties became materially altered; the King of Scotland now ranked as Edward of England's staunchest adherent, and secretly seconded all his endeavours to overturn the independence of Scotland, while the party which had throughout supported the throne of Scotland and the cause of independence were in consequence thrown into active opposition to the crown. The natural consequence of this change was that the Lord of the Isles left the party

to which he had so long adhered as soon as it became identified with the royal faction, and was thus forced into connection with those with whom he had been for so many years at enmity.

The Steward of Scotland, who was at the head of this party, was of course desirous of strengthening himself by means of alliances with the most powerful barons of the country, and he therefore received the accession of so important a person with avidity, and cemented their union by procuring the marriage of the Lord of the Isles with his own daughter. John now adhered steadfastly to the party of the Steward, and took an active share in all its proceedings, along with the other barons by whom they were joined, but without any open manifestation of force, until the year 1366, when the country was in a state of irritation from the heavy burdens imposed upon the people in order to raise the ransom of their king, and when the jealousy of David towards the Steward had at length broken out so far as to cause the former to throw his own nephew and the acknowledged successor to his throne into prison. The northern barons, who belonged to his party, broke out into open rebellion, and refused to pay their proportion of the general taxation, or attend the parliament, to which they were frequently summoned. Matters appear to have remained in this state, and the northern chiefs to have actually assumed independence for upwards of two years, until David had at last brought himself to apply to the Steward as the only person capable of restoring peace to the country, and charged him to put down the rebellion.

In consequence of this appeal, the Steward, who was unwilling to be considered as the disturber of the peace of the kingdom, and whose ends were better forwarded by steady opposition to the Court party than by open rebellion, took every means in his power to reduce the insurgent noblemen to obedience; but although he succeeded in obtaining the submission of John of Lorn and Gillespie Campbell, and although the Earls of Mar and Ross, with other northern barons, whose object was gained by the restoration of the Steward to freedom, voluntarily joined him in his endeavours, the Lord of the Isles refused to submit, and, secure in the distance, and in the inaccessible nature of his territories, set the royal power at defiance. But the state of affairs in France soon after requiring the undivided attention of the English king, he was obliged to come to terms with the Scots, and a peace having been concluded between the two countries on the most favourable terms for the latter, the Scottish Government was left at liberty to turn its attention wholly towards reducing the Isles to obedience. In order to accomplish this, David II., well aware of the cause of the rebellion of the Isles, and of the danger of permitting matters to remain in their present position, at length determined, and that with a degree of energy which his character had given little reason to expect, in person to proceed against the rebels, and for this purpose commanded the attendance of the Steward with the barons of the realm. But the Steward, now perceiving that the continuance of the rebellion of the Isles would prove fatal to his party, by the great influence which he possessed over his son-in-law, succeeded in persuading him to meet the king at Inverness, and to submit himself to his authority, and the result of this meeting was a treaty entered into between "*Johannes de Yla, dominus insularum*" on the one hand, and "*David, Dei gratia rex Scotorum*" on the other, in which John not only engaged to submit

to the royal authority and to take his share of all public burdens, but also to put down all others who dared to raise themselves in opposition to the regal authority. For the fulfilment of this obligation the Lord of the Isles not only gave his own oath, but offered the High Steward, his father-in-law, as security, and delivered his lawful son, Donald, by the Steward's daughter, his grandson, Angus, by his eldest lawful son, John, and a natural son, also named Donald, into the hands of the King as hostages.*

By the accession of Robert Steward to the throne of Scotland, which took place shortly after this event, the Lord of the Isles was once more brought into close connection with the crown, and as John remained during the whole of this reign in a state of as great tranquillity as his father Angus had been during that of Robert Bruce, the policy of thus connect-

* The following is a copy of the famous instrument which will be found at pp. 69-70 of "Invernessiana," by Charles Fraser-Mackintosh, F.S.A., Scot., M.P.—"To all who may see the present letters :—John de Yle, Lord of the Isles, wishes salvation in the Saviour of all. Since my most serene prince and master, the revered lord David, by the Grace of God, illustrious King of Scots, has been stirred up against my person because of certain faults committed by me, for which reason, coming humbly to the presence of my said lord, at the Town of Inverness, on the 15th day of the month of November, in the year of grace 1369, in the presence of the prelates, and of very many of the nobles of his kingdom, I offered and submitted myself to the pleasure and favour of my said master, by suppliantly entreating for favour and for the remission of my late faults, and since my said lord, at the instance of his council, has graciously admitted me to his goodwill and favour, granting besides that I may remain in (all) my possessions whatsoever and not be removed, except according to the process and demand of law: Let it be clearly patent to you all, by the tenor of these presents, that I, John de Yle, foresaid, promise and covenant, in good faith, that I shall give and make reparation to all good men of this kingdom whatsoever, for such injuries, losses, and troubles as have been wrought by me, my sons, or others whose names are more fully set forth in the royal letters of remission granted to me, and to whomsoever of the kingdom as are faithful I shall thus far make the satisfaction concluded for, and I shall justly note purchased lands and superiorities, and I shall govern them according to my ability; I shall promptly cause my sons and my subjects, and others my adherents, to be in peaceable subjection, and that due justice shall be done to our lord the King, and to the laws and customs of his kingdom, and that they shall be obedient to, and shall appear before the justiciars, sheriffs, coroners, and other royal servants in each sheriffdom, even better and more obediently than in the time of Robert of good memory, the predecessor of my lord the King, and as the inhabitants of the said lands and superiorities have been accustomed to do. They shall answer, both promptly and dutifully, to the royal servants what is imposed regarding contributions and other burdens and services due, and also for the time past, and in the event that within the said lands or superiorities any person or persons shall offend against the King, or one or more of his faithful servants, and if he or they shall despise to obey the law, or if he or they shall be unwilling to obey in the premises, and in any one of the premises, I shall immediately, entirely laying aside stratagem and deceit, pursue that person or those persons as enemies, and as rebels of the King and kingdom, with all my ability, until he or they shall be expelled from the limits of the lands and superiorities, or I shall make him or them obey the common law: And for performing, implementing, and faithfully observing these things, all and each, I personally have taken the oath in presence of the foresaid prelates and nobles, and besides I have given and surrendered the under-written hostages, viz., Donald, my son, begotten of the daughter of the Lord Seneschal of Scotland, Angus, son of my late son John, and one Donald, another and natural son of mine, whom, because at the time of the completion of this present deed, I have not at present ready and prepared. I shall cause them to go into, or to be given up at the Castle of Dumbarton, at the feast of our Lord's birth now next to come, if I shall be able otherwise on this side, or at the feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin (or Candlemas, 2d February) next following thereafter, under pain of the breach of the oath given, and under pain of the loss of all things which, with regard to the lord our King, I shall be liable to lose, in whatever manner. And for securing the entrance of these hostages as promised, I have found my Lord Seneschal of Scotland, Earl of Strathern, security, whose seal for the purpose of the present security, and also for the greater evidence of the matter is appended, along with my own proper seal, to these presents in testimony of the premises. Acted and given, year, day, and place foresaid."

ing these turbulent chiefs with the Government by the ties of friendship and alliance, rather than that of attempting to reduce them to obedience by force and fortitude, became very manifest. King Robert, no doubt, saw clearly enough the advantage of following the advice left by Robert Bruce for the guidance of his successors, not to allow the great territories and extensive influence of these Island lords ever again to be concentrated in the person of one individual ; but the claims of John were too great to be overlooked, and, accordingly, Robert had been but one year on the throne, when John obtained from him a feudal title to all those lands which had formerly belonged to Ranald, the son of Roderick, and which had been so long refused to him.

In order, however, to neutralise in some degree the effect of thus investing one individual with a feudal title to such extensive territories, and believing himself secure of the attachment of John during his lifetime, King Robert determined, since he could not prevent the accumulation of so much property in one family, at least, by bringing about its division among its different branches, to sow the seed of future discord, and eventually perhaps of the ruin of the race. He found little difficulty in persuading John, in addition to the usual practice in that family of gavelling the lands among the numerous offspring, to render the children of the two marriages *feudally* independent of each other, a fatal measure, the consequences of which John did not apparently foresee ; and, accordingly, in the third year of his reign, King Robert confirmed a charter by John to Reginald, the second son of the first marriage, of the lands of Garmoran, which John had acquired by his marriage with Reginald's mother, to be held of John's heirs, that is to say, of the descendants of the eldest son of the first marriage, of whom one had been given as an hostage in 1369, and who would of course succeed to every one of John's possessions which were not feudally destined to other quarters. Some years afterwards John resigned a great part of the Western portion of his territories, consisting principally of the lands of Lochaber, Kintyre, and Knapdale, with the Island of Colonsay, into the King's hands, and received from him charters of these lands in favour of himself and his heirs by the marriage with the King's daughter ; thus rendering the children of the second marriage feudally independent of those of the first, and furnishing a subject for contention between these families which could not fail to lead to their ruin.* The regularity of the first marriage has been questioned, but its perfect legitimacy is now placed beyond question by the discovery of a dispensation permitting the marriage by the Pope, dated 1337, as the parties were within the prohibited degrees of consanguinity allowed by the Church. On this point Gregory, Skene, Smibert, and indeed all the best authorities are at one. And the first wife was divorced, from anything that can be ascertained, without any just reasons or any cause of complaint against her good and faithful conduct. Gregory considers it highly probable that a secret understanding was arrived at between the Steward and the Lord of the Isles before the latter divorced his first wife and married the daughter of the Steward, that at the death of King David the Steward would ascend the throne under the title of Robert II. ; and certain it is, he says, that after that event the destination of the Lordship

* *Highlanders of Scotland*, by W. F. Skene, pp. 64-70.

of the Isles was altered so as to cause it to descend to the grandchildren of the King. Aware that his rights to Garmoran and the North Isles was annulled by the divorce of his first wife, the Lord of the Isles, disregarding her claims, and trusting to the influence of the King, his father-in-law, procured a royal charter of the lands in question, in which her name was not even mentioned. Godfrey, the eldest son of the Lord of the Isles, by his first wife, resisted these unjust proceedings, maintaining his mother's prior claims, and his own as her heir; but Ranald, his younger brother, being more pliant, was rewarded by a grant of the North Isles, Garmoran, and many other lands to hold of John, Lord of the Isles, *and his heirs*.*

When the Steward ascended the throne as King Robert II. of Scotland, one of his first Acts of Parliament was to confirm his "beloved son John of the Isles" in the possession of the greater portion of the Scottish heritage of the house of Somerled, except a portion of Argyle, Moidart, Arisaig, Morar, and Knoydart, on the mainland; and Uist, Barra, Rum, Egg, and Harris, in the Western Isles, were confirmed or assigned to him and his heirs by royal charter, dated at Scone, on the 9th March 1371-2. By the charter granted in his favour by David II. on the 12th June 1344, he, in addition to securing the lands already named, was made keeper of the "King's Castles of Kernoburgh, Iselborough, and Dunchonnal, with the lands and small Islands thereto belonging to be held by the said John, and his heirs, in fee and heritage." In 1354 he entered into an indenture with John of Lorn, Lord of Argyle, by which the latter gave up his ancient claims to these castles and lands, in favour of John of the Isles, as also his rights to the Islands of Mull, Jura, and Tiree. In the same year he was one of the four great barons of Scotland named as securities for the observance of the Treaty of Newcastle, and as the other three barons named were the Steward of Scotland, afterwards Robert II., the Lord of Douglas, and Thomas of Moray, it is clear that he was selected as one of the most powerful chiefs at the time in all Scotland. On 31st March 1356 Edward III. of England issued a commission to treat directly with the Island Chief, and in the treaty for the liberation of David II., entered into on the 3d October in the following year, by which also an "inviolable truce" for ten years between England and Scotland, was agreed upon, the Lord of the Isles was specially mentioned. In 1362 he obtained a confirmation of all donations and concessions by whosoever made to him, and of whatsoever lands, tenements, annual rents, and other possessions held by him.

The haughty temper of the Western chief is well illustrated by an anecdote preserved in Hugh Macdonald's MS.—"When John of the Isles was to be married, some of his followers and familiars advised him to behave courteously before the King, and to uncover himself as others did. He said (that) he did not well know how the King should be revered, for all the men he ever saw should reverence himself;" and, to get over the difficulty, the haughty lord "threw away his cap, saying he would wear none," and thus there would be no necessity to humiliate himself by taking it off before the King.

There is no doubt whatever that John, first Lord of the Isles, married

* *Western Highlands and Isles*, pp. 30-31,

first, as his lawful wife, Amy, sole representative and heiress of the MacRuari branch of the Siol Cuinn, and that among his descendants by this marriage, we must look for the representative of the elder branch, and therefore for the chiefs of the line of Somerled of the Isles, while it is equally true that the family of Sleat represent John, last Earl of Ross and Lord of the Isles. The controversy which has taken place on this important question between the families of Glengarry and Moydart is well known to many of our readers, and we are fortunate enough to possess copies of it; but although the question arises chronologically here, we prefer to discuss the whole subject at a future stage in a special chapter. There is, however, no doubt that Donald, the eldest son of the second marriage, although not the chief of the family by right of blood, became the actual feudal superior of his brothers. On this point Gregory is emphatic, and says "Donald, the eldest son of the second marriage, became, on his father's death, second Lord of the Isles, and in that capacity was most undoubtedly, feudal superior and actual chief of his brothers, whether of the full or half blood." We shall therefore follow and treat the Lords of the Isles as the main, and, unquestionably, the most important line in this work.

By his marriage with Amy, heiress of the MacRuaries, "the good John of Isla" had issue—

1. *John*, who died before his father, leaving one son, Angus, who died without issue.

2. *Godfrey*, of Uist and Garmoran, of whom hereafter.

3. *Ranald*, or *Reginald*, progenitor of Glengarry, and of all the Macdonalds claiming to be Clan Ranalds. These shall afterwards be dealt with in their order.

4. *Mary*, said to have married, first, one of the Macleans of Duart, and, secondly, Maclean of Coll.

He married, secondly, Lady Margaret, daughter of Robert, High Steward of Scotland, afterwards King Robert II., and first of the Stewart dynasty. By this lady he had—

5. *Donald*, who succeeded as second Lord of the Isles.

6. *John Mor Tanister* of Islay and Kintyre, and of whom hereafter.

7. *Alexander*, Lord of Lochaber, known as "Alastair Carrach," progenitor of the family of Keppoch.

Gregory says that he died in 1380, while Skene has it that he died about 1386. His death took place at his Castle of Ardtornish in Morven, and he was buried in the sacred precincts of Iona, "with great splendour," by the ecclesiastics of the Isles, whose attachment he secured by liberal donations to the Church, and who evinced their gratitude by calling him "the good John of Isla," a designation handed down by tradition to modern times.

He was succeeded in all his possessions, and in the Lordship of the Isles, by his eldest son by the second marriage.

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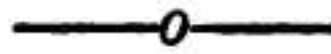
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VOL. V.

HISTORY OF THE MACDONALDS,
AND
THE LORDS OF THE ISLES.

BY THE EDITOR.



V.

VIII. DONALD, SECOND LORD OF THE ISLES, better known in history as "Donald of Harlaw," was, as stated in our last, the eldest son by his father's second marriage; but he became feudal superior of the children by the first marriage, in the manner already described. This chief possessed no small share of his father's spirit. He was a man of distinguished ability, and, though so closely connected with the throne, he resolved to gain, if possible, complete independence, like his ancestors, for the Island kingdom; and the more easily to gain his purpose he entered into an alliance with the English against his own country and king, a proceeding which can only be justified on the plea that he considered himself an independent Prince, owing no allegiance to the Scottish king for the lands hitherto held by the race of Somerled in the north-west Highlands and Isles. This position is, however, clearly untenable, for in point of fact he only possessed his lands, as the eldest son of the *second* marriage, by a charter from the crown, in the absence of which they would have gone to the children of the first marriage, who only could, on that plea, claim to be independent sovereigns. Be that as it may, it is an undisputed fact that the second Lord of the Isles is found, in the year 1388, shortly after the death of his father, negotiating with Richard II. of England on the footing of an independent Prince. Twelve years later we find him visiting England under a safe-conduct granted in his favour by Henry IV., dated 2d June 1400; and treaties exist entered into between them, dated respectively 1405 and 1408. By the first, dated June 2d, Donald de Insulis, and John, his brother, are allowed to come into England with 100 horse; while on the 16th September 1405, Henry IV. issued a commission for treating with Donald de Insulis, Chevalier, and John, his brother, concerning final peace, alliance, and friendship between his Majesty and them. The same thing is repeated under date of 8th of May 1408.

A few years later Donald of the Isles raised the flag of rebellion, and

conducted himself in a manner, and exhibited a power and capacity, which shook the throne and the government almost to their very foundations. He had married Lady Mary Leslie, only daughter of the Countess of Ross. Alexander, Earl of Ross, her only brother, married Isabella Stewart, daughter of the Regent, Robert Duke of Albany, by which union he had an only child, Lady Euphemia, who became a nun, and resigned all her estates and dignities in favour of her grandfather and her uncle, John, Earl of Buchan, second son of the Duke of Albany, and his heirs male, and whom failing, to return to the Crown, thus cutting off Lady Margaret, wife of Donald, second Lord of the Isles, who was the heir general. Skene informs us that Euphemia, on taking the veil, committed the government of her earldom to the Governor, when Donald saw that if Albany was permitted in this manner to retain actual possession of the Earldom, he would be unable to recover his vast inheritance in right of his wife from so crafty a nobleman. He accordingly proceeded to obtain possession of the Earldom, contending that Euphemia, by taking the veil, had become, in a legal point of view, dead; and that the Earldom belonged to him in right of his wife. His demand that he should on these grounds be put in possession of it was opposed by the Governor, whose principal object appears to have been to prevent the accession of so vast a district as the Earldom of Ross to the extensive territories of the Lord of the Isles, already too powerful to be kept in check by the Government. His conduct was actuated more by the principles of expediency than by those of simple justice—by what would most conduce to the security of Government than whether the claims of the Lord of the Isles were in themselves just or not. Donald was not the man, however, who would patiently brook such an unjust denial of his rights; and no sooner did he receive an unfavourable denial of his demands than he collected all the forces he could command, amounting to about ten thousand men, and with them he invaded the Earldom. He appears to have met with no resistance from the people of Ross; and he very soon obtained possession of the district; but on his arrival at Dingwall he was met by Angus Dubh Mackay, in command of a large body of men from Sutherland, who, after a fierce attack, were completely routed by the Lord of the Isles; and their leader, Angus Dubh, was taken prisoner. “Donald was now in complete possession of the Earldom, but his subsequent proceedings showed that the nominal object of his expedition was but a cover to ulterior designs; for, leaving the district of Ross, he swept through Moray, and penetrated into Aberdeenshire, at the head of his whole army. Here he was met at the village of Harlaw by the Earl of Mar, at the head of an inferior army in point of numbers, but composed of Lowland gentlemen, who were better armed and better disciplined than the Highland followers of Donald. It was on the 24th of July 1411 that the celebrated battle of Harlaw was fought, upon the issue of which seemed to depend the question of whether the Gaelic or Teutonic part of the population of Scotland were in future to have the supremacy. Of the battle the result was doubtful, as both parties claimed the victory; but in the case of the Highlanders, the absence of decided victory was equivalent to defeat in its effects, and Donald was in consequence obliged to retreat. The check which had been given to the Highland army was immediately followed by the Duke of Albany collecting additional forces, and march-

ing in person to Dingwall. But Donald avoided hazarding another encounter, and returned with his forces to the Isles, where he remained all winter, while Albany rapidly made himself master of the Earldom of Ross.*

Gregory says that the whole array of the Lordship of the Isles followed Donald of Harlaw on that occasion, and that consequently he was not weakened by any opposition such as might be expected on the part of his elder brothers or his descendants, though Ranald, "the youngest but most favoured son of the first marriage of the good John, was, as the seannachies tell us, 'old in the government of the Isles, at his father's death;'" and though he also acted as tutor or guardian to his younger brother Donald, Lord of the Isles, to whom, on attaining his majority, he delivered over the Lordship, in the presence of the vassals, "contrary to the opinion of the men of the Isles," who doubtless considered Godfrey, the eldest son of the first marriage, as their proper lord. If the opinion of the Islanders was at first in favour of Godfrey, the liberality and other distinguished characteristics of Donald seem in a very short time to have reconciled them to his rule, for "there is no trace after this time of any opposition among them to Donald or his descendants." And "as the claim of 'Donald of Harlaw' to the Earldom of Ross, in right of his wife, was after his death virtually admitted by King James I., and as Donald himself was actually in possession of that Earldom and acknowledged by the vassals in 1411, he may, without impropriety, be called the first Earl of Ross of his family."†

For a full and graphic account of the famous battle of Harlaw, and for the names of the leading men who fell in it, we refer the reader to pp. 122-125 *Celtic Magazine*, vol. iii. "In the fight," Buchanan says, "there fell so many eminent and noble personages as scarce ever perished in one battle, against a foreign enemy for many years before." We extract the following from Hugh Macdonald's MS.:—"This Alexander (Earl of Ross), who was married to the Duke of Albany's daughter, left no issue but one daughter, name Eupheme. She being very young, the Governor, her grandfather, took her to his own family, and having brought her up, they persuaded her by flattery and threats to resign her rights of the Earldom of Ross to John, his second son, Earl of Buchan, as it was given out, and that much against her will. But others were of opinion she did not resign her rights; but thereafter she was bereaved of her life, as most men thought, by the contrivance of the Governor. Donald, Lord of the Isles, claimed right to the Earldom of Ross, but could get no other hearing from the Governor but lofty menacing answers, neither could he get a sight of the rights which Lady Eupheme gave to his son John. The Governor thought that his own strength and sway could carry everything according to his pleasure in the kingdom, still hoping for the crown, the true heir thereof (James I., nephew to the Duke of Albany) being prisoner in England. He likewise was at enmity with the Lord of the Isles, because Sir Adam Moor's daughter‡ was his grandmother,

* *The Highlanders of Scotland*, vol. ii., pp. 71-3.

† *Western Highlands and Isles*, pp. 31-32.

‡ The author of the "Macdonnells of Antrim" says, in a footnote, pp. 17-18, regarding this lady, who was the grandmother of both the claimants that:—Elizabeth More or Muir, was a lady of the well-known Bowallan family, in the parish of Kilmarnock, her

knowing full well that he would own the true heir's cause against him. The Lord of the Isles told the Governor he would either lose all he had or gain the Earldom of Ross, to which he had such a good title. The Duke replied—he wished Donald would be so forward as to stick to what he said. Donald immediately raised the best of his men, to the number of 10,000, and chose out of them 6600, turning the rest of them to their homes. They thought first they would fight near to Inverness; but, because the Duke and his army came not, Donald's army marched through Murray, and over the Spey. The Governor, Alexander Stewart, Earl of Murray, and John Stewart, Earl of Buchan, the Governor's son, having gathered an army of 9700 men, desired the Lord of the Isles to stay, and that they would meet him near Inverness and give him battle; but he would not leave his own men foraging in his own county of Ross. Therefore he marched forward, resolving to take his hazard near their doors, assuring himself of victory. Huntly, who was Macdonald's friend, sent him a private message, desiring him to commit no hostilities in his country, by the way of assuring him, he would not own the Governor's quarrels, and wishing Macdonald good success, and desiring him to be of good courage. The Lord of the Isles went forward till both armies met at Harlaw, a place in Garioch, in the Braes of Buchan. There came several in the Governor's army out of curiosity to see Macdonald and his Highlanders routed, as they imagined; others came to be rewarded by the Governor, as they did not expect to see any other king, in all appearance, but he and his offspring; others came through fear of the Duke's great authority. Macdonald set his men in order of battle as follows. He commanded himself the main battle, where he kept most of the Islanders, and with the Macleods, John of Harris and Roderick of the Lewis. He ordered the rest to the wings, the right commanded by Hector Roy Maclean, and the left by Callum Beg Mackintosh, who that day received from Macdonald a right of the lands of Glengarry in Lochaber, by way of pleasing him for yielding

father, Sir Adam Muir, being the fifth in descent from David de Moore, the founder of that house early in the thirteenth century. There had formerly existed considerable doubt as to the reality of the marriage between Robert II. and Elizabeth Muir, and all the earlier Scottish historians down even to Buchanan, supposed that their union had not been legalised by marriage. The author of the *Historie of James the Sixth*, however, after quoting from a pedigree of the Muirs of Rowallan, says that "Robert, great Steward of Scotland, having taken away the said Elizabeth, drew to Sir Adame, her father, an instrument that he should take her to his lawful wyfe, which *myself hath seene*, said the collector (of the Pedigree, Mr John Lermouth), as also ane testimonie, written in Latine by Roger M'Adame, priest of our Ladie Marie's Chapell." A charter granted by Robert II., in 1364, proves that Elizabeth Muir was the *first* wife of that King, and refers to a dispensation granted by the Pope for the marriage. This charter was published in 1694, by one Mr Lewis Innes, Principal of the Scots' College at Paris. The dispensation from Rome referred to in the charter of 1364, was long sought for after the lady's death, and was not found until the year 1789, when it, and a dispensation for the King's marriage with Euphemia Ross, his last wife, were discovered together. There exists also another charter, by David II., "to Robert, great Steward of Scotland, of the lands of Kintyre; and to John Stewart his son, gotten betwixt him and Elizabeth Moore, daughter of Adam More, knight, and failzeing of him, to Walter, his second brother." Elizabeth Muir is said to have been a very beautiful woman, and to have captivated the High Steward during the unquiet times of Edward Baliol, when the former was often obliged to seek safety in concealment. It is supposed that Dundonald Castle was the "scene of King Robert's early attachment and nuptials with the fair Elizabeth." From this union are descended, through their daughter, Margaret Stewart, the Macdonnells of Antrim; and through their sons, not only the race of our British sovereigns, but also of several crowned heads in Europe. For an account of the Muirs of Rowallan, see Paterson's *Parishes and Families of Ayrshire*, vol. ii., pp. 182-194.

the right wing to Maclean, and to prevent any quarrel between him and Maclean. Mackintosh said he would take the lands, and make the left behave as well as the right. John More, Donald's brother, was placed with a detachment of the lightest and nimblest men as a reserve, either to assist the wings or main battle, as occasion required. To him was joined Mackenzie and Donald Cameron of Locheil. Alister Carrick was young, and therefore was much against his will set apart, lest the whole of the brothers should be hazarded at once. The Earls of Mar and Buchan ordered their men in a main battle and two small fronts; the right front was commanded by Lords Marishall and Erroll, the left by Sir Alexander Ogilvie, Sheriff of Angus. They encountered one another; their left wing was forced by Maclean, and the party on Macdonald's right was forced to give way. There was a great fold for keeping cattle behind them, into which they went. The Earl of Mar was forced to give ground, and that wing was quite defeated. Mar and Erroll posted to Aberdeen, the rest of Macdonald's men followed the chase. There were killed on the Governor's side 2550. The Lord Marishall was apprehended safe, and died in his confinement of mere grief and despair. Sir Alexander Ogilvy, Sheriff of Angus, was killed, with seven knights, and several other gentlemen. On Macdonald's side Maclean fell; he and Irvin of Drum fought together till the one killed the other. Drum's two brothers, with the principal men of that surname, were killed, so that a boy of that name, who herded the cattle, succeeded to the estate of Drum. Two or three gentlemen of the name of Munroe were slain, together with the son of Macquarry of Ulva, and two gentlemen of the name of Cameron. On Macdonald's side were lost in all 180. This battle was fought anno 1411. Macdonald had burnt Aberdeen had not Huntly dissuaded him from it, saying that by his victory, in all appearance, he gained his own, yet it was ridiculous in him to destroy the town, and that citizens would always join with him who had the upper hand. Now, to prove these fabulous and partial writers, particularly Buchanan, it is well known to several men of judgment and knowledge that Macdonald had the victory there, and gained the Earldom of Ross, for four or five generations thereafter, and that Mackintosh, whom they say was killed, lived twenty years thereafter, and was with the Earl of Mar when Alexander Macdonald, Lord of the Isles was captive at Tantallon, in the battle fought at Inverlochy against Donald Balloch, Alexander's cousin-german. This Donald Balloch was son to John More, brother to Donald of the Isles and Earl of Ross. Now, it happened that this same Callum Begg Mackintosh was with King James I. after his releasement from his captivity in England, in the same place where the battle was fought. The King asked him how far they followed the chase? Mackintosh replied that they followed it farther than his Majesty thought. So the King riding on a pretty pace, asked Mackintosh if they came that length? He answering, said, that, in his opinion, there was a heap of stones before them, and that he left there a mark to show that he followed the chase that length; and with that he brought a man's arm with its gauntlet out of the heap. The King, beholding it, desired him to be with him that night at Aberdeen. The King, upon his arrival there, going to his lodgings, Mackintosh said, in presence of the bystanders, that he had performed his word to the King, and now he would betake himself to his own lodgings; whereupon he immediately left the town,

for he dreaded that the King would apprehend him. Patrick, Earl of Tullibardin, said, as the other noblemen were talking of the battle of Harlaw, we know that Macdonald had the victory, *but the Governor had the printer.*"*

Summing up his description and the consequences of this famous engagement, Burton, who with his characteristic hatred of the Highlanders, must of course call the result of this battle a "defeat" for the Islanders, says—"So ended one of Scotland's most memorable battles. The contest between the Lowlanders and Donald's host was a contest between foes, of whom their contemporaries would have said that their ever being in harmony with each other, or having a feeling of common interests and common nationality, was not within the range of rational expectations. . . It will be difficult to make those not familiar with the tone of feeling in Lowland Scotland at that time believe that the defeat of Donald of the Isles was felt as a more memorable deliverance than even that of Bannockburn."†

According to the MS. History of the Mackintoshes quoted by Charles Fraser-Mackintosh in his "Invernessiana":—In this war Malcolm, or Calum Beg, Chief of Mackintosh, "lost many of his friends, particularly James Mackintosh (Shaw) of Rothiemurchus," who must have been confused with the Chief himself, though, in point of fact, he lived until about 1457. In 1412 the same author finds from "the accounts of the great chamberlain of Scotland" that "payment is made to Lord Alexander, Earl of Mar, for various labours and expenses incurred in the war against the Lord of the Isles for the utility of the whole kingdom of £122 7s 4d; and also to him for the construction of a fortalice at Inverness, for the utility of the kingdom, against said Lord of the Isles, £100; and for lime to Inverness for the construction of said fortalice, and for food and the carriage of wood, £32 10s 3d. In 1414 payment is made to Lord Alexander, Earl of Mar, in consideration of his divers labours and expenses about the castle of Inverness, of £52 11s 3d." About the year 1398 Charles Macgilleane, of the ancient house of Maclean of Mull, settled in the neighbourhood of Lochness, under the protection of Donald, Lord of the Isles, whose followers the Macleans were.

It has been generally supposed that the resignation of the Earldom of Ross by Euphemia the nun in favour of her grandfather, Robert, Duke of Albany, was the sole and immediate cause of the battle of Harlaw; but the actual date of the instrument of resignation is 1415—four years after the famous battle; and Skene thinks that the securing of the resignation of the earldom in his favour at that date was rather an attempt on the part of Albany to give a colour of justice to his retention of what he was, by the result of the battle of Harlaw, enabled to keep in his possession. There is no doubt whatever that a claim on the earldom was the ostensible cause of the invasion by the Lord of the Isles, but the readiness with which, in the following summer, that claim was given up by a treaty concluded with the Governor at Port-Gilp, in Argyleshire—when Donald not only gave up the earldom, but agreed to become a vassal of the Crown, and to deliver hostages for his future good behaviour, while he might easily have

* *Collectanea de Rebus Albanicis*, pp. 300-2.

† Vol. iii., pp. 101-102.

kept possession of Ross—clearly indicate that the invasion was but a part of a much more extensive scheme for which the claim to the earldom served as a very good pretext, and that upon the failure of the more important scheme, the claim for the earldom was, with little ado, given up. This becomes the more apparent if we keep in mind the treaty between Donald and Henry IV. of England, dated 1408, and above referred to; and that no sooner was the civil war in Scotland concluded than a truce was entered into between England and Scotland for a period of six years. Gregory is of the same opinion, and says (p. 32)—“After the death of John, Lord of the Isles, we discover various indications of the intrigues of the English Court with the Scottish Islanders had been assumed; and it is not altogether improbable that it was a suspicion of these treasonable practices which caused the Regent, Robert of Albany, to oppose the pretensions of Donald, Lord of the Isles, to the Earldom of Ross. But although English emissaries were on various occasions dispatched, not only to the Lord of the Isles himself, but to his brothers Godfrey and John—and two of the brothers even appear to have visited the English Court—we cannot, at this distance of time, ascertain how far these intrigues were carried.” The fatal policy of taking part with England instead of Scotland in the quarrels of those kingdoms was continued by Donald’s successors until the power of the Lord of the Isles was finally broken up; and, as will be seen in the sequel, his grandson, by this unpatriotic means, brought on the downfall of his house sooner than it would otherwise have come to pass.

Donald of Harlaw, second Lord of the Isles, married Lady Mary Leslie (daughter of Sir Walter Leslie, by Euphemia, Countess of Ross, in favour of whose marriage there is a dispensation dated 1367), who became Countess of Ross when her niece resigned the earldom and became a nun. By this marriage the Lord of the Isles had issue—

1. *Alexander*, who succeeded him as Lord of the Isles and Earl of Ross.
2. *Angus*, Bishop of the Isles.
3. *Mariot*, who married Alexander Sutherland, and to whom “her brother Alexander, in 1429, gave the lands of Duchall to her and her husband, Alexander Sutherland, as appears from the grant of the same in the possession of Sinclair of Roslin.”*

He died, according to Findon’s genealogy, in 1423; to Gregory, “circa 1420”; while Hugh Macdonald, the Seannachaidh, though not mentioning the year of his death, informs us that he “died at Ardhorinish, in Morvairn, in the forty-fifth year of his age, and was buried at Icolmkill, after the rites and ceremonies of his predecessors.” He was succeeded in the Lordship of the Isles, and a few years later in the Earldom of Ross, by his eldest son.

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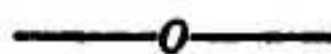
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VOL. V.

HISTORY OF THE MACDONALDS,
AND
THE LORDS OF THE ISLES.

BY THE EDITOR.



VI.

IX. ALEXANDER, third Lord of the Isles, and after the death of his mother, Countess of Ross in her own right, he became Earl of Ross, which title was in 1429 or 1430 acknowledged by the Crown, notwithstanding that his father had given up all claims to it by the treaty of Port-Gilp noticed in the previous number. It may be questioned, however, whether Donald of Harlaw was entitled to style himself Earl of Ross, though he undoubtedly possessed, in right of his wife, the territory comprising the Earldom, and notwithstanding that Skene is of opinion that Donald may fairly be considered the first Earl of Ross of the race of Somerled ; but be that as it may, there is no doubt whatever that Alexander was not only styled Earl of Ross, but was acknowledged as such by the Government and the Crown, by right of descent through his mother.

This Lord of the Isles was a man of great spirit and distinguished ability, and, like his father and grandfather, was ambitious to found a Celtic kingdom of the Isles, the sovereignty of which should be in his own family. At this period, however, Scotland was ruled by James I., a man who was exhibiting kingly talents of a high order, and a resolution to bring his rebellious vassals, however powerful, to submission. In this he was ultimately successful, even in the case of the great Lord of the Isles, though, at first, more by strategy than by actual force of arms. The King, who possessed a remarkable energy, great decision of character, and personal bravery unsurpassed, determined to break down the independence and power of the turbulent Island Lords, and, collecting a large force, in 1427 he marched, accompanied by his principal nobles, to the town of Inverness with an army which made any resistance on the part of the Highlanders quite unavailing. Here he summoned his barons, including the Highland chiefs, to attend a parliament. Even the Lord of the Isles, seeing the power and splendour of the King, thought it prudent to obey ; and, with most of the Northern barons, he proceeded to meet King James at Inverness. As they entered the hall in which the parlia-

ment was assembled, each of these haughty nobles was immediately arrested, and placed in irons in different parts of the building, not one of them being permitted to communicate with any of the others. Among the prisoners were Alexander of the Isles; his mother, the Countess of Ross; Alexander of Garmoran, and several of the most powerful chiefs in the Highlands. It is said that the King exhibited marks of great joy as he saw those powerful Highland Lords marching into the toils which he had so treacherously prepared for them. Alexander of Garmoran, as well as several others, was tried, convicted, and adjudged to be decapitated on the spot, and his whole possessions forfeited to the crown, while most of the others were sent to different castles and strongholds throughout the kingdom, until the majority of them were afterwards condemned to various kinds of death; while a few were set at liberty after various terms of imprisonment. Among the latter was Alexander of the Isles. No one can defend this mean act of treachery by the King, however brave or otherwise distinguished, though Hill Burton tries to excuse him; but while telling us that "It is useless to denounce such acts," he makes the admission, which is not altogether inapplicable even to the present day, namely:—That at that time "there was no more notion of keeping faith with the 'Irishry,' whether of Ireland or Scotland, than with the beast of prey lured to his trap;" after which he proceeds to say that those whom it was deemed fitting to get rid of were put to death, and that nothing remains to show that there was even the ceremonial of a trial.*

The Earldom of Ross, which had been procured by Robert, Duke of Albany, for his son, John Stewart, Earl of Buchan, on its resignation at Port-Gilp by Donald of Harlaw, fell to the Crown by the death, in 1424, of the Earl of Buchan, who was killed in that year at the battle of Verneuil in France; whereupon the King at once restored it to the heiress of line, the mother of Alexander of the Isles. In 1425 Alexander of the Isles and "Master of the Earldom of Ross," sat upon the jury which condemned to death the enemy of his family, Murdoch, Duke of Albany, his two sons, and the Earl of Lennox, for the murder of young Rothesay. He does not, however, seem from the above to have long continued in favour at Court, and it may be interesting to have Gregory's views of the reasons and influences which led Alexander at that time into opposition to the King. It has been mentioned, he says, that Godfrey, Lord of Uist, on the death of his younger brother, Ranald, asserted successfully his claim to the North Isles and Garmoran, from which he had been unjustly excluded by his father. Both Godfrey and Ranald left male issue who must naturally have been opposed to each other, like their fathers; but the meagre notices we possess of the domestic feuds in the Highlands and Isles at this period, do not enable us to trace the progress of these dissensions. It may be readily conceived, however, that where such a prize was in dispute, much blood would be shed and many atrocities committed. The issue of Godfrey, or the Siol Gorrie, as they were called, must for a time have acquired a superiority over the Clanranald or the descendants of Ranald; for in the year 1427 we find mention made by a contemporary writer of an Alexander MacGorrie of Garmoran, then described as a leader of two thousand men. In addition to the disturbances

* *History of Scotland*, vol. ii., 402; Blackwood & Sons, 1876.

sure to arise out of the rival claims of two such powerful families, closely connected with the Lord of the Isles, there were other circumstances, in addition to these, which tended to involve his Lordship in feuds which his natural disposition inclined him to settle more with the sword than by an appeal to the laws. There was a certain John MacArthur, of the family of Campbell, and a leader of some note in the Highlands, who appears to have revived about this period a claim which one of his ancestors had acquired over a portion of Garmoran and the North Isles, and it can easily be conjectured what reception the assertions of such pretensions would receive from Alexander of the Isles and his warlike relatives. There is a charter of the lands of Moydert, &c., by Christina, daughter of Allan MacRuari, in favour of Arthur, son of Sir Arthur Campbell, knight, early in the fourteenth century, which is found, quoted for the names of the witnesses, in a MS. history of the Macnaughtans, in the Advocates' Library. The event, however, which appears to have had most effect in throwing the Highlands and Islands into confusion at this time was the murder of John, Lord of Isla and Kintyre, uncle to the Lord of the Isles, by a man, James Campbell, who is said to have received a commission from the King to apprehend John of Isla, but who exceeded his instructions by putting him to death. When it is considered in what lawless state even the more accessible portions of the kingdom were found on his accession by James I., owing to the incapacity and the weakness of the regent, Murdoch, Duke of Albany, it can easily be conceived how the murder of the uncle of Alexander of the Isles, and the leader of a powerful branch of the Macdonalds, should have raised disturbances in the Western Highlands and Isles which required all the energy and personal bravery of the King to suppress.* Among the most prominent of those executed at Inverness in 1427 was the above-named John MacArthur, and James Campbell, hanged for the murder of John of Isla, as if to show the supposed impartiality of the treacherous proceedings of the King and his parliament on that occasion. Hugh Macdonald informs us that while the Lord of the Isles was confined in Tantallon Castle, the King sent this John Campbell to know "if John More of Kintyre, Macdonald's uncle, would take all his nephew's land; but it was a trap laid to weaken them that they might be the more easily conquered. James Campbell sent a man with a message to John of Kintyre, desiring him to meet him at a point called Ard-Du, with some prudent gentlemen, and that he had matters of consequence from the King to be imparted to him. John came to the place appointed with a small retinue, but James Campbell with a very great train, and told (him) of the King's intention of granting him all the lands possessed by Macdonald, conditionally he would hold of him and serve him. John said he did not know wherein his nephew wronged the King, and that his nephew was as deserving of his rights as he could be, and that he would not accept of those lands, nor serve for them, till his nephew would be set at liberty; and that his nephew himself was as nearly related to the King as he could be. James Campbell, hearing the answer, said that he (John of Isla) was the King's prisoner. John made all the resistance he could, till, overpowered by numbers, he was killed. His death made a great noise through the king-

* Gregory's Western Highlands and Isles, pp. 34-35.

dom, particularly among the faction in opposition to the King, viz., the Hamiltons, Douglasses, and Lindsays. The King at last being ashamed of what had happened, he pursued James Campbell as the murderer; and although Campbell protested he had the King's authority for so doing, yet the King denied having given any other orders than that of apprehending him, if he would not come into the terms proposed to him; and because Campbell had no written order from the King to produce in his defence, he was taken and beheaded, which shows the dangerous consequences of undertaking such a service without due circumspection."*

The young Lord of the Isles was sent south, some say to Edinburgh, and others to Perth, where he was kept in captivity for a short time, and then liberated. His conduct immediately after his release shows that he felt the indignity of his capture and imprisonment very deeply. According to Gregory, his mother, the Countess of Ross, had meanwhile died, though Bower states that in 1429 she was charged with encouraging her son in his violent proceedings, and was arrested and confined at Inchcolm, in the Firth of Forth, where she is said to have remained fourteen months after, a prisoner. But Gregory points out that this is hardly reconcilable with a charter, dated 24th October 1429, in which her son styles himself *Earl* instead of *Master* of Ross. We do not think the simple change from the title of *Master* to that of *Earl* at all unlikely during her life, when all the circumstances are taken into account—his mother, who quite possibly may have even resigned in his favour, being a state prisoner; and the necessity that he should use every influence, which the assumption of the title was calculated to strengthen, to raise the vassals of the Earldom for his projected raid on the Lowlands.

He raised a force of about ten thousand men in Ross and the Isles, with whom he marched to Inverness, where he wasted the Crown lands and burnt the town to ashes, in revenge for the treacherous treatment there extended to him two years before by the King. His followers, according to the MS. History of the Mackintoshes, quoted in "Invernessiana," "were a band of men accustomed to live by rapine, who fell upon Inverness, pillaged and burnt the houses, and then besieged the fort itself. But in vain, for it was gallantly defended by the bravery and vigour of the Governor, and Alexander, understanding that an assault was meditated upon him, retired precipitately towards Lochaber." The King, hearing of the burning of Inverness, prepared at once to vindicate his insulted authority, and with great promptitude collected a large force, which he commanded in person, and marched them into Lochaber, where he came upon the Island Chief quite unexpectedly. On the appearance of the Royal forces the Clan Chattan and the Camerons, who had hitherto followed the banner of the Lord of the Isles, deserted him and went over to the King, who immediately attacked the Islanders, routed them, and pursued them so closely that their chief was obliged to sue for peace. This the King sternly refused on any other terms than an absolute and unconditional surrender, which the haughty Lord of the Isles declined to make, whereupon the King returned home, leaving strict orders with his commanders to make every effort to capture the Earl, who found it necessary to flee for shelter, leaving his army to take care of itself as best it

could. He was ultimately driven to despair by the energy and vigilance of his pursuers, and determined to throw himself on the mercy of the King, which he did by presenting himself before him, his Queen, and Court, while assembled, on Easter Sunday, at a solemn festival in the Church of Holyrood, engaged in their devotions before the High Altar. The haughty chief, with bonnet in hand, his legs and arms quite bare, his body covered only with a plaid, in his shirt and drawers, with a naked sword in his hand held by the point, which, in token of submission, he offered to the King on bended knees, imploring his forgiveness. "His appearance, with the solicitations of the affected Queen and all the nobles, made such an impression on his majesty that he completely submitted to the promptings of his heart, against the wiser and more prudent dictates of his better judgment. He accepted the sword offered to him, and spared the life of his captive, but immediately committed him to Tantallon Castle, under the charge of William Douglas, Earl of Angus. The spirit of his followers, however, could not brook this mortal offence, and the whole strength of the Clan was mustered under Donald Balloch, a cousin of the Lord of the Isles. They were led to Lochaber, where they met the King's forces, under the Earls of Mar and Caithness, killed the latter, gained a complete victory over the Royal forces, and returned to the Isles in triumph with a great quantity of spoil. James again came north in person as far as Dunstaffnage; Donald Balloch fled to Ireland; and after several encounters with the Highlanders, the King received the submission of most of the chiefs who were engaged in the rebellion; others were apprehended and executed, to the number of about three hundred, after which he released the Earl from Tantallon Castle, and granted him a free pardon for all his rebellious acts, confirmed him in all his titles and possessions, and conferred upon him the Lordship of Lochaber, which had previously, on its forfeiture, been granted to the Earl of Mar."*

Skene has been led into the error of saying that Donald Balloch was the son of Reginald, and the Chief of Clanranald; whereas he was the son of John Mor Tannister, elder brother of Donald of Harlaw, and ancestor of the Macdonnells and Earls of Antrim. He also fell into the mistake of believing in the ruse played upon the King, when a head, said to be that of Donald Balloch, was sent to him by Conn O'Neil, an Irish chief; for he informs us that King James, seeing that the absence of their chief, so far from rendering the Clan more disposed to become amenable to his will, rather roused them to acts of rebellion and revenge, and that it was better to have at their head a chief who had become bound to him from acts of clemency, than to expose them to the influences of the other branches of the family, who were now irritated by the indignity offered to their legitimate chief; he therefore proceeded in person to the north, for the purpose of quelling the remains of the rebellion. His expedition was attended with his usual success by the submission of all the chiefs who had been engaged in it. "Donald Balloch was soon after this betrayed, and his head sent to the King, upon which he at once restored the Lord of the Isles to liberty, granted him a free pardon for all the various acts of rebellion he had been guilty of, and also confirmed him not only all his titles and possessions, but even granted him the Lordship

* *History and Genealogies of the Clan Mackenzie*, by the same author, 1879, pp. 49-50.

of Lochaber, which had been forfeited from his cousin Alexander, and given to the Earl of Mar."* The prudence of this policy on the part of the King was soon apparent, for although the Island Chief was naturally more disposed to take up an antagonistic position to the Crown, and went the length of even entering into a treasonable league with the Earls of Crawford and Douglas, who at the time led the opposition to the King, he did not again disturb the peace of the nation as long as he lived. Donald Balloch inherited through his mother, Margery Bisset, the district of the Glens in Ireland, whither he had betaken himself after the dispersion of his army, and after he had ravaged and spoiled the territories of the Clan Chattan and the Camerons, who had left him and gone over to the King. Most of the subordinate insurgent leaders submitted to the dreaded James, and tried to avoid punishment by throwing the whole blame of the insurrection on Donald Balloch, whose power, they declared, they dared not resist. Regarding Donald and his reputed decapitation, Gregory says that "on the return of James to Edinburgh, a head, said to be that of Donald Balloch, was sent to him by Hugh Buy O'Neill, an Irish chief of Ulster; and it was generally believed at the Scottish Court that the ringleader of the late insurrection was now no more. But as Donald Balloch certainly survived King James many years, it is obvious that the sending of the head to Edinburgh was a stratagem devised by the crafty Islander in order to check further pursuit."†

The date of this battle, according to Hill Burton and Gregory, was 1431. The former tells that an extraordinary tax was granted on the occasion of it "for the resistance of the King's rebellers of the north," which was to be such that "in all in lands of the realm where the yield of twa pennies was raiset, there be now ten pennies raiset." [Vol. ii., p. 403]. After describing the battle of Inverlochy, the author of "The Macdonnells of Antrim" informs us that the Lowland knights, who were very numerous in the Royal army, plumed themselves on the superior armour and discipline of their men, but soon found that even this was of no avail against the furious onset of their Highland foes, who wielded their broadswords and Lochaber-axes with all the ferocity of Northern warfare. According to him, at least one thousand of the King's army were slain, among whom were the Earl of Caithness, and sixteen of his personal retinue, together with several knights and barons from the southern counties of Scotland, after which the Highland host dispersed itself into marauding parties, spoiled the county, and then returned to their native fastnesses, having only lost some fifty of their comrades in arms on the battlefield. "Donald Balloch, and several other leaders, having had their revenge, steered their galleys across the channel, and sought rest and security, which they very much needed, in the woody glens of Antrim. They were soon followed by a despatch from the Scottish King to O'Neill, requesting the latter to seize and send back Donald Balloch alive or dead. O'Neill, who had previously entered into a treaty with James I. of mutual assistance against England, sent the latter a human head, which was joyously accepted as that of Donald Balloch by the Scottish Court then at Perth. But Donald Balloch retained possession of his own head, and at the time of this other head's transmission

* The Highlanders of Scotland, pp. 78-79.

† Highlands and Isles, pp. 38-39.

to Scotland he was actually paying his addresses to O'Neill's daughter, whom he soon afterwards married, and through whose powerful connections he was restored without much delay to his estates in Isla and Cantire." This lady was the daughter of Conn O'Neill (son of Hugh Buy O'Neill), who resided at a place called Edenduffcarrick, and now known as Shane's Castle, in Ireland, where he died in the year 1482.

Following up his account of the execution of James Campbell at Inverness in 1427 for the murder of John Mor Tannister, father of Donald Balloch, Hugh Macdonald proceeds to describe the incidents which led up to the battle of Inverlochy, the battle itself, and the events which followed upon it, in a manner so detailed and interesting that, even at the risk of some little repetition, we shall place it before the reader, slightly modernising the phraseology. He says:—All those about the King wished to impair Macdonald's estate and diminish his grandeur, to which the King himself was not very averse. They now thought it a convenient time for their purpose, the Lord of the Isles being in prison (in Tantallon Castle) and his uncle, John Mor, dead, to seize on the lands of Lochaber, whereupon, Alexander, Earl of Mar, who had received a grant of these lands from the King, levied a great army by his Majesty's directions, namely, the followers of Huntly; Allan, Lord of Caithness; Fraser of Lovat, Mackintosh, Mackay of Strathnaver, Grant, and the Chief of the Camerons, who enticed some of Macdonald's vassals, by making them great promises, to join with them, and that the rights they formerly held of Macdonald would be confirmed to them by the King. The vassals and the freeholders, considering that Macdonald's power was entirely gone and ruined, and believing they would never again see him installed in his possessions, through greed and covetousness they joined the King's party. So, coming to Lochaber, they pitched their tents near the Castle of Inverlochy. Fraser of Lovat* was sent to harass Sunart and Ardnamurchan with 3000 men, to secure provisions for the army and the camp. Macdonald obtaining information of these proceedings, and finding an opportunity, sent a message from his prison of Tantallon to the Highlands desiring those whom he trusted most to face the enemy, though they might never again get a sight of him. So Donald Balloch, his cousin-german (John Mor's son, at the time only 18 years of age, and who was fostered by Maclean), gathered all those who faithfully adhered to Macdonald's interest, and came to Carna, an island in Loch Sunart, where, meeting with the Laird of Ardnamurchan; Allan, son of Allan of Moydart; and his brother, Ranald Bàn (for these were the principal men of the name who were with him). He picked out the best of their men to the number of 600, most of whom were gentlemen and freeholders, and all of whom came in their galleys to Inverskipinish, two miles south of Inverlochy. Now Alastair Carrach, Macdonald's younger uncle, who held the lands of Lochaber east of Lochy, and whose posterity are yet there, took possession of the hill above the enemy with 220 archers, being unable by the smallness of their number to face the enemy, and expecting that some of his friends would at last come to his relief. Upon seeing his nephew, Donald Balloch, he was, however, much animated. As Donald Balloch drew near the Royal forces, Huntly stepped into the Earl

* This was Hugh Fraser, created Lord Lovat by James I. in the same year, 1431. His second son, Hugh, succeeded to the title.

of Mar's tent, where he and Mackintosh were playing at cards. Huntly suggested to them to give up their play as the enemy were close at hand. They (the card-players) asked if the enemy were in great force, when Huntly replied that they were not very numerous, but he could see that they were determined to fight. "Well," said Mackintosh, "we'll play this game, and dispute with these fellows afterwards." Huntly again looked out, when he saw the enemy driving on furiously towards them; he goes a second time to the tent, saying, "Gentlemen, fight stoutly, or render yourselves to your enemies." Mackintosh replied that they "would play that game, and would do with the enemy what they pleased afterwards, and that he knew very well the doings of the big-bellied carles of the Isles." "Whatever they be," replied Huntly, "they will fight like men this day," when Mackintosh retorted that "though he himself (Huntly) should assist them, their (Mackintosh's) party would defeat them both." Whereupon Huntly went out of the tent in a rage, saying that he would fight none against the Highlanders that day. He then drew his men aside, and "was more of a spectator than of either party." "Then joining battle, Donald Balloch made a main battle, and a front of his men." The front was commanded by MacIan of Ardnamurchan, and John Maclean of Coll; the main battle by Ranald Bàn, son of John Mòr, murdered by James Campbell (and a natural brother of Donald Balloch, who became progenitor of the family of Lairgy), and Allan, son of Allan, Laird of Moidart (of whom descended the family of Knoydart), and MacDuffie of Colonsay, MacQuarrie of Ulva, and MacGee of the Rinds of Isla. As the combatants faced one another, Alastair Carrach and his 220 archers poured down the brae of the hill on which they had planted themselves, and shot their arrows so thick, on the flank of the Royal army, as to compel them to give way. Allan, Lord of Caithness; a son of Lovat; and 990 were killed. Hugh Mackay of Strathnaver was taken prisoner, and he married a daughter of Alexander Macdonald of Keppoch, "of whom descended the race of Mackays called Slioc Ean Abridh." Donald Balloch lost only 27 men. The Earl of Mar was wounded in the thigh by an arrow, and was in the hills for two nights accompanied only by his servant, in a starving condition, for they had no provisions. At last he fell in with some women tending their cattle, who happened to have a little barley meal for their own use, and with which they relieved the Earl and his servant, mixing it with a little water in the heel of the Earl's own shoe. The Earl, after he and his servant had satisfied their hunger, composed the following lines in Gaelic:—

'S math an cocaire an t acras,
 'S maire 'ni tailleas air biadh,
 Fuarag eorn' a sail mo bhroige
 Biadh is fhearr a fhuair mi riamh.

The Earl left his clothes with the woman that he might disguise himself, and he travelled all night until he came to a small house, on a spot of land called Beggich, belonging to an Irishman named O'Birrin. He told this man that he was one of the Earl of Mar's followers, and that necessity obliged him to disguise himself for fear of being discovered. The man was going to slaughter a cow as the Earl came to his place, and he desired the stranger to hold her. "The Earl was more willing to obey his landlord's orders than skillful to act as butcher." The Irishman, dis-

satisfied with the awkward manner in which he was assisted by the Earl, "cursed those who took such a blockhead abroad to be a soldier. At last he cuts some collops which he gave to the Earl to dress for himself, which he could not very well do, until his landlord did it for him, by roasting them upon the coals. At going to bed he washed the Earl's feet in warm water, cleaned and washed his wound. When the Earl laid himself down, he could not sleep with cold, being very scarce of bed-clothes. O'Birrin got up, took the cow's hide, and warming it to the fire, wrapped it about the Earl, which warmed him so much that he perspired during the whole night. In the morning, after such refreshments as they had, the Earl said he would go to Badenoch." He informed his host that he did not know the way thither, but would do his best to find it, whereupon the Irishman made him fill his pockets with the flesh of the cow, and then convoyed him three or four miles on his way. When they parted company the stranger told him if he should ever find himself in tightened circumstances, to go to Kildrummie, the seat of the Earl of Mar, and ask there for Alexander Stewart, who would cause the Earl to reward him for his present kindness to himself. Some time after the Irishman did as he was told, and arriving at Kildrummie, asked for Alexander Stewart, when the porter told him that "he was a fool, for there was no such man there," but the Irishman continued to knock until the Earl himself at last heard him, and, calling for the porter, he asked him who was knocking at the gate. The latter replied that "he was some fool enquiring for Alexander Stewart." The Earl soon recognised the "fool" as his old friend the Irishman, ordered the gate be opened to him, and kindly embraced him. The Earl then addressed him in the following lines:—

Oidhoche dhomh a bhi ann an tigh air moran bidh 's air bheag aodaib,
Fhuaras agh' mor do dh' fheoil air dhroch bhruidh bho O'Birrin 's a Bhaggach.

His Lordship sent for a tailor, and ordered him at once to make a suit of clothes for O'Birrin, whom he requested to bring his wife and son to Kildrummie, but this the Irishman declined, saying that his wife was old, and would not leave her native country. After entertaining him for some time, the Earl sent O'Birrin home with sixty milch cows, enjoining him to send his son to Kildrummie. The son came "some time thereafter, and was made a laird of a small estate, which has since fallen to a gentleman of the name of Forbes, whereby it may be seen, that a good turn to a generous or noble person is not always lost."*

In the minority of James II. the Earl of Ross and Lord of the Isles held the important office of "Justiciar of Scotland north of the Forth," a position which Gregory thinks he probably obtained from Archibald, Earl of Douglas and Duke of Touraine, then Lieutenant-General of Scotland. There is no account extant from which it can be ascertained in what manner the Earl exercised the duties of his high office; but it is supposed that it was under colour of it that he inflicted his vengeance on the Chief of the Camerons about this time for deserting him and going over to the Royal standard, in Lochaber, and in consequence of which Lochiel was forced to fly to Ireland, where he remained for several years;

* Transactions of the Iona Club, pp. 308-312.

and in his absence his lands were bestowed by the Earl of Ross upon John Garve Maclean, ancestor and founder of the family of Coll.

He married Elizabeth, daughter of Alexander Seton, Lord of Gordon and Huntly, and by her had issue—

1. *John*, his successor.

2. *Celestine*, variously styled Archibald, and its Gaelic equivalent, Gillespie, Lord of Lochalsh and Lochcarron. He married Finvola, daughter of Lachlan Maclean of Duart, with issue—Sir Alexander Macdonald of Lochalsh (Alastair MacGillespie) who afterwards, in 1488 fought the famous battle of Park with the Mackenzies, and of whom hereafter.

3. *Hugh*, often called “Austin” and “Augustine,” being a corruption of the Gaelic equivalent of Hugh, *i.e.*, *Huistean* or *Uistean*. He was styled Lord of Sleat, and married, first, Finvola, daughter of MacIain of Ardnamurchan, by whom he had John, his heir, who died without issue. He married, secondly, a lady of the Clan Gunn in Caithness, by whom he had issue, who carried on the succession, and whose descendants are now held, by general concurrence, to represent, as heirs male, John, last Earl of Ross and Lord of the Isles, forfeited in these honours, respectively, in 1475 and 1494. A question has been raised about the legitimacy of Celestine and Hugh, as well as of Hugh’s descendants, especially Donald Gallach, from whom is descended the present Lord Macdonald of the Isles. Respecting Hugh, after describing the results of a successful raid under him to Orkney, Hugh Macdonald says, that “Having routed the enemy, Austin (Hugh) and his party began to ravage the country, that being the only reward they had for their pains and fatigue, with which, having loaded their galleys, they returned home. Austine having halted at Caithness, he got a son by the Crouner of Caithness’s daughter, of the name of Gun, which at that time was a very flourishing name there, descended of the Danes. This son was called Donald Gallach, being brought up in that county in his younger years; for the ancient Scots, until this day, call the county of Caithness Gallibh.” Referring to the two families of John, first Lord of the Isles, Skene says [vol. ii., p. 95] that the representation of his children by his second marriage, with the daughter of Robert II. “clearly devolved upon the Macdonalds of Sleat, who were descended of Hugh, brother of John, the last Lord of the Isles,” and at page 96 he says that “it is fully admitted that the family of Sleat are the undoubted representatives of the last Lord of the Isles.” Smibert calls Hugh of Sleat a “full brother” of John, Lord of the Isles, and says that “he left a line which indubitably had the clearest direct claims, as legitimate descendants, to the family honours and inheritance.” Gregory, who says that it is uncertain whether they are by the same mother as John or not, is more learned, and in a footnote, p. 41, writes:—“I call these sons legitimate notwithstanding that Celestine is called ‘*filius naturalis*’ by Earl Alexander (charter in charter chest of Mackintosh 1447), and ‘*frater carnalis*’ by Earl John (Reg. of Great Seal, vi., 116, 1463), and that Hugh is likewise called ‘*frater carnalis*’ by Earl John (charter in Westfield Writs, in the possession of Alex. Dunbar, Esq. of Scrabster, 1470). They are, however, both called ‘*frater*,’ without any qualification, by Earl John (Reg. of Great Seal, vi., 116, xiii., 186). The history of Celestine and Hugh and their descend-

ants, as given in the present work (Highlands and Isles), sufficiently shows that they were considered legitimate, and that, consequently, the words 'naturalis' and 'carnalis,' taken by themselves, and without the adjunct 'bastardus,' do not necessarily imply bastardy. It is probable that they were used to designate the issue of those handfast, or left-handed marriages, which appear to have been so common in the Highlands and Isles. Both *naturalis* and *carnalis* are occasionally applied to individuals known to be legitimate in the strictest sense of the term." This important question will be more fully discussed when we come to consider the respective claims to the Chiefship of the race of Macdonald, and of its various branches.

Alexander of the Isles had also several daughters, one of whom

4. *Margaret*, married the Earl of Sutherland, and another

5. *Florence*, who married Duncan Mackintosh, IX. of Mackintosh, with issue.

He died, at his Castle of Dingwall, on the 8th of May 1448, and was succeeded by his eldest son.

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VOL. V.

HISTORY OF THE MACDONALDS,
AND
THE LORDS OF THE ISLES.

BY THE EDITOR.

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VII.

X. JOHN, FOURTH AND LAST LORD OF THE ISLES of the family of Macdonald, who was as strenuous an opponent of the King's party as his father had been, began to rule at a critical period in the history of his family. The treasonable league which his father, Alexander, had entered into with William, 8th Earl Douglas, and the Earl of Crawford, has been already referred to, and though no action was taken upon it during the life of the last Lord, after his death the parties to it broke out into open rebellion, and John of the Isles took an active part in the insurrection, collected a large force of the Islanders, seized the royal castles of Inverness, Urquhart, and Ruthven, and declared his independence of the Scottish King. The Castle of Ruthven he at once demolished to the ground. Urquhart Castle was placed under the command of his father-in-law, Sir James Livingston, who on hearing of the insurrection of the Island lord left the Court and escaped to the Highlands; while the stronghold at Inverness was carefully garrisoned and supplied with a large quantity of military stores. It is asserted that it was the King himself who caused the Lord of the Isles to marry the daughter of Sir James Livingston, promising him a grant of land with her which he never granted. And in the Auchinleck Chronicle it is recorded that this was a private grievance which, among others, urged the Island Chief into this rebellion. On this subject Gregory says, that it may be supposed he was too much occupied in securing himself against the great power and ambition of the Douglas party in the southern counties, now rendered more confident by the return of their chief from abroad, to be able to take prompt measures against the Earl of Ross; at least, none such are recorded in the chronicles which have come down to us. But there can be no doubt that James contemplated proceeding to the north to chastise the rebels there; for it was upon the refusal of Douglas to renounce the league, offensive and defensive, into which he had entered with the Earls of Ross and Crawford, that the king, in a sudden fit of passion, assassinated, with his own

hand, that nobleman, whose inordinate ambition was considered the chief cause of all these commotions. William, Earl of Douglas, being thus cut off in the height of his power, was succeeded by James, 9th Earl, his brother, who, after repeated rebellions, was finally encountered and defeated by the Earl of Angus, leader of the King's troops, at Arkinholme in Anandale. In this battle, Archibald, Earl of Moray, and Hugh, Earl of Ormond, brothers to the Earl of Douglas, were slain; whilst the Earl himself, with his only remaining brother, Sir John Douglas of Balvany, made his escape into the West Highlands. Here he was received by the Earl of Ross, who still remained faithful to his engagements, having, it would appear, hitherto escaped, by reason of the remoteness and inaccessibility of his territories, the vengeance which had fallen so heavily on his confederates, Douglas and Crawford. Ross immediately collected a fleet of one hundred galleys, with a force of five thousand men on board, and dispatched this expedition, under the command of his kinsman, Donald Balloch of Isla, to attack the coast of Ayrshire, with the intention, probably, of encouraging the Douglas party again to draw together, should such a course appear expedient. Owing to the able measures of defence adopted by the King, this enterprise met with little success. Donald commenced hostilities at Innerkip in Ayrshire; but being unable to effect any object of importance, he proceeded to ravage the Cumrays and the Isle of Arran. Not above twenty persons, men, women, and children, were slain by the Islanders, although plunder to a considerable amount—including five or six hundred horses, ten thousand oxen and kine, and more than a thousand sheep and goats—was carried off. The Castle of Brodick in Arran was stormed and levelled with the ground; whilst one hundred bolls of meal, one hundred marts (cows), and one hundred marks of silver, were exacted as tribute from the Isle of Bute.* The expedition was concluded by an attack upon Lauder, Bishop of Argyle or Lismore, a prelate who had made himself obnoxious by affixing his seal to the instrument of forfeiture of the Douglasses; and who was now attacked by the fierce Admiral of the Isles, and, after the slaughter of the greater part of his attendants, forced to take refuge in a sanctuary, which seems scarcely to have protected him from the fury of his enemies.†

The Earl of Douglas returned to England after the failure of the expedition under Donald Balloch; and Ross, finding himself alone in rebellion, became alarmed for the consequences, and, by a submissive message, entreated the forgiveness of the King; offering, as far as it was still left to him, to repair the wrongs he had inflicted. James at first refused to listen to the application; but, after a time, consented to extend to the humbled chief a period of probation, within which, if he should evince the reality of his repentance by some notable exploit, he was to be absolved from all the consequences of his rebellion, and reinstated in the Royal favour.‡ The Earl of Ross was, in 1457, one of the Wardens of the Marches,§ an office of great trust and importance, but obviously intended to weaken his influence in the Highlands and Isles, by forcing him frequ-

* It would seem that the Castle of Rethesay was also besieged. *Acts of Parliament*, II. 109.

† Tytler's *Scotland*, IV. pp. 86-127. *Auchinleck Chronicle*, pp. 44, 51, 55. *Acts of Parliament*, II. 190.

‡ Tytler's *Scotland* (1879 ed.), vol. II. p. 177.

§ Rymer's *Fœdera*, XL, p. 397.

ently to reside at a distance from the seat of his power ; and, as he was, at the same time, one of the nobles who guaranteed a truce with England,* it would seem that he had lost no time in effecting a reconciliation with the King. Previous to the siege of Roxburgh, at which James II. was [1460] unfortunately killed, the Earl of Ross joined the Royal army with a body of three thousand of his vassals, well armed in their peculiar fashion. In order to prove his fidelity and loyalty, he offered, in case of an invasion of England, to precede the rest of the army, whilst in the enemy's country, by a thousand paces distance, so as to receive the first shock of the English. Ross was well received, and ordered to remain near the King's person ; but, as there was at this time no invasion of England, the courage and devotion of himself and his troops were not put to the test proposed.†

Dr John Hill Burton [434-5 History of Scotland, vol. II.], quoting from Pitscottie, informs us that the Earl of Ross got such encouragement as made him believe that it was sound policy to help the King in his project, and so he went to the siege with "ane great army of men, all armed in Highland fashion, with halbershownes, bows, and axes ; and promised to the King, if he pleased to pass any farther into the bounds of England, that he and his company should pass ane large mill before the host, and take upon them the press and dint of the battle" ; and that he was found very serviceable "to spoil and herrie the country," an occupation to which the Lowland forces were now less accustomed than they used to be.

Soon after the siege of Roxburgh, and the death of the King, a Parliament met in Edinburgh, which was attended by the Earl of Ross and Lord of the Isles, and other Highland chiefs. The Earl soon discovered that the new Government was not strong enough to keep him in subjection, and he renewed his league with the banished Douglasses, with the view of pursuing his former schemes of personal aggrandisement. The Douglasses were naturally anxious to secure the great power and influence of the Earl of Ross on their own side and against the Government, and they soon succeeded in inducing the Island chief to enter into a treasonable league with Edward IV. of England. By the advice of his principal vassals and kinsmen, on the 19th of October 1461, Ross assembled in council at his Castle of Ardtornish, and granted a commission, as an independent prince, "to his trusty and well-beloved cousins," Ranald of the Isles, and Duncan, Archdean of the Isles, to confer with the deputies of the English King. These Commissioners met soon after at Westminster, and on the 13th of February 1462, concluded a treaty for the conquest of Scotland by Edward IV., with the assistance of the Earls of Ross and Douglas, who were to receive stipulated sums of money, and, in case of success, large grants of lands for their support in subjugating their native land to the English crown.

Referring to these negotiations, Hill Burton [vol. iii., p. 3] informs us that on the 2d of August 1461, "a commission is appointed by Edward IV. for peace 'with our beloved kinsman the King of Scots,' yet just two months earlier another had been issued for treating with 'our beloved kinsman, the Earl of Ross, and our choice and faithful Donald Balagh, or their ambassadors, commissioners, or messengers.' The refugee Earl of

* Rymer's *Fœdera*, XI., p. 397.

† Tytler's *Scotland*, IV., p. 176. Buchanan, b. XI.

Douglas was a party to this negotiation. It was brought to a conclusion by an elaborate treaty bearing date in February 1462. By this astounding document it was covenanted that the Lord of the Isles should become for all his territory the liegeman of King Edward and his heirs ; and that if Scotland should be conquered through the aid of the Lord of the Isles, he should be lord of the northern part of the land to the Scots Water, or Firth of Forth ; while Douglas, should he give proper aid, was to be lord of all the district south of the Forth—both districts to be held in strict feudal dependence on King Edward and his heirs. Meanwhile, and until he should reap this brilliant reward, the Lord of the Isles was to have ‘for fees and wages’ yearly, in time of peace, a hundred merks, and in time of war two hundred pounds ; while his assistant, Donald, was to receive a retainer amounting to twenty per cent of these allowances.” Donald Balloch’s son, John, was at the same time retained at half the sum stipulated for his father for his part in carrying out the treasonable and unpatrotic programme.

While the negotiations which ended in this treaty were proceeding, the Earl of Ross raised the standard of rebellion in the North. Having assembled a great force, he placed them under the command of his bastard son, Angus Og of the Isles, who had the assistance of his distinguished and experienced relative, the veteran Donald Balloch. The rebellion, according to Tytler,* “was accompanied by all those circumstances of atrocity and sacrilege that distinguish the hostilities of these island princes. Ross proclaimed himself King of the Hebrides, whilst his son and Donald Balloch, having taken possession of the Castle of Inverness, invaded the county of Athole, published a proclamation that no one should dare to obey the officers of King James, commanded all taxes to be henceforth paid to Ross, and after a cruel and wasteful progress, concluded the expedition by storming the Castle of Blair, dragging the Earl and Countess of Athole from the chapel and sanctuary of St Bridget to a distant prison in Isla. Thrice did Donald attempt, if we may believe the historian, to fire the holy pile which he had plundered—thrice the destructive element refused its office, and a storm of thunder and lightning, in which the greater part of his war-galleys were sunk, and the rich booty with which they were loaded consigned to the deep, was universally ascribed to the wrath of heaven, which had armed the elements against the abettor of sacrilege and murder. It is certain, at least, that this idea had fixed itself with all the strength of remorse and superstition in the mind of the bold and savage leader himself ; and such was the effect of the feeling, that he became moody and almost distracted. Commanding his principal leaders and soldiers to strip themselves to their shirt and drawers, and assuming himself the same ignominious garb, he collected the relics of his plunder, and proceeding with bare feet, and a dejected aspect, to the chapel which he had so lately stained with blood, he and his attendants performed penance before the altar. The Earl and Countess of Athole were immediately set free from their prison.” The relief of Donald Dubh from captivity seems to have been originally the chief object of this expedition, but Angus appears to have liberated his prisoners, as above, without attaining his object.

During the recent turbulent proceedings Ross assumed royal preroga-

tives over the whole Sheriffdoms and Burghs of Inverness and Nairn, which at that time included all the northern counties. There are now no means of ascertaining how this civil broil was suppressed ; but it is known that the Earl of Ross was summoned before Parliament for treason in connection with it, that he failed to appear, and that the process of forfeiture against him was for a time suspended, though an army was actually in readiness to march against him. His submission, however, rendered this unnecessary, and although he did not receive an unconditional pardon, he was permitted to remain in undisturbed possession of his estates for twelve or thirteen years afterwards, until at length, in 1475, the treaty concluded between himself and Edward IV., in 1462, came to light, when it was at once determined to proceed against him as an avowed traitor to the crown. He was summoned at his Castle of Dingwall to appear before the Parliament to be held in Edinburgh, in December 1475, to answer the various charges of treason and rebellion brought against him, and at the same time a commission was granted in favour of Colin, Earl of Argyle, to prosecute a decree of forfeiture against the island lord. He failed to appear on the appointed day, and sentence was pronounced upon him. He was declared a traitor, and his estates were forfeited to the Crown. A formidable armament, under the command of the Earls of Crawford and Athole, comprehending both a fleet and a land force, was made ready to carry the sentence of Parliament into effect. These preparations induced him to sue for pardon through the medium of the Earl of Huntly. By means of a grant of lands in Knapdale to the Earl of Argyle he secured the powerful influence of that nobleman in his favour. The Queen and the States of Parliament were also prevailed upon to intercede in his behalf, and appearing soon afterwards in person at Edinburgh, he, with much humility, and many expressions of repentance, surrendered himself unconditionally to the Royal clemency, when the King, "with wonderful moderation," consented to pardon him, and in a Parliament held on the 1st of July 1476, he was restored to the forfeited estates of the Earldom of Ross and the Lordship of the Isles. Immediately afterwards he made a voluntary and absolute surrender to the Crown of the Earldom of Ross, the lands of Kintyre and Knapdale, and all the Castles thereto belonging, as well as the Sheriffdoms of Inverness and Nairn ; whereupon he was in return created a Baron Banrent, and Peer of Parliament by the title of Lord of the Isles. "The Earldom of Ross was now inalienably annexed to the Crown, and a great blow was struck at the power and grandeur of a family which had so repeatedly disturbed the tranquillity of Scotland."

"By the favour of the King, the succession to the new title and the estates connected with it, was secured in favour of Angus and John, the bastard sons of the Lord of the Isles ; and Angus, the elder of them, was soon afterwards married to a daughter of the Earl of Argyle. This Angus was early accustomed to rebellion, having acted as Lieutenant to his father in the great insurrection of 1461. Neither the favour now shown to him by the King, nor his alliance with the Earl of Argyll, were sufficient to keep the natural violence of his temper within bounds ; and circumstances soon enabled him to establish an ascendancy over his father. The sacrifices made by the latter in 1476, when he gave up the Earldom of Ross, and the lands of Kintyre and Knapdale, were very un-

popular among the chiefs descended of the family of the Isles, who further alleged that he had impaired his estate by improvident grants of land to the Macleans, Macleods, Macneills, and other tribes. Thus, the vassals of the Lordship of the Isles came to be divided into two factions—one comprehending the clans last mentioned, who adhered to the old lord, the other consisting of the various branches of the Clandonald who made common cause with the turbulent heir of the Lordship. In these circumstances Angus not only behaved with great violence to his father, but he involved himself in various feuds, particularly with the Mackenzies.*

The Sleat Seannachaidh, Hugh Macdonald, gives the following version of the feuds and family quarrels which took place between John of the Isles and his son Angus Og. He describes the father as "a meek, modest man, brought up at Court in his younger years, and a scholar, more fit to be a churchman than to command so many irregular tribes of people. He endeavoured, however, still to keep them in their allegiance by bestowing gifts to some and promoting others with lands and possessions; by this he became prodigal and very expensive. . . . He gave the lands of Morvairn to Maclean, and many of his lands in the north to others, judging by these means to make them more faithful to him than they were to his father. His son, Angus Ogg, being a bold, forward man, and high minded, observing that his father very much diminished his rents by his prodigality, thought to deprive him of all management and authority. Many followers adhered to him. His father being at Isla, he went after him with a great party, forced him to change seven rooms to lodge in, and at last to take his bed, during the whole of the night under an old boat. When he returned to his house in the morning he found his son sitting with a great crowd about him. MacFinnon rising up, desired Macdonald to sit down; who answered that he would not sit till he would execute his intention, which was to curse his son. So leaving Isla with only six men, he went to the mainland and to Inveraray, and having waited without till one of the Argyll gentlemen came forth in the morning, who, observing Macdonald, went in immediately and told Argyll of the matter, who could scarcely believe him, saying, if he was there he would certainly send some person to inform him before hand. With that he started up, and going out, finds Macdonald, and having saluted him and brought him in, he said, I do not wonder at your coming here; but I am surprised you did not warn me before your arrival and that your retinue is so small. That is little, said Macdonald, to the revolutions of the times, and thou shall be the better of my coming; and so, after dinner, he bestowed on him the lands of Knapdale, Rilisleter, from the river Add to the Fox-burn in Kintyre, 400 merks lands, and desired Argyll to convey him to Stirling, where the King was at that time, and for his son's disobedience he would resign all his estates to the king. So they went to Stirling, and from thence to Air, in company with the King, when John resigned all into his hands, excepting the barony of Kinloss in Murray, of Kinnaird in Buchan, and of Cairndonald in the West, which he retained to support his own grandeur during his lifetime. Angus Ogg Macdonald, his son, followed his former courses, came to Inverness, and demolished the castle. When his brother

* Gregory's *Western Highlands and Isles*, pp. 51-52.

Austin saw how matters went on, and that John had resigned all to the king, he goes to Edinburgh, and takes his charters from the king for all his patrimony which his father and mother bestowed on him formerly, in favour of his heirs-male, legitimate or illegitimate; which patrimony consisted of North Uist, the parish of Hough in South Uist, Canna, Benbucula, Slate, Trottenish, and Lochbroom. But Angus Ogg, his nephew, continuing his former pretensions, resolved not to surrender any of his father's lands to the king or to his father himself. The Earl of Athole was ordered with a party against him. He joined others in the north, who had the same injunctions from the king, viz., the Mackays, Mackenzie, the Brodies, some of the Frasers and Rosses. Angus Ogg came from Isla and Kintyre to the West, and raising some of his own name; viz., Alexander Macdonald of the Braes of Lochaber, John of Glengarry, the Laird of Knoydart, and some of the Islanders, he goes to Ross, where, meeting Athole and his party near Lagebread, he gave them a defeat, killing 517 of their army. Mackay was made prisoner, Athole and Mackenzie made their escape. The Earl of Crawford afterwards was ordered by the king to go by sea, and Huntly with a party to go by land, to harass and discourage Angus Ogg's adherents; but neither of them executed their orders. Argyll and Athole were sent to the Islanders, desiring them to hold of the king, and abandon Angus Ogg, and that the king would grant them the same rights they had formerly from Macdonald. This offer was accepted by several. But when the Macdonalds, and heads of their families, saw that their chief and family was to be sunk, they began to look up to Angus Ogg, the young lord. About this time Austin, his uncle, died, and was buried in Sand, North Uist."*

Skene informs us that after the resignation of the Earldom of Ross, and after the late Earl was created a Peer of Parliament by the title of Lord of the Isles, the Earl of Athole was despatched to the north to reinstate Ross in his former possessions, now re-granted to him by the King, where he was joined by the Mackenzies, Mackays, Frasers, Rosses, and others; but being met by Angus Og at a place called Lag-a-bhraid, the Earl of Athole was defeated with great slaughter, and it was with great difficulty that he managed to make his escape. Two expeditions were afterwards sent north—the first under the Earl of Crawford by sea, with another body under the Earl of Huntly by land; the other, under the Earls of Argyll and Athole, accompanied by the Lord of the Isles in person. But these expeditions proved unsuccessful against Angus Og. Argyll, however, managed to persuade several families of the Isles to join him; but failing in the object of their mission, the two Earls soon returned. The Lord of the Isles, however, proceeded south, through the Sound of Mull, accompanied by the Macleans, Macleods, Macneils, and others, and again encountered his rebellious son in a bay on the south side of Ardnamurchan, near Tobermory, where a naval engagement immediately took place between them, which resulted in the complete overthrow of the father and in the dispersion of his fleet. By this victory, at "the battle of the Bloody Bay," Angus was completely established in the full possession of the power and extensive territories of his clan. "There was one called Edmond More Obrian along with Ranald Bain (Laird of Muidort's eldest son), who thrust

the blade of an oar in below the stern-post of Macleod's galley, between it and the rudder, which prevented the galley from being steered. The galley of the heir of Torquil of the Lewis, with all his men, was taken and himself mortally wounded with two arrows, whereof he died soon after at Dunvegan. . . . After this conflict, the Earl of Athole, being provided with boats by Argyle, crossed over privately to Isla, where Angus Ogg's lady, daughter of Argyle, was, and apprehended Donald Dhu, or 'the Black,' a child of three years of age, and committed him a prisoner to Inch Chonuil, so called from the builder, Conuil, son of the first Dougall of Lorn, where he remained in custody until his hair got grey. Yet Angus Ogg, Donald Du's father, was still advised by the Earl of Angus and Hamilton to hold out and maintain his rights. After this, John of the Isles gave up to the King all these lands which he formerly held back for the support of his grandeur. . . . If we search antiquaries, we will find few names in Scotland that mortified more lands to the Church than the Macdonalds did. However, I cannot deny but his father's curse seems to have lighted on this man. He took a journey south, where he killed many of the Macalisters in Arran, and also of his own name, for seizing and intromitting with some of his lands without his consent. Returning through Argyle and Lochaber, he came to Inverness. Mackenzie was like to be killed, or at least banished, by Macdonald, because he was always against him, contriving all the mischiefs he could, least, upon recovering his own, he would deprive Mackenzie of these lands which he held of the King. There was another circumstance which shortened Macdonald's days—viz., there was a lady of the name of Macleod, daughter of Rory, surnamed the Black, who was tutor to the lawful heir of the Lewis, married to the Laird of Muidort. The tutor, her father, being resolved not to acknowledge, by any means, the true heir of the Lewis, and engross the whole to himself, was displaced by Macdonald, and the rightful heir put in possession. This lady having a spite at Macdonald for dispossessing her father, together with John Mackenzie, contrived his death in the following manner. There was an Irish harper of the name of Art O'Carby, of the county of Monaghan in Ireland, who was often at Macdonald's, and falling in love with Mackenzie's daughter, became almost mad in his amours. Mackenzie seeing him in that mood, promised him his daughter, provided he would put Macdonald to death, and made him swear never to reveal the secret. This fellow being afterwards in his cups, and playing upon his harp, used to sing the following verse, composed by himself in the Irish language:—

T' anam do dhia a mharcaich an eich bhall-a-bhric,
 Gu'm bheil t' anam an cunnart ma tha puinnsean an Gallfit;

meaning, that the rider of the dapple horse was in danger of his life (for Macdonald always rode such a one), if there was poison in his long knife, which he called Gallfit. As Macdonald went to bed one night, there was none in the room along with him but John Cameron, brother to Ewan, laird of Locheill, and Macmurrich, the poet. This John had some rights from Macdonald of the lands of Mammore in Lochaber, written the day before, but not signed by Macdonald. The harper rose in the night-time, when he perceived Macdonald was asleep, and cut his throat, for which he was apprehended, but never confessed that he was employed by

anybody so to do, although there were several jewels found upon him, which were well known to have belonged formerly to Mackenzie and the lady of Muidort. The harper was drawn after horses till his limbs were torn asunder. After the death of Angus, the Islanders and the rest of the Highlanders were let loose, and began to shed one another's blood. Although Angus kept them in obedience while he was sole lord over them, yet, upon his resignation of his rights to the King, all families, his own as well as others, gave themselves up to all sorts of cruelties, which continued for a long time thereafter."*

Gregory substantially corroborates the family historian and informs us that the rage of Angus knew no bounds when he discovered by whom his child, Donald Dubh, had been carried away; that this was the real cause of the expedition to Athole and the mainland, and of the sacrilegious act of violating the Chapel of St Bridget. And after describing his assassination at Inverness, he concludes:—Thus fell Angus, the son and heir of John, last Lord of the Isles. With all his violence, which appears to have verged upon insanity, he was a favourite with those of his own name, who, perhaps, flattered themselves that he was destined to regain all that had been lost by his father.

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HISTORY OF THE MACDONALDS,
AND
THE LORDS OF THE ISLES.

BY THE EDITOR.

VIII.

It has been maintained by some that Angus Og was a legitimate son of John, Earl of Ross, but all authorities now considered worthy of the name hold a different opinion. It has been already seen that Gregory calls him a bastard. Smibert, in his "Clans of the Highlands of Scotland," referring to the assertions of "ancient private annalists," and especially to Hugh Macdonald, the Sleat family historian, says that some of these assert that John, last Lord of the Isles, who had no children by his wife, Elizabeth Livingston, had yet, quoting from Hugh Macdonald, "a natural son begotten of Macduffie, Colonsay's daughter, and Angus Og, his legitimate son, by the Earl of Angus's daughter." In reference to the latter assertion, Smibert says—"No mention of this Angus marriage occurs in any one public document relating to the Lords of the Isles, or to the Douglasses, then Earls of Angus. On the other hand, the acknowledged wife of John of the Isles, Elizabeth Livingston, was certainly alive in 1475, at which date he, among other charges, is accused of making 'his bastard son' a lieutenant to him in insurrectionary convocations of the lieges; and Angus could therefore come of no second marriage. He indubitably is the same party still more distinctly named in subsequent Parliamentary records as 'Angus of the Isles, *bastard son* to umquhile John of the Isles.' The attribution of noble and legitimate birth to Angus took its origin, without doubt, in the circumstance of John's want of children by marriage having raised his natural son to a high degree of power in the clan, which the active character of Angus well fitted him to use as he willed. That power was still further established by his being named in 1476 as principal heir of entail to his father, when the latter submitted to the Crown and obtained a seat in Parliament; but in that very deed of entail his illegitimacy is stated once more with equal clearness, and he was only to succeed failing other heirs of the body of John. However, in the absence of any such legal issue, Angus wielded all the authority of an heir-apparent, and appears, by his violence, to have involved the tribe in perpetual disturbance." The father and son seem to have become quite reconciled to each other during the latter years of

the life of Angus, who died during his father's lifetime, about 1485, at Inverness, in the manner already described. A few years after this the Lord of the Isles is again in antagonism to the Crown, and enters into a treaty with Edward IV. of England, who was preparing another expedition against the Scots; and for the remainder of the reign of James III. the vassals of the Island Chief appear to have been in a state of open resistance to the Crown. Angus Og having, according to some authorities, died without legitimate issue, and John, Lord of the Isles, being now advanced in years, his nephew, Alexander of Lochalsh, son of Celestine, his Lordship's brother, held, according to Gregory and other authorities, the rank of heir to the Lordship of the Isles, while others maintain that he merely commanded the clan as guardian to Angus Og's youthful son, Donald Dubh, who was still a prisoner at Inchconnell; but the latter view, it is held, is inconsistent with several known facts, one of which is, a charter, dated in 1492, in favour of John Maclean of Lochbuy of the office of Bailliary of the south half of the Island of Tiree, granted by John, Lord of the Isles, and *Alexander de Insulis, Lord of Lochalsh*, an office which could not have been given by Alexander of Lochalsh in any other capacity than as his father's heir to the Lordship of the Isles, for it formed no part of his own patrimony of Lochalsh. In 1488 Alexander invaded the mainland at the head of his vassals with the view of wresting the ancient possessions of his house in the Earldom of Ross from those who now held them by charters from the Crown, especially the Mackenzies, apparently with the full consent and approval of his aged uncle of the Isles. A full account of his proceedings and the causes which were the more immediate cause of them is given in "The History of the Mackenzies,"* pp. 59-74, and at pp. 161-170, No. xxix. (vol. iii.) of the *Celtic Magazine*. It is therefore unnecessary to reproduce it here, but we may give the following summary from Gregory:—"As the districts of Lochalsh, Lochcarron, and Lochbroom, which Alexander inherited from his father, and which he now held as a Crown fief, lay in the Earldom of Ross, his influence there was greater than that of Angus of the Isles had been. Yet the only Crown vassal of the Earldom who joined him was Hugh Rose, younger of Kilravock, whose father at this time was keeper, under the Earl of Huntly, of the castle of Ardmanach, in Ross. In the year 1491,† a large body of Western Highlanders, composed of the Clanranald of Garmoran, the Clanranald of Lochaber, and the Clanchameron, under Alexander of Lochalsh, advanced from Lochaber into Badenoch, where they were joined by the Clanchattan. The latter tribe, which possessed lands both under the Lord of the Isles and the Earl of Huntly, was led by Farquhar Mackintosh, the son and heir of the captain of the Clanchattan. From Badenoch the confederates marched to Inverness, where Farquhar Mackintosh stormed and took the royal castle, in which he established a garrison; and where the forces of the Highlanders were probably increased by the arrival of the young Baron of Kilravock and his followers. Proceeding to the north-east, the fertile lands belonging to Sir Alexander Urquhart, the Sheriff of Cromarty, were plundered, and a vast booty carried off by the Islanders and their associates. It is probable that at this time Loch-

* By the same author. Published by A. & W. Mackenzie, Inverness: 1879.

† There is some confusion here as to the dates, for there is no doubt at all that the battle of Park was fought as early as 1488.

alsh had divided his force into two parts, one being sent home with the booty already acquired, whilst with the other he proceeded to Strathconnan, for the purpose of ravaging the lands of the Mackenzies. The latter clan, under their chief, Kenneth, having assembled their forces, surprised and routed the invaders, who had encamped near the river Connan, at a place called Park, whence the conflict has received the name of Blairnepark. Alexander of Lochalsh was wounded, and, as some say, taken prisoner in this battle, and his followers were expelled from Ross. The victors then proceeded to ravage the lands of Ardmanach, and those belonging to William Munro of Fowlis—the former because the young Baron of Kilravock, whose father was governor of that district, had assisted the other party; the latter probably because Munro, who joined neither party, was suspected of secretly favouring Lochalsh. So many excesses were committed at this time by the Mackenzies, that the Earl of Huntly, Lieutenant of the North, was compelled (notwithstanding their services in repelling the invasion of the Macdonalds) to act against them as rebels and oppressors of the lieges. Meanwhile, the origin of these commotions did not escape the investigation of the Government; and the result was the final forfeiture of the Lordship of the Isles, and its annexation to the Crown. It does not appear, from the documents which we possess, how far the Lord of the Isles was himself implicated in the rebellious proceedings of his nephew. It may be that his inability to keep the wild tribes of the West Highlands and Isles in proper subjection was his chief crime, and that the object of the Government in proceeding to his forfeiture was, by breaking up the confederacy of the Islanders, to strengthen indirectly the royal authority in these remote districts. The tenor of all the proceedings of James IV., connected with the final forfeiture of the Lordship of the Isles, leads to this conclusion. These proceedings will be described at more length in their proper place. At present we have only to record the fact, that, in the Parliament which sat in the month of May 1493, John, fourth and last Lord of the Isles, was forfeited and deprived of his title and estates. In the month of January following, he appeared in presence of the King, and went through the form of making a voluntary surrender of his Lordship, after which he appears to have remained for some time in the King's household in the receipt of a pension. Finally, this aged nobleman retired to the Monastery of Paisley, a foundation which owed much to the pious liberality of himself and his ancestors. Here he died, about the year 1498; and was interred, at his own request, in the tomb of his royal ancestor, King Robert II.*

During this period—from the final forfeiture of the Lords of the Isles in 1493, to his death—the country was almost in a constant state of insurrection, though many of the leading heads of families made their submission to the Crown; for Alexander of Lochalsh lost no opportunity of asserting his claim to the Earldom of Ross and the Lordship of the Isles. It was, however, determined by the Government that no single family should ever again be permitted to acquire the same preponderance in the west as the Lords of the Isles. At first the steps taken to secure the submission of the Islanders were not characterised by any great severity, and in the year 1493 James IV. proceeded in person to receive the sub-

* Highlands and Isles, pp. 55-58.

mission and homage of the leading vassals of the ancient Lordship. In this he acted wisely, for even those haughty barons had some respect for Royalty, and proved themselves willing to grant to their king in person what it was quite possible he could never have forced from them by the sword. Among the first who came to submit themselves to his clemency were Alexander de Insulis of Lochalsh, John de Insulis of Isla, John Maclean of Lochbuy, and Duncan Mackintosh of that ilk, formerly vassals of the forfeited Lord of the Isles. They received in return for their submission royal charters of all or nearly all the lands which they previously held under the Island Chief, and were thus made freeholders, quite independent of any superior but the Crown; and Alexander of Lochalsh and John of Isla both received the honour of knighthood, while the former, as presumptive heir to the Lordship of the Isles, previous to the forfeiture of his uncle, received a promise from the King to secure all the free tenants of the Isles in their then present holdings, an engagement which at first seems to have been strictly adhered to. This promise is distinctly mentioned in several charters of the year 1498.* In all the circumstances it must be conceded that the King acted with great leniency towards the Island Chiefs, and especially to Alexander of Lochalsh, who had been the leading spirit in all the recent troubles, particularly in the outbreak which ended in the forfeiture of the Lordship of the Isles. The King soon after returned to his lowland court; but some of the more powerful vassals still holding out, it was decided that another expedition should be sent accompanied by such a display of military force as should effectually secure their submission and command their obedience. So, in the month of April 1494, we find the King in the Isles making preparations for a third visit by preparing and garrisoning the castle of Tarbet, one of the most important strongholds in the West Highlands. In July following he is again there with a powerful force, when he proceeded to seize the castle of Dunaverty, in South Kintyre, where he placed a strong garrison, supplied, like the one at Tarbet, with powerful artillery and experienced gunners. By far the best and most complete account of this period by any writer is that given by Gregory, and whether acknowledged or not, it has been made the groundwork by all our modern historians when treating of this dark period in the History of the Highlands and Isles. We shall therefore quote him *in extenso*. He says—It will be recollected that the districts of Kintyre and Knapdale were, in 1476, expressly resigned by the Lord of the Isles, along with the Earldom of Ross, to the Crown. A great portion of Kintyre had been held, under the Lord of the Isles, by Sir Donald de Insulis, surnamed Balloch of Isla, prior to this resignation, which deprived Sir Donald and his family of a very valuable possession. Whether Sir John of Isla, the grandson and representative of Sir Donald, had, at the time he received knighthood, on the first visit of James IV. to the Isles, any hopes of the restoration of Kintyre, cannot now be ascertained. But it is certain that he was deeply offended at the step now taken, of placing a garrison in the castle of Dunaverty; and he secretly collected his followers, determined to take the first opportunity of expelling the royal garrison, and taking possession of the district of Kintyre. This opportunity was soon afforded

* Reg. of Great Seal, xiii., 336, 337. Gregory, p. 88.

him. The King, not expecting opposition from this quarter, was preparing to quit Kintyre by sea, with his own personal attendants—the bulk of his followers having previously been sent away on some other expedition—when the Chief of Isla, finding everything favourable for his attempt, stormed the castle, and hung the governor from the wall, in the sight of the King and his fleet.*

James, unable at the time to punish this daring rebel, took, nevertheless, such prompt measures for the vindication of his insulted authority, that ere long Sir John of Isla and four of his sons were apprehended in Isla, by Macian of Ardnamurchan, and brought to Edinburgh. There they were found guilty of high treason, and executed accordingly on the Burrowmuir; their bodies being interred in the church of St Anthony. Two surviving sons, who afterwards restored the fortunes of this family, fled to their Irish territory of the Glens, to escape the pursuit of Macian.† In the course of this year, likewise, two powerful chiefs, Roderick Macleod of the Lewis, and John Macian of Ardnamurchan, made their submission, and the activity displayed by the latter against the rebellious Islesmen, soon procured him a large share of the Royal favour.

In the following year, 1495, after extensive preparation for another expedition to the Isles, the King assembled an army at Glasgow; and, on the 18th of May, we find him at the Castle of Mingarry, in Ardnamurchan, being the second time within two years that he had held his court in this remote castle. John Huchonson, or Hughson, of Sleat; Donald Angusson of Keppoch; Allan MacRuari of Moydert, chief of the Clanranald; Hector Maclean of Dowart; Ewin Allanson of Lochiel, captain of the Clan Chameron, and Gilleonan Macneill of Barra, seem to have made their submission in consequence of this expedition. In this year, too, Kenneth Oig Mackenzie of Kintail and Farquhar Macintosh, son and heir of the captain of the Clanchattan, were imprisoned by the King in the Castle of Edinburgh. This may have been partly owing to their lawless conduct in 1491, but was more probably caused by a dread of their influence among the Islanders—for the mothers of these powerful chiefs were each the daughters of an Earl of Ross, Lord of the Isles. The measures now taken by the King were soon after followed up by an important Act of the Lords of Council (1496), which merits particular notice. This Act provided, in reference to civil actions against the Islanders—of which a considerable number were then in preparation—that the chief of every clan should be answerable for the due execution of summonses and other writs against those of his own tribe, under the penalty of being made liable himself to the party bringing the action. This, although undoubtedly a strong measure, was in all probability rendered necessary by the disturbed state of the Isles after so many rebellions, and could hardly fail to produce a beneficial effect; for in these wild and remote districts the officers of the law could not perform their

* The Treasurer's accounts, under August 1494, show that Sir John of the Isles was summoned, at that time, to answer for treason "in Kintyre." The precise act of treason is learned from a tradition well known in the Western Highlands.

† These particulars regarding the punishment inflicted on the Chief of Isla and his sons are derived from the MS. of Macvurich and Hugh Macdonald, corroborated from a charter from the King to Macian, dated 24th March 1499, and preserved among the Argyle papers, rewarding the latter for his services in apprehending Sir John, his sons, and accomplices.

necessary duties in safety, without the assistance of a large military force. At the same time that this important regulation was made, five chiefs of rank—viz., Hector Maclean of Dowart, John Macian of Ardnamurchan, Allan MacRuari of Moydert, Ewin Allanson of Lochiel, and Donald Angusson of Keppoch—appearing before the Lords of Council bound themselves, “by the extension of their hands,” to the Earl of Argyle, on behalf of the King, to abstain from mutual injuries and molestation, each under a penalty of five hundred pounds. Such were the steps taken by the King and Council to introduce, at this time, law and order into the remote Highlands and Isles.

The active share taken by King James in supporting the pretensions of Perkin Warbeck (1497) withdrew his attention for a time from the state of the Western Isles, and seems to have given opportunity for a new insurrection, which, however, was suppressed without the necessity for another Royal expedition. Sir Alexander of Lochalsh—whether with the intention of claiming the Earldom of Ross, or of revenging himself on the Mackenzies, for his former defeat at Blairnepark, is uncertain—invaded the more fertile districts of Ross in a hostile manner. He was encountered by the Mackenzies and Munros at a place called Drumchatt, where, after a sharp skirmish, he and his followers were again routed and driven out of Ross. After this event the Knight of Lochalsh proceeded southward among the Isles, endeavouring to rouse the Islanders to arms in his behalf, but without success, owing probably to the terror produced by the execution of Sir John (Cathanach) of Isla and his sons. Meantime Macian of Ardnamurchan, judging this a proper opportunity of doing an acceptable service to the King, surprised Lochalsh in the Island of Oronsay, whither he had retreated, and put him to death. In this Macian was assisted, according to tradition, by Alexander, the eldest surviving son of John (Cathanach) of Isla, with whom he had contrived to effect a reconciliation, and to whom he had given his daughter in marriage. Sir Alexander of Lochalsh left both sons and daughters, who afterwards fell into the King's hands; and of whom we shall have occasion to speak in the sequel. About the same time as the unsuccessful insurrection of which we have just spoken, the Chiefs of Mackenzie and Mackintosh made their escape from Edinburgh Castle; but on their way to the Highlands they were treacherously surprised at the Torwood by the Laird of Buchanan. Mackenzie having offered resistance, was slain, and his head, along with Mackintosh, who was taken alive, was presented to the King by Buchanan. The latter was rewarded, and Mackintosh returned to the dungeon, where he remained till after the battle of Flodden.

In the summer of 1498 King James, still intent upon preserving and extending his influence in the Isles, held his court at a new castle he had caused to be erected in South Kintyre, at the head of Loch Kilkerran, now called the Bay of Campbelltown. Alexander Macleod of Harris, or Dunvegan, and Torquil Macleod, now (by the death of his father Roderick) Lord of the Lewis, paid their homage to the King on this occasion; and some steps were taken to suppress the feud between the Clanhuistean of Sleat and the Clanranald of Moydert, regarding the lands of Garmoran and Uist. The King soon afterwards returned to the Lowlands, leaving, as he imagined, the Isles and West Highlands in a state of tranquillity not likely soon to be disturbed. A few months, however, sufficed

to produce a wonderful change between the King and his subjects in the Isles. The cause of this change remains involved in obscurity; but it must have been powerful to induce so sudden and total a departure from the lenient measures hitherto pursued, and to cause the King to violate his solemn promise by revoking all the charters granted by him to the vassals of the Isles during the last five years.* The new line of policy was no sooner determined on than followed up with the wonted vigour of the Sovereign. We find him at Tarbet in the month of April, when he gave to Archibald, Earl of Argyll, and others for letting on lease, for the term of three years, the entire Lordship of the Isles as possessed by the last lord, both in the Isles and on the mainland, excepting only the Island of Isla and the lands of North and South Kintyre. Argyll received also a commission of Lieutenandry, with the fullest powers, over the Lordship of the Isles; and, some months later, was appointed Keeper of the Castle of Tarbet, and Bailie and Governor of the King's lands in Knapdale. Argyll was not, however, the only individual who benefited by this change of measures. Alexander, Lord of Gordon, eldest son of the Earl of Huntly, received a grant of numerous lands in Lochaber (1500) formerly belonging to the Lordship of the Isles. Upon Duncan Stewart of Appin, who was much employed in the Royal service, were bestowed the lands of Duror and Glenco during the King's pleasure. The important services of Macian of Ardnamurchan (who alone of all the Islanders seems to have retained the favour of his Sovereign) were likewise suitably acknowledged.†

Skene, though somewhat less clear in his details, substantially corroborates this account,‡ and Tytler sums up the whole of the various expeditions of the King so neatly that we cannot resist quoting him. He says:—In 1493, although much occupied with other cares and concerns, he found time to penetrate twice into the Highlands, proceeding as far as Dunstaffnage and Mingarry in Ardnamurchan, and in the succeeding year, such was the indefatigable activity with which he executed his public duties, that he thrice visited the Isles. The first of these voyages, which took place in April and May, was conducted with great state. It afforded the youthful monarch an opportunity of combining business and amusement, of gratifying his passion for sailing and hunting, of investigating the state of the fisheries, of fitting out his barges for defence as well as pleasure, and of inducing his nobles to build and furnish, at their own expense, vessels in which they might accompany their Sovereign. It had the effect also of impressing upon the inhabitants of the Isles a salutary idea of the wealth, grandeur, and military power of the King. The rapidity with which he travelled from place to place, the success and expedition with which he punished all who dared to oppose him, his generosity to his friends and attendants, and his gay and condescending familiarity with the lower classes of his subjects, all combined to increase his popularity and to consolidate and unite, by the bonds of equal laws and affectionate allegiance, the remotest parts of the kingdom.

* The King's general parliamentary revocation of all charters granted in his minority, could not affect those of the Islanders, which seem all to have been granted after his attaining majority.

† Highlands and Isles, 89-95.

‡ Highlanders of Scotland, vol. ii., pp. 86-90; Tytler's History of Scotland, vol. ii., pp. 258-259, 1879 Ed.

At Tarbet, in Cantire, he repaired the fort originally built by Bruce, and established an emporium for his shipping, transporting thither his artillery, laying in a stock of gunpowder, and carrying along with him his master-gunners, in whose training and practice he appears, from the payments in the treasurer's books, to have busied himself with much perseverance and enthusiasm. These warlike measures were generally attended with the best effects; most of the chieftains readily submitted to a Prince who could carry hostilities within a few days into the heart of their country, and attack them in their island fastnesses with a force which they found it vain to resist; one only, Sir John of the Isles had the folly to defy the royal vengeance, ungrateful for that repeated lenity with which his treasons had been already pardoned. His great power in the Isles probably induced him to believe that the King would not venture to drive him to extremities; but in this he was disappointed. James instantly summoned him to stand his trial for treason; and in a Parliament which assembled at Edinburgh soon after the King's return from the north, this formidable rebel was stripped of his power, and his lands and possessions forfeited to the crown.*

The last Lord of the Isles died, as we have seen, in the Monastery of Paisley, about the year 1498, leaving no legitimate issue. He was married to Elizabeth, eldest daughter of James, Lord Livingston, great Chamberlain of Scotland. His son, Angus Og, died, as already stated, about 1485, leaving an only child, Donald Dubh, who was at the time of his father's death, and still (1498) continued to be, a prisoner in the Castle of Inchconnell. Angus was married to Lady Mary Campbell, daughter of Colin, first Earl of Argyll; and most authorities agree that Donald Dubh was the legitimate issue of this marriage, though, for state reasons, he was declared a bastard in various Acts of parliament, and known, in consequence, as "Donald the Bastard." John the second illegitimate son of the last lord, also died during his father's lifetime—before the 16th of December 1478, as is clearly proved by the Register of the Great Seal, viii., 120. Angus Og of the Isles had also two daughters—one of whom, Florence, married Duncan Mackintosh of Mackintosh, and the other, Margaret, who married Kenneth Mackenzie (a'Bhlair), VIIth Baron of Kintail. The sons of both—the heirs respectively of Mackintosh and Kintail, were taken prisoners to Edinburgh Castle, in 1495, as already described. Celestine of Lochalsh died in 1473—fifteen years before the death of his brother, Earl John—while his son, Alexander of Lochalsh, the "heir presumptive" to the Lordship of the Isles, was assassinated in the Island of Oronsay in 1498—the same year in which Earl John himself died. In the same year also died Hugh of Sleat, the only surviving son of Earl John, leaving by his first wife, Finvola, daughter of Alexander, the son of John of Ardnamurchan, one son—John MacHuistean, or Hughson, who is above referred to as having, in 1495, made his submission to James IV. with several others of the principal vassals of the Isles. John Hughson died without issue in 1502, but he was succeeded in the property by his brother, Donald Gallach, previously referred as the issue of his father by

* Treasurer's Accounts, August 24th, 1494, "Item, to summon Sir John of the Isles, of treason in Kintyre, and for the expense of witnesses, vi. lb. xiii. sh. iii. d." This, according to Mr Gregory, was Sir John, called "Cathanach," of Iola and Cantire, and Lord of the Glens in Ireland—executed afterwards at Edinburgh about the year 1500.

Mary, daughter of Gunn, Crouner of Caithness, and from whom is descended the family of the present Lord Macdonald of the Isles, who still possesses the Sleat property in Skye, and of whom, and other members of the family, hereafter.

Sir Alexander of Lochalsh, nephew of the last Lord of the Isles, married a daughter of Lovat, by whom he left three sons and two daughters, the eldest of whom, Sir Donald of Lochalsh, known as "Donald Gallda," Lieutenant of the Isles, was afterwards elected by the Islanders to the Lordship of the Isles. He and his brothers took a prominent part in the succeeding insurrections in the Isles, in connection with which his proceedings will be noticed at length in the sequel. It may, however, be stated here that he and his brothers died without issue, his two sisters, Margaret and Janet, having succeeded to his property, carrying it to their respective husbands—Macdonald of Glengarry and Dingwall of Kildun.

From these facts it will be seen that the vassals of the Lordship of the Isles, on the death of Earl John, were without any recognised head, while there were not less than three possible claimants to that high position; namely, Donald Dubh, the son of Angus Og of the Isles, the latter of whom was undoubtedly heir of entail to John, last Lord of the Isles and Earl of Ross. Donald Dubh therefore, whether legitimate or not, had powerful claims, and he was not long in asserting them. The next claimant was Sir Donald, whose father, Sir Alexander of Lochalsh, had been for many years acting as, and holding the rank of, heir to the Lordship; and finally we have the descendants of Hugh of Sleat, who also, in their turn, claimed the succession. To follow these in their various insurrections and make the various points in this most difficult portion of the history of the Macdonalds as clear as possible, will be attempted in our next.

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HISTORY OF THE MACDONALDS,
AND
THE LORDS OF THE ISLES.

BY THE EDITOR.

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IX.

IT will be remembered that DONALD DUBH, son of Angus Og, and grandson of John, last Lord of the Isles, was still a minor, and, at the time of his grandfather's death, in 1498, a prisoner in the Castle of Inchconnell. The Islanders looked upon him as the legitimate heir of John, last Lord of the Isles and Earl of Ross, and having been set at liberty by the gallantry and fidelity of his relatives, the Macdonalds of Glencoe, he at once proceeded to the Lewis to solicit the aid of Torquil Macleod, then a very powerful chief, and married to the aunt of Donald Dubh, Katharine, daughter of Colin, first Earl of Argyll. Donald's cause was warmly espoused by the Lord of Lewis, a fact which had great influence with the other Island Lords, as they naturally concluded that Torquil Macleod must have had ample proof of Donald's legitimacy; otherwise he would not have anything to do with him; and from his intimate relations with the Argyll family, he was supposed to have had every facility of procuring accurate information regarding the marriage of Angus Og to Macleod's sister-in-law, Katherine of Argyll. At first sight it would seem almost inexplicable that the first Earl of Argyll should have continued to maintain the illegitimacy of his grandson, and the second Earl, Archibald, that of his nephew; but if their own positions be kept in view—the latter being Lieutenant of the Isles, as well as the grasping character of the race—we can easily account for the position which these Earls assumed. They had their eye on the extensive and valuable island possessions of the Isles for themselves, and it was in their view a venial crime to sacrifice the reputation of a daughter or a sister in comparison with the sacrifice of their chances—now so much increased by the confusion among the Islanders for want of a chief and leader—of possessing for themselves the vast territories of the Lordship of the Isles and Earldom of Ross. And Archibald would the more readily be induced to adopt this selfish view, when he found that the claims of Donald Dubh, even if he were admitted to be the legitimate offspring of Angus Og of the Isles, were very materi-

ally weakened, and likely to be contested by others of the Macdonalds on the ground of the undoubted and admitted bastardy of his father. The news of young Donald's escape, as well as its effect upon the disaffected Island chiefs, soon reached the King. Torquil was charged to deliver up the person of the rebel, who is described as being at Macleod's "rule and governance," under the penalty of treason. This he declined, whereupon he was himself denounced as a traitor, and all his possessions were formally forfeited to the crown. The Earl of Huntly was sent to Lochaber and the neighbouring districts to collect the crown rents by force if necessary, and soon afterwards, in 1502, a commission was issued in favour of Huntly, Lord Lovat, and William Munro of Fowlis, to enable them to proceed to Lochaber and Mamore, and to let the King's lands there for the space of five years to "true men." They, at the same time, received strict orders to drive all "broken men" from the district. This injunction, considering the disorganised state of that part of the country, meant the expulsion of the entire population; for in those days all who were not governed by a responsible head or chief would come under this designation. Lewis, forfeited by Torquil Macleod, was treated in the same manner, and we find that a grant of the lands of Mamore—Dunrobin and Glencoe—was made to Duncan Stewart of Appin, who had been at the time actively employed carrying out the King's behests in the Isles. Great efforts were made by the King to win over some of the most powerful of the Highland chiefs, especially Ewen MacAllan, or Allanson, of Lochiel and Lachlan Maclean of Duart. These gentlemen were in constant communication with the Court, and finally proceeded thither with the view of completing negotiations previously carried on by correspondence; but no sooner did they return to the north than they seem to have forgotten everything "except the duty by which they fancied themselves bound to support the claims of the alleged heir of Innisgall."

The causes which led up to this rebellion of the Islanders under Donald Dubh, and which so embittered the feelings of the Highlanders against the Government of the King are pretty fully explained by various writers. Tytler informs us that from 1495 to 1499, in the autumn of which latter year the monarch held his court in South Cantire, all appears to have remained in tranquillity; but after his return, a complete change took place in the policy of the King, from causes which cannot now be ascertained. And the wise and moderate measures, some time previously adopted, were succeeded by proceedings so severe as to border on injustice. "The charters which had been granted during the last six years to the vassals of the Isles, were summarily revoked. Archibald, Earl of Argyle, was installed in the office of Lieutenant, with the ample and invidious power of leasing out the entire lordship of the Isles" (the Island of Isla and the lands of North and South Cantire alone excepted). "The ancient proprietors and their vassals were violently expelled from their hereditary property; whilst Argyle and other royal favourites appear to have been enriched by new grants of their estates and lordships. We are not to wonder that such harsh proceedings were loudly reprobated; the inhabitants saw with indignation their rightful masters exposed to insult and indigence, and at last broke out into open rebellion," the object of which was to place Donald Dubh on the throne of his ancestors of the Isles. After describing the release of Donald from the Castle of Inch-

connel by the MacIans of Glencoe, and his visit to Macleod of the Lewis, Tytler proceeds—"Although James received early intelligence of the meditated insurrection, and laboured by every method to dissolve the union amongst its confederated chiefs, it now burst forth with destructive fury. Badenoch was wasted with all the ferocity of Highland warfare—Inverness given to the flames; and so widely and rapidly did the contagion of independence spread throughout the Isles that it demanded the most prompt and decisive measures to arrest it. But James' power, though shook, was too deeply rooted to be thus destroyed. The whole array of the kingdom was called forth. The Earls of Argyle, Huntly, Crawford, and Marshall, with Lord Lovat and other barons, were appointed to lead an army against the Islanders; the castles and strongholds in the hands of the king were fortified and garrisoned; letters were addressed to the various chiefs, encouraging the loyal by the rewards which awaited them, whilst over the heads of the wavering or disaffected were suspended the terrors of forfeiture and execution. But this was not all: a parliament assembled at Edinburgh on the 11th of March 1503, and in addition to the above rigorous resolutions, the civilisation of the Highlands, an object which had engrossed the attention of many a successive council, was again taken into consideration. To accomplish this end, those districts, whose inhabitants had hitherto, from their inaccessible position, defied the restraints of the law, were divided into new sheriffdoms, and placed under the jurisdiction of permanent judges. The preamble of the Act complained in strong terms of the gross abuse of justice in the northern and western divisions of the realm—more especially the Isles; it described the people as having become altogether savage, and provided that the new sheriffs for the north Isles should hold their courts in Inverness and Dingwall, and those for the south, in the Tarbet of Lochkilkerran. The inhabitants of Dowart, Glendowart, and the lordship of Lorn, who, for a long period, had violently resisted the jurisdiction of the justice-ayres or ambulatory legal courts, were commanded to come to the justice-ayre at Perth, and the districts of Mawmor and Lochaber, which had insisted on the same exemption, were brought under the jurisdiction of the justice-ayre of Inverness. The divisions of Bute, Arran, Knapdale, Cantire, and the larger Cumbrae were to hold their courts at Ayr, whilst the deplorable condition of Argyle was marked by the words of the Act, 'that the court is to be held wherever it is found that each Highlander and Lowlander may come without danger, and ask justice,' a problem of no easy discovery. The districts of Ross and Caithness, now separated from the sheriffdom of Inverness, were placed under their judges; and it was directed that the inhabitants of these three great divisions of the kingdom should as usual attend the justice-ayre of Inverness."*

In addition to his commission of Lieutenandry, with full powers over the Lordship of the Isles, the Earl of Argyll a few months later received the appointment of Keeper of the Castle of Tarbert and Bailie and Governor of the King's lands in Knapdale, while at the same time Alexander, Lord Gordon, eldest son of the Earl of Huntly, received grants of various lands in the district of Lochaber, which previously formed part

* Tytler's History of Scotland; vol. ii., pp. 271-3.

of the Lordship of the Isles. The Islanders, about the same time, became aware that steps were being taken to expel the vassals of the old Lordship from their ancient possessions, and it was only natural that these high-handed measures, and the great danger in which they now found themselves, should have exasperated their feelings, and induced them to form a powerful combination under their newly liberated leader, Donald Dubh, whom they rightly, or wrongly, regarded as their hereditary lord, for the protection of their mutual interests. Without waiting to be attacked they advanced into Badenoch, the property of one of their principal enemies, the Earl of Huntly, who afterwards, when the other lords already named led a large force against the Isles, undertook to seize and garrison the castles of Strome in Lochcarron, and Eileandonain in Kintail, then thought "rycht necessar for the danting of the Ilis," provided the artillery and ammunition necessary for besieging these strongholds were sent to him by sea at the King's expense. From this it would appear that the Mackenzies under Hector Roy of Gairloch, who then acted as tutor to John of Killin, then a minor, sided with Donald Dubh against the Government. It would also account for certain differences which took place between Hector Roy and his ward regarding the possession of the Kintail stronghold a few years later, when the former was ordered by the Privy Council to give it up to his nephew and chief, John Mackenzie, IXth Baron of Kintail.

In April, 1504, the Royal army had its rendezvous at Dumbarton, and from this place artillery and warlike stores of every description then available, including "gun stanes," were sent forward for the siege of the stronghold of Cairnburgh, a fort on an isolated island on the west coast of Mull. The Earl of Arran received two commissions against the Islanders, and, at the same time, the Earl of Argyll, Macleod of Harris and Dunvegan, and MacIan of Ardnamurchan, favoured, and were in regular correspondence with, the King,* who did not proceed to the Isles in person on this occasion. The rebellion was found to be of a more formidable character than was anticipated, and very little progress was made to repress it in this campaign. Next year, the insurrection becoming more alarming, the King determined to lead his army in person. He invaded the Isles with a powerful force from the south, while Huntly attacked them from the north, and took several prisoners, none of whom, however, were of very distinguished rank or influence. At the same time the Royal navy was employed under Sir Andrew Wood and Robert Barton. This expedition resulted in breaking up the confederacy of the Island lords; many of them submitted to the Royal authority, among the first being the powerful Chief of the Macleans, Lord of Duart, which act on his part also implied the submission of Nacneil of Barra, of Macquarrie of Ulva, two

* In 1504 great efforts had been made, but with little permanent success, and the progress of the insurrection became alarming. Macvicar, an envoy from Macleod, who was then in strict alliance with the King, remained three weeks at Court. MacIan also had sent his emissaries to explain the perilous condition of the country; and with characteristic energy, the King, as soon as the state of the year permitted, despatched the Earl of Huntly to invade the Isles by the north, whilst himself in person led an army against them from the south; and John Barton proceeded with a fleet to reduce and overawe these savage districts. The terror of the Royal name; the generosity with which James rewarded his adherents, and the vigorous measures which he adopted against the disaffected, produced a speedy and extensive effect in dissolving the confederacy.—*Tytler's History of Scotland.*

chiefs who, since the forfeiture of the Lordship of the Isles, had followed the banner of their powerful neighbours, the Macleans. Maclean of Lochbuy soon followed the example of his chief, while the Macdonalds of Largie (MacRanald Banes), a powerful sept of the Macdonalds of Islay, also came in. Ranald MacAllan, the heir of the Chief of the Clanranald Allansons, was already in high favour at Court; so that the power of the Islanders was now almost completely shattered. Some of the great chiefs, however, still held out, the principal among them being Torquil Macleod of the Lewis, though his chief, Macleod of Harris, had all through been loyal to the throne. He had taken such an active and leading part in the rebellion of the Islanders under Donald Dubh that it is extremely probable he entertained little hope of obtaining remission for his offences, and this probably determined him in his resolution to hold out after the other leaders made their submission to the King. In 1506 he was solemnly forfeited in Parliament for not appearing to stand his trial for high treason, and to execute this sentence the Earl of Huntly was despatched with a powerful force to the North Isles. He besieged and took the Castle of Stornoway, and reduced the whole Island of Lewis to obedience by the aid of Mackay of Strathnaver, who accompanied him in this expedition, and who was rewarded for his services by a life-rent grant of the lands of Assynt and of Coigeach, part of the lands forfeited by Macleod, accurately described by Tytler as "the great head of the rebellion." Macleod himself does not, however, appear to have been taken; and it is uncertain what became of him after; but we find a charter under the Great Seal in favour of his brother, Malcolm Macleod, of the lands and Lordship of the Lewis, "de novo," dated 29th June 1511, under which his nephew John, the son of the forfeited Torquil, was excluded from the succession. According to Gregory—"Although this tedious rebellion was at length suppressed, it does not appear that the projects of the Government for expelling the old inhabitants from the Lordship of the Isles, and substituting 'true men' in their room, had made any sensible progress. On the contrary the clans of the Isles and adjacent coasts continued to occupy, many of them, perhaps contrary to law, their ancient possessions. Donald Dubh, the alleged heir of the Isles, for whose sake the Hebridean chiefs had made such sacrifices, again became a prisoner, and was committed to the Castle of Edinburgh, where he remained until he made his escape a second time, nearly forty years after this period, under the regency of the Earl of Arran," when the faithful Islanders again rallied round him, and supported him in his claims to the Lordship of the Isles and the Earldom of Ross, as the last male heir, in the direct line, of John, the last lord who legitimately held the ancient honours.

Meanwhile we must leave him in his long and weary captivity of forty years, and proceed to describe the state of the vassals of the Isles during his imprisonment, including the fortunes of another who in his absence claimed the same ancient honours. During the recent rebellion under Donald Dubh, the lands of Clanchattan, as vassals of the Earl of Huntly, and those of the Stewarts of Appin, as followers of the Earl of Argyll, suffered severely from the incursions of the Islanders, who were infuriated against the former especially for separating themselves from the vassals of the ancient Lordship of the Isles, for joining the enemy, and for claiming lands in the heart of Lochaber; while the Stewarts, under the protection

of Argyll, encroached upon the ancient lordship from the opposite side. The Camerons, since 1497, forcibly occupied the lands of Glenluy and Locharkaig without any acknowledgment to the representatives of the ancient superiors, in consequence of which they suffered severely from the Islanders by the plunder and devastation of their lands of Badenoch. These feuds, which in former times would have been settled by the arbitration of the sword between the injured parties and the aggressors, were on this occasion, by the influence of the King, Huntly, and Argyll, settled by decisions of the Privy Council, or of arbitrators chosen mutually by the parties themselves.

The King was not satisfied with a mere compulsory obedience to the statutes of the realm, but took steps for the introduction to the Highlands of a knowledge of the laws by means of natives trained at the expense of Government. A document is still in existence granting a piece of crown lands in the Isle of Skye by James IV. to Kenneth Williamson to support him at the schools, with a view to his studying and making himself master of the laws of Scotland, and of afterwards practising as a lawyer within the bounds of the Isles. The document, published in "The Transactions of the Iona Club," page 22, is as follows:—"A letter of gift maid to Kanoch Wilyamson, induring the king's will, of all and hale the lands of [the] *Terunga* of Kilmartine, and the half of [the] *Terunga* of Baramosmor in Trouternes, with their pertinentis, extending yerely to sax marks of old extent, liand in the Lordschip of the Ilys, to hald the said Kanoch at the Skolis, and for to lere and study the kingis laws in Scotland, and eftirwart to exerce and use the samin within the boundis of the Ilis, &^{ca}. At Strivelin, the xj of Aprile, the yere of God i^m v^c and viij yeris (1508), and of the kingis regne the xxi. yere."

During the remainder of this reign justice seems to have been administered throughout the kingdom with great impartiality, and in the Highlands in a manner hitherto unknown. The King himself was becoming so popular among the leading Islanders, and the royal authority so well established that "from the suppression of the insurrection of 1506 to the disastrous battle of Flodden in 1513, the West Highlands and Isles seem to have been free from any serious disturbance." Various appointments were confirmed which made the royal authority felt in the north. The heritable Sherifdom of Inverness, which embraced the county of that name and those of Ross and Caithness, was conferred upon the Earl of Huntly, who was empowered to appoint deputies to hold courts respectively, for the district of Badenoch, at Kingussie; for Lochaber, at Inverlochy; for Ross, at Tain or Dingwall; and for Caithness at Wick. Huntly was by the same charter, dated 16th January 1508-9 "appointed governor of the Castle of Inverness, with a large grant of lands for the support of a garrison. Power was given him to add to the fortifications; and he was, at the same time, bound, at his own expense, to build upon the Castlehill of Inverness a hall of stone and lime upon vaults. This hall was to be one hundred feet in length, thirty feet in breadth, and the same in height; it was to have a slated roof, and to it were to be attached a kitchen and chapel of proper size. The same nobleman had previously obtained a grant of the site of the Castle of Inverlochy, where he was bound to build a 'tower and strength with a barmekyn,' which, however, had not been done—owing to the Earl's constant employment in the King's

service—so late as the year 1511. From this period, the great power formerly enjoyed by the Earls of Ross, Lords of the Isles, was transferred to Argyle and Huntly; the former having the chief rule in the South Isles and adjacent coasts, whilst the influence of the latter prevailed in the North Isles and Highlands. The general effect of the vigorous Government of James IV. was a decided improvement on the state of the Isles during the latter part of his reign, which was accompanied, however, by great changes in the relative position of many of the principal insular families. . . . In the course of James' frequent expeditions to the West Highlands, the children of Sir Alexander de insulis of Lochalsh, who were all young at their father's death, had fallen into his hands. It appears that they were brought up in the Royal household, and we may presume that their education was carefully attended to. Donald, the eldest son—called by the Highlanders Donald *Gallda*, or the Foreigner, from his early residence in the Lowlands—speedily became a great favourite with the King. He was allowed to inherit his father's estates, or a great part of them, and was frequently permitted to visit the Isles. This privilege he did not abuse during the life of James IV.; and but for the untimely death of that monarch, he would, no doubt, have received still greater marks of favour.”*

The position of the various families of the Macdonalds were now in most cases more unfortunate than they had ever been before. John, the eldest son and heir of Hugh of Sleat, made over all his estates to the family of Clanranald. They were thus without any legitimate means of subsistence, viewed with jealousy by the Government, and ultimately became by force of circumstances rebels and murderers. The Clann Ian Mhoir of Isla at this period possessed no heritage in Scotland, but resided on their estate of the Glens, in the north of Ireland. The Macdonalds of Lochaber, or Keppoch, had their own local troubles on hand, which terminated in the deposition of one of their chiefs by the elders of the tribe, while they held their lands as occupants merely “without any legal rights to the heritage.” The family of Moydert appear hitherto to have been in high favour at court, but in 1509 their chief, Allan MacRuari, was tried, convicted, and executed in presence of the King, at Blair Athole, for some unrecorded crime, at which place, according to MacVurich, his body lies interred. His successor, Ranald MacAllan, in 1513, met with the same unfortunate fate as his father, being executed under similar circumstances of obscurity, at Perth, and, like his father, tried in presence of the King. While the other families of the Isles were thus in misfortune, in consequence of the measures adopted by Government after 1493, the Clann Ian of Ardnurchan, as the result of having throughout recent rebellions sided with the King, greatly increased in power and became proportionally obnoxious to the other Islanders. The family of Glencoe shared in the common misfortune, while other leading vassals of the old Lordship improved their positions, or, as in the case of those forfeited, were restored to their estates. But we prefer to leave a full account of the various Macdonald families and their doings and vicissitudes until we come to deal with each

* Gregory, who quotes the Treasurer's Accounts, A. D. 1507 to 1512, and Acts of the Lords of Council, xxiv., fo. 186,

of them under separate headings in their order of descent from the main stem.*

The events which led up to the fatal battle of Flodden, in which James IV. with the flower of the Scottish nobility so chivalrously sold their lives, are so well known, as well as all the facts regarding the battle itself, that it is as unnecessary, as it would indeed be out of place here, to reproduce them. In this memorable engagement the Highlanders took a leading part, Sir Donald (Gallda) Macdonald of Lochalsh, who had been knighted under the Royal banner on the field of Flodden, leading a large body of the Islanders to that fatal and ever memorable engagement. Though they distinguished themselves in the characteristic and heroic manner of their race, it is held by most authorities that their peculiar mode of fighting rather helped to insure the defeat of the Scottish army on this occasion than serve to advantage against the better disciplined hosts of England. Tytler, in his description of the battle,† its causes and results, makes the following reference to the Highlanders:—"On the right the divisions led by the Earls of Lennox and Argyle were composed chiefly of the Highlanders and Islesmen; the Campbells, Macleans, Macleods, and other hardy clans, who were dreadfully galled by the discharge of the English archers. Unable to reach the enemy with their broadswords and axes, which formed their only weapons, and at no time very amenable to discipline, their squadrons began to run fiercely forward, eager for closer fight, and thoughtless of the fearful consequences of breaking their array. It was to little purpose that La Motte and the French officers who were with them attempted by entreaties and blows to restrain them; they neither understood their language nor cared for their violence, but threw themselves, sword in hand, upon the English. They found, however, an enemy in Sir Edward Stanley, whose coolness was not to be surprised in this manner. The squares of English pikemen stood to their ground; and although for a moment the shock from the mountaineers was terrible, its force once sustained became spent with its own violence, and nothing remained but a disorganisation so complete that to recover their ranks was impossible. The consequence was a total rout of the right wing of the Scots, accompanied by a dreadful slaughter, in which, amid other brave men, the Earls of Lennox and Argyle were slain." Among the others killed were the Earls of Huntly, Athole, Caithness, and Glencairn; the Bishops of Caithness and of the Isles; Sir Duncan Campbell of Glenurchy; Lachlan Maclean of Duart; Campbell of Lawers, and several other Highlanders of note. Quoting the same authority—"The names of the gentry who fell are too numerous for recapitulation, since there were few families of note in Scotland which did not lose one relative or another, whilst some houses had to weep the death of all. It is from this cause that the sensations of sorrow and national lamentations occasioned by the defeat were peculiarly poignant and lasting; so that to this day few Scotsmen can hear the name of Flodden without a shudder

* Meanwhile we shall be glad to receive any information from those interested in these families, which may enable us to give a full and complete account of their history with accurate genealogies, to the present time, in the same manner as we have been able to do in our recently published "History of the Mackenzies" of the principal families of that name.

† Vol. ii., pp. 292-294.

of gloomy regret. . . . The news of the discomfiture of the Scottish army at Flodden spread through the land with a rapidity of terror and sorrow proportionate to the greatness of the defeat, and the alarming condition into which it instantly brought the country. The wail of private grief, from the hall to the cottage, was loud and universal. In the Capital were to be heard the shrieks of women who ran distractedly through the streets, bewailing the husbands, the sons, or the brothers, who had fallen, clasping their infants to their bosoms, and anticipating in tears the coming desolation of their country."

Notwithstanding the favours and honours which had been extended to Donald Gallda of Lochalsh by the late King, no sooner did he return to the Isles after Flodden than a new plot was organised to proclaim him Lord of the Isles, in spite of the fact that Donald Dubh, the recently elected holder of that high honour and position, was still alive, though still confined in the Castle of Edinburgh. In November 1513, only two months after his arrival in the north, he marched to Urquhart with a large body of Highlanders, among whom we find Alexander MacRanald of Glengarry, and Wiland Chisholm of Comar, and there expelled the garrison from the Castle of Urquhart, seized the stronghold, plundering and laying waste at the same time the adjoining lands, then the property of John Grant of Freuchy. Almost simultaneously Lachlan Maclean of Duart seized the Royal Castle of Cairnburgh, near Mull, and some time afterwards, with the aid of Alexander Macleod of Dunvegan, possessed himself of the Castle of Dunskaich, in Sleat, shortly after which Sir Donald was formally proclaimed Lord of the Isles. This position he was able to maintain for several years, but his history in detail must stand over until our next.

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HISTORY OF THE MACDONALDS,
AND
THE LORDS OF THE ISLES.

BY THE EDITOR.

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X.

THE rebellion of Sir Donald *Gallda* Macdonald of Lochalsh, almost immediately on his return from the field of Flodden, now falls to be noticed. On that fatal day fell, surrounded by a literal wall of the dead bodies of his clansmen, the brave Chief of the Macleans, Hector Odhar; whereupon Lachlan Cattanach succeeded to the chiefship of Duart, and became the principal leader in the movement to place Sir Donald Gallda on the Island throne. He accompanied him in his raid to Urquhart, on Lochness, as already seen, took the strongholds of Cairnburgh and Dunskiach; after which Sir Donald was proclaimed Lord of the Isles by Maclean and the other leading vassals of the Isles. Colin, third Earl of Argyle, was now ordered by the Privy Council to proceed against Maclean and his associates with as many of the King's lieges as he thought necessary for the purpose of putting down the rebellion. By an Act of Council, in 1514, men of influence were appointed to take charge, as lieutenants, of particular divisions of the Northern Highland Counties—Mackenzie of Kintail and Munro of Fowlis being appointed Lieutenants of Wester Ross; while Ewin Allanson, or MacAllan, and William Lauchlanson were placed in charge of the district of Lochaber. Letters were at the same time sent to all the chiefs whose properties on the mainland lay contiguous to the Isles, charging them, in case any of the Islanders landed on their territories, to resist their hostile intentions to the utmost of their power, and intimating that any of them who disobeyed these instructions would be held equally guilty with the Islanders themselves and punished accordingly.

The effect produced was neither very great nor satisfactory, and it was considered necessary and prudent to adopt measures of a more conciliatory character. John, Duke of Albany, at the time Regent, granted a commission to John Macian of Ardnamurchan, who had throughout continued faithful to the Government, to make terms with the less prominent and violent of the rebels, and to promise them the Royal favour, and re-

mission for their past crimes, if they became obedient and loyal subjects in future, and made restitution to those whom they had injured in their recent incursions. From these conditions, however, the principal rebels were exempted. These embraced the Macleans of Duart; the Macleods of Lewis and Harris; Alexander of Isla, chief of the Clann Ian Mhoir, or Macdonalds South, who now resided on his Antrim estate of the Glynn. There were also exempted the personal adherents and nearer relations of Sir Donald Gallda, with several of the smaller septs who dared not refuse to take part with the neighbouring and more powerful clans. This plan so far succeeded that several of the insurgents made their submission, and went to Court, under assurance of protection, to arrange, in person, the terms upon which they were to be pardoned and restored to favour. The Isles were thus brought for a time to a state of pacification previously unknown among their inhabitants. The Earl of Argyll and Mackenzie of Kintail, who had been guilty of some irregularities during these turbulent years, had to obtain remission from the Regent. It would appear that the intestine disorders so long chronic in the Isles were now coming to an end. In 1516 Sir Donald Gallda and Macian of Ardnamurchan submitted many of the disputes which had risen between them to the decision of the legal tribunals of the Kingdom. They came under obligations to redress injuries done to each other's properties in the past. About the same time Sir Donald frequently appeared at Court under a safe conduct from the Regent, while he was simultaneously carrying on a lawsuit against his old enemy the Earl of Argyll. "The reconciliation of Sir Donald to the Regent was apparently so cordial, and so much power was still left to him in the Isles, that, on the 24th September, 1516, a summons was dispatched to the Earl of Argyle and to 'Monsieur de Ylis,' to join the Royal Army, then about to proceed to the Borders. Some months after this the latter appears to have been in Invernes, with no good intentions, for the Earl of Huntly was directed to watch his motions; and ere long he was again in open rebellion. Sir Donald and his followers had joined with Alexander, Lord Home, in the treasonable practices which brought that nobleman's head to the block; and, after his death, had given shelter to his proscribed followers. This fact, regarding which all our historians are silent, would seem to imply that Sir Donald was first excited to rebellion by the intrigues of English agents, and serves to account for the inveteracy of the Scottish Government against him after this time.

Sir Donald is again in rebellion. In 1517, having given out to the Islesmen the false intimation that the Lieutenandy of the Isles and other important offices belonging to the Crown had been bestowed upon him by the Regent and Privy Council, he succeeded in raising a strong body of men by which he attacked and expelled his old enemy, Macian of Ardnamurchan, from his lands, and took possession of his castle of Mingarry, and, although repeatedly charged by the Privy Council to give up the stronghold and the lands to their lawful owner, he defied the Government, "razed the castle of Mingarry to the ground, and ravaged the whole district with fire and sword." His chief leaders had in the meantime discovered that he had deceived them, and that, instead of protecting the lands of which he pretended to have received charge and control, his real object was to lay them waste in the most ruthless manner. He refused

to take their advice in regard to any of his reckless and insane proceedings, and at length, taking the matter boldly into their own hands, they determined to apprehend him and deliver him up to the Regent. He, however, discovered their meditated designs, and managed to effect his escape; but both his brothers were made prisoners by Lachlan Cattanach Maclean and Macleod of Lewis, the two leaders who had hitherto been most conspicuous in supporting Sir Donald in his defiance of the Government. They had now, however, turned against him, became his most inveterate enemies, proceeded to make submission to the Regent, and to palliate their rebellious conduct in support of the Island Chief.

In 1517 the Earl of Argyll, the Macleans of Duart and Lochbuy, and Macleod of Harris, presented petitions to the Privy Council, making certain offers and suggestions regarding the affairs of the Isles and Sir Donald Gallda; and, although the petitions are separate and distinct, they are uniform in advocating the suppression of Sir Donald and his rebellion. Argyll demanded, first, that he "should be invested with very high powers over the the men of the Isles 'for the honour of the realm and the common weal in time coming.' He desired a commission of lieutenandy over all the Isles and the adjacent mainland on the ground of the vast expense he had previously incurred, of his ability to do good service in the future, and of his having broken up the confederacy of the Islanders," which commission was granted to him for a period of three years, with the exceptions that those parts of Lochaber belonging to the Earl of Huntly, the Clanchattan, and Ewin Allanson, and the Islands of Arran and Bute, were excluded from it. Second, "He claimed and obtained authority to receive into the King's favour all the men of the Isles who should make their submission to him, and become bound for future good behaviour—to promise them remission for former offences, and to engage for the restitution, not only of their heritage, but of such Crown lands as they previously held in lease, upon proper security being given for payment of the accustomed rents and duties, by the delivery of hostages and otherwise;" the last condition being imperative, 'because the men of the Isles are fickle of mind, and set but little value on their oaths and written obligations.' Sir Donald of the Isles, his brothers, and the Clan Donald were, however, specially excepted from the benefit of this second article. The Earl likewise demanded and received express power to pursue and follow the rebels with fire and sword, to expel them from the Isles, and to use his best endeavours to possess himself of Sir Donald's castle of Strone, in Lochcarron. Particular instructions were given to him to demand hostages from the Clan Ian Vor, or Clandonald of Isla, and their followers, who were now the principal supporters of Sir Donald; and, in the event of their refusal, to pursue them with the utmost severity; while, on the other hand, if they should submit, their leaders, the surviving sons of the late Sir John Cathanach of Isla, were to receive Crown lands in the Isles, to the annual value of one hundred merks, to enable them to live without plundering the King's lieges, and to keep rule in time to come—they being now without heritage, owing to their father's forfeiture."

Lachlan Maclean of Duart in his petition makes the following demands:—First, "A free remission of all offences to himself and his associates; and particularly to his 'kin, men, servants, and partakers,

following—viz., Donald Maclean (his uncle), Gilleonan Nacneill of Barra, Neill Mackinnon of Mishnish, Dunslaf Macquarrie of Ulva, and Lachlan Macewin of Ardgour; it being understood that Dowart was ready to make redress of all damages committed against the Earl of Argyle and Macian of Ardnamurchan, according to the decision of certain mutual friends. This remission was authorised by the Council to be granted to Maclean, upon hostages being given for future obedience. His next demands are somewhat startling, when his own previous conduct and the history of his predecessors are taken into consideration, and might well justify the charge of fickleness of mind brought against the Islanders by the Duke of Argyle. He desired, in the second place, that Sir Donald of Lochalsh, with his associates, should be proceeded against as traitors, and their lands forfeited, according to law, for their treason and perseverance in rebellion. In the third place, he demanded that Sir Donald's *two brothers*, then in his custody, should be 'justified,' *i.e.*, executed, according to law, 'for pleasure and profit to the King and Regent, and for stability of the country;' and further stated that he would act with double zeal in the King's service, as soon as he should perceive that the Government was serious in '*destroying the wicked blood of the Isles; for as long as that blood reigns, the King shall never have the Isles in peace, whenever they find an opportunity to break loose, as is evident from daily experience.*' For his good service done and to be done—and particularly for collecting, which he now undertook to do, the King's duties, in all places 'within (south of) the point of Ardnamurchan (except those belonging to Macian, who was to answer for himself), Maclean demanded an heritable grant of one hundred merk lands in Tiree and Mull, free of all duties. This, however, the Council would not give for a longer term than till the majority of the King, an arrangement with which he was obliged to rest satisfied in the meantime. He made various other demands, chiefly regarding his lands and possessions in the Isles; and, with some trifling exceptions, these were all agreed to."*

It is impossible for the reader not to be struck with the mean and treacherous conduct of Lachlan Cattanach, the Chief of the Macleans—conduct which it is impossible to stigmatise too severely. The author of the "Historical and Genealogical Account of the Clan Maclean," naturally indisposed to be unnecessarily severe in his condemnation of one of the chiefs of his own clan, says of him—"The death of the brave Hector Odhar introduces us to the name of one, in writing of whom I could wish the pen were in other hands than that of a Maclean; but as I have set out avowedly with the purpose of giving a faithful record of our race, I shall certainly 'nothing extenuate.' Lachlan Cattanach Maclean succeeded his father in the year 1513; this chief, whose natural violence of temper and neglected education led to acts of the most savage cruelty, was altogether such a character as to make one regret that the noble line of Duart's lords had ever been tarnished by his being of their number. In early youth he exhibited such symptoms of a bad disposition, and reckless indifference to the lives of his inferiors, that while residing among the Clan-Chattan, his mother's kindred, he twice narrowly escaped falling by the hand of some injured vassal. On his returning to Mull, a *Moid*, or

* Gregory, pp. 115-122.

council of chieftains and gentlemen of the Macleans, was held, at which the propriety of excluding him altogether from the succession was mooted ; his advocates, however, carried it in his favour, alleging his youth as some palliative for his present wicked and ungovernable conduct, and that at a more mature age there was hope of his being less objectionable ; but neither time nor circumstances seemed calculated to smooth the rugged nature of Lachlan Cattanach. The first act of his chieftainship is one for which we would grant him credit for boldness at least, were it a matter of certainty that he even deserved it. In the seizure of the royal castle of Cairnburgh, near Mull, and of Dunscaich, in the Isle of Sky, he was aided by braver spirits than his own ; in this as well as in other exploits in which he had embroiled himself with his sovereign, he was powerfully assisted by his uncle Donald, and the Macleans of Lochbuy and Ardgour, by Macleod of Dunvegan, and others ; and it is not shown by any thing the sennachies have recorded on the subject that one single act of bravery (a quality, when at all exhibited, they were ever fond of dwelling upon) was displayed on these occasions by Lachlan Cattanach ; on the contrary, his pusillanimity is shown in very glaring colours on one or two occasions, when called to account for the rebellious doings in which he aided some, and to which he had led others. His first act of rebellion was to favour the establishment of Sir Donald Macdonald of Lochalsh as Lord of the Isles ; yet, when he himself was obliged to crave indemnity for the share he had taken therein, he did so in terms which it is unnecessary to characterize. Let his cowardly petition speak for itself : he seeks that two brothers of Sir Donald, who were originally acting in concert with him, but whom he had detained prisoners in the hope of ingratiating himself with his sovereign, whose power he now found to be pressing hard upon him, 'should be executed according to law, for pleasure and profit to the King and Regent, and for stability of the country ;' and that he himself would 'aid the Government in the purpose of destroying the wicked blood of Isles, for as long as that blood reigned the King could never have the Isles in peace.' Strange demands these for a man who was himself a prime agent in that very rebellion for which he wished others thus to suffer. His demands were numerous, but we find little else than the remission of offences to himself and those of his immediate followers conceded to him. He was in return obliged to promise restitution to the Earl of Argyll and Macdonald of Ardnamurchan for injuries done to their vassals, to become personally responsible for the chieftains lately in arms with him, and to give his oath of allegiance to the King and Regent. Treacherous and pusillanimous as his conduct in these proceedings was, history might be tempted to offer something in excuse for him, were it not that his character, both public and private, is such as not to admit of a single palliative.

"A circumstance in the life of this worthless Chief of Maclean, though already rendered sufficiently familiar, as having been made the subject of a modern dramatic piece, *The Family Legend*, is rather in its proper place by being recorded here.

"Lachlan Cattanach was married to the Lady Elizabeth Campbell, daughter of Archibald, second Earl of Argyll, and scarcely had two years elapsed ere he evinced the most brutal hatred against his amiable wife, and to such a length that nothing seemed to satisfy the tyrant but her final destruction. No other cause is assigned for this dislike except that

he entertained a violent passion for a young daughter of a vassal chieftain, Maclean of Treshnish, and the only hope he had of obtaining her was by getting rid of his present lady. The better to accomplish his end, and to lull suspicion, on the eve of his infamous attempt, he for some time bestowed more than his usual attentions on his unsuspecting victim, and proposed that on a certain evening they should make an excursion on the water in the neighbourhood of Duart Castle. To this his confiding lady consented, and on the proposed evening he had one of his galleys in readiness, manned by a few tools whom he had admitted into his secret. They embarked and proceeded towards a solitary rock, distant about two miles eastward of Duart castle, and only visible at half-tide, where he left her, in the anticipation that the tide, now rapidly rising, would soon sweep her away for ever from his sight; but the diabolical attempt of the tyrant was happily frustrated. One of those who aided him, probably from a feeling of remorse, let some three or four of the dastardly chief's own bodyguard into the secret; they instantly launched a boat from a neighbouring creek called Loch-Dow, and proceeded to the rock, where they found the amiable sufferer sitting, and the sea already beginning to break over her. Rescuing her from her perilous situation, they conveyed her to the opposite shore of Lorn, where she was landed in safety, and whence, on the second day, she found her way to Inveraray Castle, the residence of her noble brother.

“Lachlan Cattanach, anticipating that his wife had met the doom to which he consigned her, immediately wrote letters to her brother and others of her relatives announcing her sudden death, and proposing to have her remains conveyed to Inveraray to be buried amongst her kindred. To humour the tyrant's deception, and the more effectually to confront him with his treachery, his proposal was acceded to, and, due preparation being made, he proceeded on his journey, attended by a goodly number of *mourners*, himself wearing the mask of the bereaved and disconsolate husband as well as a treacherous heart could allow his scowling countenance to exhibit it. By the management of a deputation sent by Argyll to meet his brother-in-law at or about a place called Glenara, the *mournful* train just arrived as the family and guests of the Castle were sitting down to dinner, and Maclean being directed to deposit his *precious* charge in an apartment adapted to the purpose, he was invited to enter the dining-hall, at the head of which, to his utter consternation, he saw seated his own injured lady, to whom Argyll, in bitter scorn, formally introduced him. The crafty and suspicious chief had, however, taken such precaution in arming himself and his followers as to render it dangerous to attempt the summary punishment he so justly merited; be that as it may, it is at all events asserted that the Lady Elizabeth herself ardently begged that her cruel husband should be permitted to depart in peace. He returned to Mull, and shortly afterwards married the daughter of the Laird of Treshnish; and Lady Elizabeth, after suing for and obtaining a regular divorce, was united to her kinsman, Campbell of Achnabreck. This worthless Chief of Maclean (the only worthless one, I am happy to say, of his race), lived to a great age; nevertheless vengeance pursued him, and his end was such as in those days have been expected, and such as may indeed be justified; he was killed in his bed, in Edinburgh, by Campbell of Achallader, brother to the injured Lady Elizabeth. Lachlan Cattanach.

does not appear to have possessed one single redeeming quality. I do not find that he even possessed the negative virtue of being a brave tyrant."

The execution of Sir Donald Gallda's two brothers, insisted upon by this brutal and treacherous Chief of the Macleans, was, it is supposed, ultimately carried out, though at first the Council were divided on the point. The majority, however, were in favour of the extreme sentence, while the minority wished to leave the ultimate decision to the Regent; and Gregory states that "although it cannot positively be affirmed, there is reason to think that the opinion of the majority prevailed."

Maclean of Lochbuy and Alexander Macleod of Harris received remissions for themselves and for their followers on giving up hostages, but Macleod demanded in addition a heritable grant of the lands of Troternish, in Skye. This was refused; but he was continued a king's tenant as formerly. Mutual arrangements were made between the Earls of Huntly and Argyll as to the expulsion of the Clanchattan and the Highlanders of the Isles in certain circumstances. Maclean of Duart appeared before the Council, and "gave his solemn oath of allegiance to the King and to the Regent; binding himself at the same time to give his best assistance to Argyle, as Lieutenant of the Isles for the good government of these districts, and as far as lay in his power to observe the public peace, and administer justice to all the King's lieges." Sir Donald was still able to continue at large, and in spite of the great efforts made to capture him he was able to escape from his pursuers, and ultimately, by the aid of some of his old friends, still powerful, to revenge the death of his father, Sir Alexander Macdonald of Lochalsh, upon his hereditary enemy, Macian of Ardnamurchan. It will be remembered how vigorously and unhesitatingly John Macian supported the Government of James IV., and that among his other exploits was the apprehension of his own near relatives, Sir John Macdonald of Isla, and the assassination of Sir Alexander Macdonald of Lochalsh. For these services he was well rewarded by James IV., and the favours then extended to him were continued by the Regent after the King's death. He well knew that his unnatural conduct would never be forgotten or forgiven by the children or kinsmen of the murdered chiefs, and that certain vengeance was only delayed until a fitting opportunity occurred. Macian, knowing all this, was the first to join the Earl of Argyll against the Islanders after his return from the field of Flodden, and he uniformly continued steadfast in his opposition to Sir Donald and his party in the Isles. His lands suffered in consequence; and his life was eagerly sought for, not only by Sir Donald Gallda and his more immediate followers, but also by Alexander of Isla, who, although married to Macian's daughter, determined to revenge the death of his father and brothers upon his father-in-law. Soon after the submission of Maclean of Duart and Macleod of Dunvegan, Sir Donald Gallda, ably assisted by the Macleods of Lewis and Raasay, proceeded south to Ardnamurchan, where they met Alexander of Isla, and with their united forces they at once attacked Macian at a place called Creag-an-Airgid, or the Silver Craig, where he was defeated and slain, with his two sons, John Suaineartach and Angus, and a great number of their followers. This happened some time before the 18th of August 1519 [Reg. of Privy Seal v. folio 139].

The Sleat historian, Hugh Macdonald, after describing the death of Sir Alexander Macdonald by Macian at Isleornsay, gives the following interesting account of how Donald Gaulda came to be elected leader of the Islanders, and of their subsequent rebellious proceedings :—“ Now Donald Gauld, Alexander MacGillespig's son, was in a very low condition ; he had a dauvich of lands from his uncle Lovat. He gathered a great many necessaries, such as seed, &c., among the best men in Ross, for his being a great man's son. There was a common fellow in his company (named) Paul, who gathered together his thigging in Ross. This man asked Donald Gauld what he meant to do with all the trash he was gathering. Donald Gauld answered, That mean and low as that was, he could do no better, and as it was God's will to reduce him to that low and despondent state, he ought to be content. Then, says Paul, if you will be advised by me, you will sell all your seed and thigging, for you will never raise yourself to any notice or respect by continuing a farmer ; therefore it is your interest to make money of all you have gathered, and hire as many men therewith as you can, to apprehend, in the first place, the Laird of Raisay, being the weakest and least powerful of all the Island Lairds, and after succeeding in this, you can act according to circumstances. This advice being followed, they came to the Isles, apprehending Raisay, to whom they communicated their intentions. Raisay goes along with them to the Lewis, and remained that night within the castle of Macleod of the Lewis. After that, Raisay had a consultation with his chief, the Laird of Lewis. It happened that night that a great many whales ran ashore in the Bay of Stornoway. Macleod in the morning goes out to behold the diversion, and to kill them with broadswords. Donald Gauld and his company go out likewise. Raisay advised Donald Gauld, when Macleod began to strike at the whales to keep close at his heels to assist him ; to which advice Donald invariably adhered, Macleod having gone home, asked what that young man was who assisted him in killing the whales. Being informed he was Donald Gauld, Macleod said it was reasonable and proper that he should be assisted to some honour and preferment. After this Macleod of the Lewis and some others of the Islanders held a meeting at Kyleakin. Alexander of Kintyre came there for Donald Gruamach, son of Donald Gallich, to make him Lord of the Isles, and imparted his sentiments on the subject to Macleod. Macleod said he was willing that Donald Gruamach should be made Lord of the Isles, and that he was nearer related to him than Donald Gauld. Alexander of Kintyre had a double meaning in this offer. He well knew it did not belong to himself by right, and had a greater respect for Donald Gruamach, who had a greater right to that title, than for Donald Gauld, who, according to his opinion, was not so fit for the place, either by his actions or friendship ; besides, he did not wish to prefer Donald Gauld, he himself having a hand in his father's murder. Upon this, Macleod spoke to Donald Gruamach upon this subject, who answered, that it was a cause not very easily carried through ; that he doubted much the loyalty of the Islanders ; and that he would noways have a hand in that affair so long as Donald Du, Angus Ogg's son, was alive. Alexander of Kintyre undertook this journey to create Donald Gruamach Lord of the Isles, fearing that if Donald Gauld succeeded he would revenge his father's death, of which he was a partaker. This Alexander of Kintyre being married to John of Ardnamurchan's

daughter, was easily induced by his father-in-law to stand as heir, and to look for great honour and preferment, if Alexander MacGillespig was cut off. John of Ardnamurchan's purpose was to set them by the ears, in case he himself might get some of their lands to purchase. Donald Gruamach rejecting the offer made him of being created Lord of the Isles, the Macleods thought to make Donald Gauld Lord of them. With this intention, going to Morvern, where they met Maclean, Alexander of Kintyre being also in company, comporting with the times, because he formerly told his mind to these men, they proclaimed Donald Gauld Lord of the Isles. When Brayack of Ardnamurchan was desired to compear, Maclean sent him a private message not to come, to which he paid no attention, but appeared, and was paid the same deference as any of the rest. As he sat in the tent, his son, John Sunoirtich, expressed his surprise that all the gentry of the Isles were called to Macdonald's tent, and he not treated as the rest. His father observed it was his own fault, by having a hand in Donald's father's death. His son said, if his advice was followed, they would attack Macdonald's tent; but his father said they were too weak against Donald Gauld's party. In the meantime he ordered one of his men to look to the shore and see if his galley was afloat; upon this there came a black sheep into the tent, and the person sent to see the galley came back with a salmon fish wanting an eye, telling him his boat was not afloat. John Brayach asked what was the place's name in which they were? Being answered it was called Ballepaig, he said that three things had come to pass, of which the old woman who nursed him desired him to be aware, viz., the black sheep, the salmon with one eye, and Ballepaig, wherein she warned him never to remain a night; and now, said he, the last period of my life must certainly be at hand. At that very moment one rushed out of Donald Gauld's tent, crying out, kill, and do not spare the MacEans; which commands were instantly obeyed. MacEan fled for the space of a mile, but was overtaken by Mr Allan Morrison, and killed by the Laird of Raisay. His son John was killed, together with a young son called Angus; in short all of them that could be taken. This happened at a place called Craiganairgid. In the evening thereafter, Alexander of Kintyre, observing that the death of Donald's father was amply revenged, because it was John of Ardnamurchan that apprehended him; but Donald Gauld said that his father's death was not yet fully revenged while Alexander, who was equally guilty with John Brayach, was in life. Alexander, hearing this, slipt away privately in the night time and left them. Donald Gauld after this went to Tyree, and died in the Inch of Teinlipeil, five weeks after he was proclaimed Lord of the Isles. Alexander of Kintyre and his two sons, one of whom was called John Cathanach, were afterwards, by the King's orders, hanged at the Borrowmuir, near Edinburgh, because, after the resignation of John of the Isles, they neither would take their rights from the King, nor deliver up to him those lands which Macdonald had in Isla and Kintyre."*

For some time previously measures had been taken to have Sir Donald forfeited for high treason, and when the news of the slaughter of Macian of Ardnamurchan reached the Council, the Earl of Argyll strongly urged that a sentence of forfeiture should be pronounced against him as

* *Collectanea de Rebus Albanicis*, pp. 321-324.

soon as the usual forms would admit of. In this, however, he did not succeed, whereupon he made a protest before Parliament that neither he nor his heirs should in future be held responsible, as Lieutenant, for any mischief that might follow on the refusal of his advice regarding the territory which had been committed to his care. He at the same time complained that he did not receive certain supplies of men and money, previously promised to him by the Regent, for carrying on the King's service in the Isles. In the opinion of Gregory, "this last statement fully accounts for the length of time Sir Donald had been allowed to remain at large after the defection of so many of his adherents; and it is difficult to say how much longer this state of things might have continued had not his death, which took place some weeks after his success in Morvern, brought the rebellion, which had lasted with little intermission during upwards of five years, to a sudden close."*

In February 1517-18 the Earls of Huntly and Argyll were, both directed to proceed against "Donald Ivis, rebel and traitor, and his complices," and the Reg. of the Privy Seal shows that he was dead before 18th of August 1519. He was the last male of the family of Lochalsh, and he died without issue about 1518-19. Leaving Donald Dubh still in captivity we shall, in our next, go back about 20 years to pick up Hugh of Sleat, brother of John, last Lord of the Isles, and ancestor of the present Lord Macdonald of Sleat, and treat of his and his family's doings until Donald Dubh again bursts from his prison, and, in a second rebellion, though of very short duration, for a time completely disarranges all the schemes of the house of Sleat, and becomes the cause of another period of disorder and chaos in the Isles which almost equalled in intensity those which we have just described.

THE
CELTIC MAGAZINE.

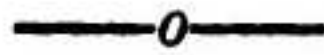
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VOL. V.

HISTORY OF THE MACDONALDS,
AND
THE LORDS OF THE ISLES.

BY THE EDITOR.



XI.

It will be remembered that Sir Donald Gallda, the last male representative of Celestine of Lochalsh, second son of Alexander, third Earl of Ross of the race of Macdonald, and immediate younger brother of John, fourth and last Earl, died about 1518-19. Also that Donald Dubh, the son of Angus Og of the Isles, and grandson of the last Earl, was still in captivity in the Castle of Edinburgh when we last parted with the reader. We must at present leave him there, and return to

HUGH, FIRST OF SLEAT, third son of Earl Alexander, and youngest brother of Earl John, and of Celestine of Lochalsh. Very little is known of Hugh's doings. In 1460, accompanied by William Macleod of Harris and "the young gentlemen of the Isles," he made a raid into Orkney and ravaged the country. Hugh's father, Earl Alexander, was taken prisoner to Edinburgh, and while there he dined with the Earl of Orkney, when "some sort of pudding was laid before them," apparently containing suet or other such fatty substance. The Sleat historian, Hugh Macdonald, and the author of the Macvurich MS., are the only writers who take any notice of this expedition, which, it will be seen, was of considerable importance, though it had its origin in a boasting frolic between the respective chiefs:—"Macdonald (Earl Alexander) pressed the Earl of Orkney to eat (the pudding), who said he would not eat *light*. Macdonald replied, that as he himself was not used to such light, he would eat of it. The Earl of Orkney asked what sort of light was wont to be burnt in his presence. Macdonald turning about, and seeing Lauchlane Maclean behind him, desired the Earl to inquire at that man standing. Maclean said there was no other light but wax burnt before Macdonald. Upon this subject they discoursed until such time as the Earl of Orkney invited Macdonald to breakfast with him next morning. Macdonald invited the Earl of Orkney rather to breakfast with him, who answered, that his breakfast would be sooner ready. Macdonald said, not so. Wagers being laid, and pledges given on both sides, in the night time the Earl of

Orkney sent twelve men through the town, desiring that none should dress or make meat ready for Macdonald that night, and likewise should supply him with no fuel for firing early in the morning. Maclean, getting up by times next day, could get no fuel, and remembered what happened the preceding night between the Earl of Orkney and his own master; whereupon he cut so many bows in their company, of which he made fire, and prepared a venison breakfast. Orkney being disappointed when called to breakfast with Macdonald, and much incensed, said to Macdonald, Do you think to equal or cope with me in power and authority? Macdonald said he had a young son at home, who would be his equal and match in full, and would undertake to harrass his country, if he himself would procure liberty from the King. The Earl of Orkney said, if Macdonald would undertake to fulfil his engagements, he would procure the King's leave. These promises being ratified, they went home. At this time Macdonald gave the Isle of Tyree to Maclean, and sent his son Austine (Hugh), with all the young heritors of lands, to harrass the Orkney inhabitants, who expected and waited for their arrival, and had encamped in a little promontory pointing out in the sea, thinking the Islanders would land there, and be defeated on their landing. But Austine took another course; for there was another point directly opposite to that in which the people of Orkney were encamped, separated by a long arm of the sea; here he landed his men. The Orcadians had to go round the head of this bay before they could come at their enemies. At first they came on furiously, but being as bravely resisted, they fell back in confusion, on which a great slaughter ensued, for the common people there are said to be no great warriors, whatever their gentry are. One of their best soldiers, called Gibbon, was killed. The Earl of Orkney himself was killed, single-hand, by one of William Macleod of Harris's men, called Murdo MacCotter, who was afterwards Maclean's ensign-bearer. Having routed the enemy, Austin and his party began to ravage the country, that being the only reward they had for their pains and fatigue; with which, having loaded their galleys, (they) returned home. Austine having halted at Caithness, he got a son by the Crouner of Caithness's daughter, of the name of Gun, which at that time was a very flourishing name there, descended of the Danes. This son was called Donald Gallich, being brought up in that county in his younger years; for the ancient Scots, until this day, call the county of Caithness Gallibh.*

Hugh Macdonald of Sleat, the first of this family, has a charter under the Great Seal, dated 10th November 1495, as follows:—"Hugoni Alexandri de Insulis, Domino de Slete, fratri Joannis de Yle, Comitis Rossiaë, et heredibus suis masculis inter ipsum Hugonem et Fynvolam, Alexandri Joannis de Ardnamurchan, legitime seu illegitime procreatis seu procreandis, ac ipsorum legitimis heredibus, quibus omnibus deficientibus heredibus suis masculis post mortem præfatæ Fynvolæ, inter ipsum Hugonem, et quam cunque aliam mulierem de concilio dicti Comitis, viz Donaldi de Insulis Domini Dunnowaig et de Glynnis, Celestini de Insulis de Lochalche, Lachlani Macgilleoni de Doward, et Alexandri Joannis de Ardnamurchan, quibus deficientibus tunc de concilio ipsorum heredum vel ipsius deficientis heredis, electam super cartam sibi factam per dictum

* Transactions of the Iona Club, pp. 306-307.

Joannem de Yle, Comitem Rossie et Dominum Insularum, de data 28 Junii 1449, testibus Donaldo de Insulis, Domino de Dunnowaig, et de Glynnis, Celestino de Insulis de Lochalche, fratre dicti Comitis, Lachlano Macgilleon, Domino de Doward, Joanne Macgilleon de Lochboyg, Lachlano juvente Macgilleon, Magistro de Doward, Willielmo Macloyd de Glannelg, Roderico Macleod de Leoghys, Alexandro Joannis de Ardnamurchan, Joanne Lachlani Macgilleon de Colla, et Thoma de Moro, secretario dicti Comitis ac rectore de Kilmanawik, terris triginta mercarum de Skerehowg, duodecim merc de Benbecila, denariatam de Gergremyniss ex parte boreale de Uist, duab. den. de Scolpic, quatuor den. de Gremynes, duab. den. de Talawmartin, sex den. de Oroinsaig, dim. den. de Wanylis, et dim. den. de insula Gillegerve, una cum terris viginti octo mercarum de Slete, jacen. in dominio Insularum, tenend. de dicto Joanne de Yle."*

It will be observed that by this charter the lands named therein were to go to the descendants of Hugh of Sleat and Finvola of Ardnamurchan, whether legitimate or illegitimate.

Having died in 1498, the same year as his father, John, last Earl of Ross and Lord of the Isles, Hugh of Sleat cannot properly be reckoned as one of the succeeding chiefs even of this line of the Macdonalds. He never did succeed to that honour. In addition to Sleat, which he occupied during the life of his father, we have seen by the charter of 1495, above quoted, that he also possessed lands in Uist and Benbecula, but during the rule of one of his successors, the whole of these lands are granted by Precept, dated 23d of August 1505, to the Chief of the Clanranald Allansons of Islandtirrim.†

We have already seen that the legitimacy of both Celestine of Lochalsh and Hugh of Sleat was called in question. At present we shall only refer the reader to the authorities quoted in No. 54, pp. 218-219—reserving full discussion of the whole question for the special chapter which, later on, shall be devoted to a consideration of the rights to the CHIEFSHIP, according to the *jus sanguinis*, or right of blood.

Hugh Macdonald, first of Sleat, married, first, Finvola, daughter of Alexander Macian (Macdonald) of Ardnamurchan, and by her had issue, one son—

1. John, who succeeded him as his heir.

He married, (?) secondly, a daughter of Gun, Crowner of Caithness, by whom he had a son—

2. Donald Gallach, who succeeded his brother John. He had also

3. Donald Herrach, by a daughter of Macleod of Harris, whether legitimate or not cannot be ascertained, but there is no record, that we can find, of any marriage which has taken place between Hugh of Sleat and a daughter of Macleod of Harris. From Donald Herrach descended the Macdonalds of Balranald and others in the Western Isles.

4. Archibald, or *Gillespic Dubh*, an illegitimate son, of whom hereafter.

Hugh of Sleat died in 1498, and was succeeded by his eldest son,

XI. JOHN MACDONALD, known as "John Huchonson," or Hugh's Son, second of Sleat, who is instructed by two charters, the one to Ranald MacAllan, of the Clanranald Allansons, of lands in Uist, and of some

* Wood's Douglas's Peerage, vol. ii., pp. 11-12; Reg. Great Seal, xiii., 150.

† Privy Seal, vol. iii., folio 15.

lands which belonged to John's father, Hugh of Sleat, held by Ranald of John, Lord of the Isles, "on the resignation of John Huchounson of Sleit, son and heir of the said deceased Hugh," dated 5th of August 1498, the same year in which John succeeded to these lands on the death of his father, Hugh of Sleat. The other charter is in favour of "Angus Rewathson Makranald, of the lands of Arrassaik, Keppath," &c., also on the resignation of John, Hugh's son.

This John Huchonson is found among those who made their submission to the King at the Castle of Mingarry in Ardnamurchan in 1495, during his father's life.

He died, without issue, in 1502, and was succeeded, as representative of the family, by his half brother,

XII. DONALD GALLACH MACDONALD, third of Sleat. The strict legitimacy of this chief has always been considered doubtful; and we can find no record of any formal marriage by his father to the daughter of Gun, Crowner of Caithness. Even the family historian, Hugh Macdonald, who on all occasions showed such an inclination to bastardise the descendants of all the other branches of the Macdonalds to glorify his own chief, does not assert that there was a formal marriage, and such was hardly possible in the circumstances which he describes. Indeed his MS., already quoted, is strong presumptive evidence the other way. The fact that his brother John made over all his possessions to the Clanranald Allansons past his own half-brother, has been held by some as an element which goes to strengthen the same assumption. In any case Donald appears to have had neither possessions nor influence, whatever may have been the reason. Gregory says on this point:—John, the eldest son of Hugh, having no issue himself, and having probably quarrelled with his brothers, made over all his estates to the Clanranald; as well as those estates which had been claimed and forcibly occupied by that clan as those which had remained in his own hands.* The rest of the Clanhuistein, on John's death, were thus left without legal rights to any landed property in the Isles; and being, moreover, viewed with jealousy by the Government, owing to their propinquity to the last Lord of the Isles, they were in a manner forced to become rebels. Donald Gallach, their leader, was, with another of the brothers, murdered by their own bastard brother, Archibald, or Gillespick Dubh, an unprincipled and ambitious man, whose atrocities seem to have been winked at by the Government, on the ground, probably, that his brothers were proclaimed rebels, whom it was desirable to exterminate. This happened about the year 1506; and Archibald, the fratricide, having endeavoured to seize the lands of Sleat, was expelled from the North Isles by Ranald Allanson, the heir of Moydart, to whom Sleat had been made over by John Huchonson, the last legal possessor. Taking refuge in the South Isles, where he joined himself to a band of pirates, Archibald, after a time, procured his own pardon, by delivering up to justice some of his lawless associates.† He then returned to Skye, and, being a man of ability, seized the command of his tribe, and exercised the office of Bailie of the extensive district of Trouterness; his right to which, however acquired, was recognised by Government in 1510."‡

* Reg. of Great Seal, xiii., 336-7; xiv., 141. John Huchonson had no brothers-german.

† Hugh Macdonald's MS.; Reg. of Privy Seal, iii., fo. 161. The pardon was granted at the intercession of Argyll.

‡ Highlands and Isles, pp. 107-8; Reg. Great Seal, iv., fol. 70; Hugh Macdonald's MS.

Gillespic Dubh appears, from all accounts, to have been remarkably violent and unscrupulous, even for the lawless age in which he lived. According to a copy of a MS., supplied to us through the courtesy of Mr Macdonald, Balranald, the lands of North Uist appears to have been at the time in possession of his ancestor, Donald Herrach, who then resided on the farm of Griminish. Donald Herrach's natural brother, Gillespic Dubh, who is described as of "a designing and ambitious disposition," was most anxious to obtain possession of the estate of North Uist, and "contrived under some specious pretence to inveigle him (Donald Herrach) to the neighbouring Dun of Loch Scolpeg, where he had made arrangements for his destruction. He (Gillespic) and his associates being afraid of the personal strength of Donald Herrach, which, it is said, was uncommon even in those times, as 'his single blow left seldom work for two,' were consequently obliged to revert to stratagem and duplicity, even after they had their victim in their power. They proposed, after partaking of some refreshments, that they should pass some of their time in some gymnastic feats (at which Donald was very expert), such as who should leap highest, they having previously contrived that one of the associates, named Paul, should place a thong, with a noose, through, or over, the wooden partition of the apartment in which they were assembled, and remain concealed on the opposite side, ready, when Donald would try the leap, to get the noose over his neck and strangle, or hold him, while Gillespic Dubh and the rest of his associates could, with more safety to themselves, finish him. This they did by running a red-hot spit through his body.

"Gillespig got the lands for the time, as also possession of his (Donald Herrach's) eldest son. Ranald, the other son, Angus Fionn, escaped to his friends in Skye.

"Some time afterwards, Gillespig visiting his eldest brother, Donald Gallach, in Skye, they went where a boat or galley had been built for him, and wishing to have Gillespig's opinion of her, he observed that he thought that there was something deficient under her bow. Donald stooping down to see it, Gillespic Dubh drew his dirk and stabbed him to the heart.

"He had now got possession, not only of the two estates, but also of the heirs of his brothers, whom he had murdered.

"Gillespig afterwards resided in Uist, and what is most singular is, that he should preserve the lives of his nephews, the rightful heirs to the property, and that he should educate them with care; but it is presumed that he was satisfied with acting as guardian, or, as it was then called, Tutor to the young men, and I do not believe he had any family of his own.

"These two young men, Donald Gruamach, son of Donald Gallach, and Ranald, son of Donald Herrach, grew up to manhood under the subjection of their unnatural uncle, but determining to take the first opportunity of ridding themselves of his thralldom and injustice, they resolved to quarrel with him at an early opportunity, which offering as they were in quest of deer, by Donald Gruamach's letting slip his own dogs at the first deer they saw, at which Gillespig took offence, and challenged him for so doing. Donald retorting, said that he had a better right to the deer than he had, and at the same time striking his uncle.

"Gillespig, calling Ranald, desired him to give him his sword as the fellow had hurt him. Donald said, 'Give it to him, Ranald, as he deserves, and remember your father's death and my father's,' upon which Ranald drew the sword he carried for his uncle, and slew him with it on the spot.

This took place on a small rising ground in the glen between North and South Lee in Uist (called Crock Gillespig Dhui at Beallach-a-Skail), and Archibald is known to this day by the name of Gillespig duh Bheallach-a-Skail.

“A servant who attended them at the time observed to Ranald, that he should strike a second blow, and that all would be clear before him, thereby intimating that by killing his cousin, Donald Gruamach, he would have the property. Ranald replied that he wished he had not done what he did. Upon the man's finding that his advice was not followed, he left them and fled to Harris, where his descendants are at this day, known by the name of Stalkers, or Macdonalds of the second blow.

“Paul, who assisted with the thong at the murder of Donald Herrach, obtained lands at Balmore, in North Uist, from Gillespig Duh, but he occasionally resided for his better security at Dun Steingarry on Loch Paible, he being in terror of his life, after the death of his patron Gillespig Duh, from Donald Herrach's sons, Ranald and Angus Fionn, the latter of whom came expressly from Skye for the purpose of revenging his father's death. He wounded Paul as he was endeavouring to gain the sanctuary of Kilmuir, and an end was put to his life by a blind man that followed Angus Fionn on hearing of the pursuit, but in a manner too savage to be mentioned. There are some of Paul's descendants at present in Benbicula.

“Of this Angus Fionn were descended the Macdonalds of Trumisgarry. He generally resided at Dun Angus, at Orinsay.

“Ranald Mac Dhoil Herrach went afterwards to Ireland, where he distinguished himself in the wars carried on in the northern provinces of that country by the Antrim family, at that time very powerful. Being severely wounded, he returned to his native country accompanied by a medical attendant of the house of Maclean, whose posterity were settled afterwards at Cuidrach, in Skye, and of whom is descended Sir Lachlan Maclean of Sudbury.

“Ranald lived afterwards at Grinish, and frequently visited his cousin and chieftain, Donald Gruamach, who resided on his estate in Skye.

“On one occasion he found, on his going to Dunskaich in Sleat, that a party of the tribe of Clanranald were there, revelling without control, they presuming on the protection of their kinswoman, a daughter of Clanranald, the wife of their host, Donald Gruamach (who was himself of an indolent, passive disposition). Ranald, despising the pusillanimity of his relation, seized on twelve of them early one morning, and hung them up to the walls of the castle in front of the lady's window, and going immediately to his friend told him that he was just setting off for Uist. He was requested to remain and partake of some breakfast previous to his departure. Ranald replied that he was afraid when the lady would look out of her window, the sight she would see would not incline her to thank him for his morning's work, and he immediately departed.

“It is supposed that she afterwards instigated Black Fionn Mackinnon to murder Ranald, which took place some time thereafter at a spot marked by a Cairn on Druimard in Balmore, as he was on his way to pass the New Year with Donald Gruamach at Kirkbost, who had sent Fionn to Grinish for Ranald on New Year's day, and on coming to Druimard, Mackinnon produced Donald Gruamach's dirk (which he had stolen for the purpose) as a token that it was Donald Gruamach's orders that Ranald should be killed by the people, which was done accordingly.”

The atrocious murder of Donald Herrach in the manner above described, is corroborated in the New Statistical Account of the Parish of North Uist,* where it is related, in addition to the above, that " Paul, at the moment Donald's head was within the loop, drew the thong with savage determination, and strangled him. From this circumstance he was called *Paul na h-Eille*, or Paul of the Thong. His life was short. Revenge, which, in barbarous ages, takes a summary mode of inflicting punishment, soon overtook him. In a few weeks thereafter, while Paul was building a stack of corn, from the top of it he observed, at some distance, a person of large stature rapidly moving towards the place. He hastily asked those around him from what airt the wind had blown the day before? On being informed it was from the east, and a leading wind from Skye, he exclaimed, the person at a distance must be Angus, commonly called *Aonas Fionn*, or *Fair*, son of Donald Herrach, who possessed some part of Troternish in Skye, and that it was time for him to look to his own safety. At full speed he fled to the Church sanctuary at Kilmuir, a distance of about three miles. Angus saw him at a distance, and, following him with still greater speed, just as he was crossing a small rivulet that bounded the sanctuary on the south side, bent his unerring bow, and the arrow pierced Paul in the heel. He fell; his legs in the water and the rest of his body on the land within the sanctuary, which to this day is called *Shead Phoil*, or Paul's Field. This field forms part of the glebe of the parish. It is immediately adjoining the church, and the scene is pointed out about 100 yards from it. A blind man, a *Chomhalt* (foster-brother) of Donald Herrach, is said to have taken a brutal and indescribable revenge on Paul, which put an end to his lingering life. The memory of *Paul na h-Eille* is still held in universal detestation, while the descendants of Donald Herrach have since his time possessed and still possess large farms in North Uist. Loch Scolpeg, in which is, or rather was the dun, where Donald Herrach was so barbarously sacrificed to the evil passion of avarice, was some years ago drained by a gentleman living in its immediate neighbourhood; and on the site of the dun he has erected a small octagonal building." This erection the present writer saw still standing while on a recent visit to North Uist.

It will be remembered that it was during the rule of the two last mentioned chiefs of Sleat, John Hughson and Donald Gallach, from 1501 to 1506, that the Island rebellion under Donald Dubh took place, and both of them, with all the other vassals of the Lordship of the Isles, acknowledged his claim, and supported him in his attempts to regain the Lordship and its ancient possessions. In 1506, the same year in which Donald was captured and imprisoned in Edinburgh Castle, Donald Gallach, as we have also seen, was murdered by his bastard brother, Gillespic Dubh, and during the whole of this period there is no evidence whatever that they ever claimed any right to lead the vassals of the Lordship of the Isles. On the contrary they followed Donald Dubh, while at the same time their lands were in possession of the Clanranald Allansons.

Donald Gallach married Miss Macdonald, daughter of John (Cathanach) Macdonald of Isla and the Glynnns in Ireland, ancestor of the Earls of Antrim, and by her had one son who succeeded him as representative of the family.

(To be continued.)

* Written by the Rev. Finlay Macrae, minister of the Parish. Footnote, pp. 170-171.

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HISTORY OF THE MACDONALDS,
AND
THE LORDS OF THE ISLES.

BY THE EDITOR.

—o—
XII.

XIII. DONALD MACDONALD, fourth of Sleat, was known among the Highlanders as "Domhnall Gruamach Mac Dhomh'uill Ghallaich." During the life of this chief the usual internal feuds and rapine appear to have continued rampant throughout the Isles, though they did not extend to the rest of the kingdom, but his position appears all through to have been of a subordinate character among the Island chiefs, and little is known of his early history. The dispute which had long existed between the family of Sleat and Ranald MacAllan, chief and heir of the Clanranald Allansons, about the Sleat possessions in Skye and North Uist seems to have been decided in favour of the latter in 1505, the last year of the rule of his predecessor.* In 1528 King James V., then in his seventeenth year, extricated himself from the thraldom in which he had so long been held by the Earl of Angus and by the Douglasses; whereupon the policy of the government underwent a considerable change, especially towards the Isles.

One of the first Acts passed by the Privy Council, and dated 12th November 1528, bears that certain persons in the Lordship of the Isles during the supremacy of the Douglasses obtained new titles to land there which might "turn to the great skaith of his majesty, both in respect to his own proper lands and his casualties, without the same be wisely considered and forseen to be for the good of his Grace and realm." These grants were made by the Earl of Angus, no doubt with the view of securing adherents in the Isles; but on the assumption of power by the King, they were declared null and void, while it was, at the same time, provided that, in future, no lands should be bestowed in the West Highlands and Isles without the advice of the Privy Council and of the Earl of Argyll, the King's Lieutenant in the Isles, "because it is understood, by the

* Gregory, p. 102; Reg. Great Seal, xiv., 141; Reg. Crown Rentals, A.D. 1505.

King, that the said lands, or the most part thereof, are his own proper lands, or in his hands, through forfeiture, escheit or non-entries."*

In the same year, 1528, serious disturbances again broke out in the North and South Isles. Those in the North originated in a feud between the Macdonalds and the Macleods of Harris and Dunvegan regarding the lands and office of Bailliary in the wide district of Troternish in the Isle of Skye:—To understand this feud properly, says Gregory, it will be necessary to trace, with some care, the history of the district in question. By a charter under the Great Seal, in August 1498, the office of Bailliary, with two *unciates* of the lands of Trouterness, was confirmed to Alexander Macleod of Dunvegan as having been formerly held by him under the Lord of the Isles, and as being then in the hands of the Crown, by the last forfeiture of that nobleman.† Two months later, another charter passed the Great Seal, granting the same office, and eight merks of the lands, to Torquil Macleod of the Lewis, on precisely similar grounds.‡ Both of these charters seemed to have been rendered null by the general revocation in 1498, or 1499, already alluded to. In 1505 the eighty merk lands of Trouterness were let, by the Commissioners of the Crown, for three years, to Ranald Bane Allanson of Moydert; the Earl of Huntly being surety for the payment of the rent by the latter.§ In 1510, Archibald Dubh, the bloodstained captain of the Clanhuistein, was acting as Bailie of Trouterness, and a letter was directed under the Privy Seal to the tenants of Trouterness in his favour.|| Ranald Bane of Moydert was executed at Perth in 1513: and Archibald Dubh soon afterwards met with the fate he deserved, being killed by his nephews, the sons of his murdered brothers.¶ Macleod of Dunvegan, who seems to have been principal crown tenant of Trouterness some time before 1517, had his lease continued from that year until the majority of James V. Under the government of the Earl of Angus, Dunvegan appears to have obtained also an heritable grant of the lands of Sleat and North Uist; and thus became additionally exposed to the hostility of the Clanhuistein of Sleat, who were now under the command of Donald Gruamach.** The latter chief sought the assistance of his uterine brother, John MacTorquil Macleod (son of Torquil Macleod of the Lews, forfeited in 1506, and nephew of Malcolm, the present Lord of Lewis), a man like himself, without legal inheritance of any kind, in order to expel Dunvegan and his clan from Trouterness. In this they were successful, as well as in preventing him putting in force his new charter to Sleat and North Uist. Trouterness was again occupied by the Clanhuistein; and John MacTorquil, taking

* Transactions of the Iona Club, p. 155.

† Reg. of Great Seal, xiii., 305.

‡ Ibid, xiii., 377.

§ Reg. of Crown Rentals, ad tempus.

|| Reg. of Privy Seal, iv., fo. 70. In the same year, at the Justiceaire held at Inverness, precept of remission, dated 4th July, is issued to Gillespie Dhu, Baillie of Troternish, and others, John MacGille Martin, and 63 others, for common oppression of the lieges, and for resetting, supplying, and intercommuning with the King's rebels, and also for fire-raising.—*Invernessiana*, p. 193.

¶ Hugh Macdonald's MS.

** Donald Gruamach (or grim-looking) was son of Donald Gallach, and grandson of Hugh, Lord of Sleat. His mother was first married to Torquil Macleod of the Lewis, as his second wife (?) Hugh Macdonald's MS.; Dean Munro's Genealogies.

advantage of the opportunity afforded by the death of his uncle, and the minority of the son of the latter, and aided by Donald Gruamach and his followers, seized the whole barony of Lewis, which, with the command of the Siol Torquìl, he held during his life.*

The Clandonald of Islay were among those rewarded by the Earl of Angus with grants of some of the lands which had reverted to the Crown after the forfeiture of the Lordship of the Isles. The same policy had been adopted towards Hector Mor, chief of the Macleans of Duart. These grants were now, however, declared null and void; the Earl of Argyll being foremost in pressing the Council to this act of bad faith, no doubt, anticipating that the result might almost to a certainty lead to the lands being ultimately conferred upon himself. The Macleans panted for an opportunity to avenge the death of their late chief, Lachlan Cattanach, on the Campbells of Argyll, and the combined followers of Macdonald of Isla and Maclean of Duart made a descent upon Roseneath, Craignish, and other lands belonging to the Campbells, ravaging them with fire and sword, and putting many of the inhabitants mercilessly to death. The Campbells retaliated by laying waste a great part of Mull and Tiree, as well as the lands of Morvern on the mainland. The insurrection had proceeded to such a height that Sir John Campbell of Calder, "on behalf of his brother, the Earl of Argyll, demanded from the Council powers of an extraordinary nature to enable him to restore the peace of the country," in which was included among other demands one to the effect that all the able-bodied householders in the shires of Dumbarton and Renfrew, and in the Bailliaries of Carrick, Kyle, and Cunningham, should meet the Earl at Lochranza, in Arran, with provision for twenty days, to aid him in the subjection of the Islanders. This request was refused by the Council, on the plea that, being harvest time, such would be most injurious to those districts, "but they gave directions for a cannon, with two falconets, and three barrels of gun-powder, under the charge of two gunners, and as many carpenters, to be forwarded to Dumbarton for the use of the Earl, in case he should find it necessary to besiege any of the 'strengths' of the Isles. At the same time they determined upon sending a herald of 'wisdom and discretion' to Alexander of Isla, with directions, in the first instance, to summon him and his followers to lay down their arms, under pain of treason; and, if he found them disposed to be obedient, the herald was then authorised to treat with that chief about his coming under protection, to wait upon the King and state his grievances in person, being prepared to give hostages (Lowlanders) for his obedience, and for his payment of the rents and duties of such lands as might be assigned to him by his sovereign." The herald was a pursuivant named Robert Hart, who, in the course of about a month, reported to the Council that Alexander Macdonald of Isla proved contumacious, when directions were at once given to Argyll to proceed against the rebels of the Isles and reduce them to obedience. During the first six months little or no success was secured, but in the spring of 1538 preparations were made on a more extensive scale to compel the obedience of the rebel chiefs. The "tenants" of the Isles were summoned to the King's presence upon the 24th of May "to

* Acts of the Lords of Council xxxix., fo. 159; xli., fo. 79. Acts of Parliament li. 333. Sir R. Gordon's History of the family of Sutherland, p. 263.

commune with his Majesty for the good rule of the Isles," and they were at the same time prohibited from giving any assistance to the rebels, and from "convocating the King's lieges in arms" under pain of treason. A large force from the southern counties were to join Argyll, the King's Lieutenant, under high penalties, and to continue their service under him "for a month;" while the burghs of Ayr, Irvine, Glasgow, Renfrew, and Dumbarton were to send their boats with provisions for the army, for which, however, they were to receive payment. Any of the Islesmen afraid to trust themselves in the low country on their way to the King were offered protection while on their way to Court, and for thirty days additional to enable them to return home in safety.

These proceedings had the desired effect on some of the leading Island chiefs, nine of whom sent in offers of submission to the King through one of their number, Hector Maclean of Duart. Among them we find Donald Gruamach Macdonald of Sleat. Their names are as follows, in the order given, viz. :—"Hector Maclean of Doward, John Maclean of Lochbuy, John Moydertach, captain of the Clanranald; Alexander Macian of Ardnamurchan, Alexander Macleod of the Harris (Dunvegan), the Laird of Coll (Maclean), John Macleod of the Lewis, and Donald Gruamach of Dunskaich (a castle in Sleat). These were all promised protection against Argyll, and any others, on condition that they should meet the King at Edinburgh, or anywhere else where he might be holding his Court before the 20th of June following, and remain there so long as he should require them to do so. The protection was to continue for twenty-one days, after their departure from Court, to enable them to reach their homes in safety. The King at the same time agreed to procure from Argyll ample hostages to secure their absolute safety going and returning. These were to be Duncan Campbell of Glenurchy, Archibald Campbell of Auchinbreck, Archibald Campbell of Skipnish, and Duncan Campbell of Ilangerig, all of whom were to be confined in the Castle of Edinburgh. Owing to the death of the Earl of Argyll in this year nothing, however, was done, but in the following year it was resolved finally that the King should proceed in person against the Islanders on the first of June. The whole southern array of Scotland were to meet him, with forty days provisions, at Ayr, on that day, to accompany him to the Isles, while the whole array of the northern counties were ordered to meet James, Earl of Murray, the King's natural brother and Lieutenant of the North, at Kintail, or anywhere else he might appoint, to proceed against the Islanders under his directions. And, finally, a parliament was summoned to meet at Edinburgh on the 24th of April to pass sentence of forfeiture against any Islesmen who should still continue disobedient.

Seeing the magnitude of the preparations made for the Royal expedition, Macdonald of Isla and Maclean of Duart, having first received a protection and safeguard, went to the King at Stirling, and made their submission on certain conditions which were considered satisfactory and agreed to. These chiefs being the leaders of the insurrection, it was now considered unnecessary for the king to lead the expedition to the Isles in person, and the command was handed over to the Earls of Murray and Argyll. Macdonald of Isla promised to enforce the collection of the Royal rents upon the Crown lands of the Isles; to support the dignity and respect the revenues of the church; and to maintain the authority of the laws,

and the inviolability of private property. Under these conditions he and his vassals were reinstated in the lands which they had forfeited by their recent rebellions.* Macdonald's revelations at Court "were such that Argyll was deprived of his Lieutenancy, and even for a time imprisoned, and the Crown took the government of the Isles and West Highlands into its own hands, an arrangement which made it necessary to take John of Isla and other chiefs into confidential communication with the Government. The lieutenancy which had been held by the house of Argyll was not transferred to another. Certain engagements were taken by John of Isla and others which seemed to render such a high officer unnecessary. On the vital question of the money interests of the Crown in these districts, the Council were satisfied with obligations by the chiefs to collect and forward the feudal duties of the Crown and the ecclesiastical taxes."†

This portion of the history of the Macdonalds belongs to, and ought perhaps to be given under the heading of the family of Isla itself, and at greater length, but we think this reference to it is necessary here as Macdonald of Isla appears at this time to have been leader of all the Macdonalds; but Donald Gruamach of Sleat, though not taking the leading seems all through to have taken a prominent share in the warlike proceedings of the Islanders during this period.

Like most other chiefs of his time Donald Gruamach could handle the sword better than the pen. A bond of offence and defence between Sir John Campbell of Cawdor, Hector Mackintosh, captain of the Clan Chattan; Hector Munro of Fowlis, Hugh Rose of Kilravock, and "Donald Iles of Slate," entered into at Inverness, on the 30th of April 1527, is given *in extenso* by Mr Charles Fraser-Mackintosh, F.S.A. Scot., in his *Invernessiana*, p. 203, whereon the last signature is "Donald Iles of Slate, with my hand at the pen," guided by Sir William Munro, notary public. "It is after and from him," continues Mr Fraser-Mackintosh, "that the family of Sleat, now represented by Lord Macdonald, had the patronymic in Gaelic of 'Macdhomhnuill nan Eilean,' or Macdonald of the Isles, to distinguish this family from other branches. It has been alleged that neither this Donald, nor his co-temporary and namesake, Ian Muideartach, were of legitimate descent."

Donald Gruamach married Margaret, daughter of Macdonald of Moydart, by whom he had issue—

1. Donald, his heir and successor.
2. James, from whom descended the Macdonalds of Kingsburgh, and of whom hereafter.

He died in 1534, and was succeeded by his eldest son,

XIV. DONALD GORME MACDONALD, fifth of Sleat, who soon after claimed for his family, and in his own person, the ancient honours of his ancestors, the Lordship of the Isles, and the Earldom of Ross; for we find him writing a letter, in Latin, dated 5th August 1535, to King Henry VIII., in which he styles himself "Donaldus Rossie Comes et Insularem Scotie Dominus." On this point Gregory says that "many of the Islanders still regarded Donald Dubh, for whose sake their fathers had risen in rebellion in 1503, as the proper heir; but the lengthened

* Tytler's Scotland.

† John Hill Burton's History of Scotland, vol. iii., p. 149, 1876 edition.

captivity of this hapless chief, joined to the doubts of his legitimacy, which were countenanced by the Government, contributed to bring forward another claimant. This was Donald Gorme of Sleat, the son and successor of Donald Gruamach. The talents of the father had done much to raise the Clandonald, or Clanhuistein, of Sleat from the depressed state into which they had fallen, owing to confiscations and internal dissensions ; and the power of the son was much increased by his marriage with the heiress of John MacTorquil Macleod. That chief, the representative of an elder branch, though forfeited branch of the family of Lewis, had, as we have seen, obtained possession of the estates and leading of his tribe ; and, although he did not hold these by any legal title, the claims of his daughter, after his death, were far from contemptible, especially when supported by the influence of Clandonald. A compromise seems to have been entered into between Donald Gorme and Ruari Macleod, the legal heir of the Lewis. Ruari Macleod was allowed to enter into possession of the estate of Lewis, as formerly held by Malcolm Macleod, his father, and the last lawful possessor. In return for such an important concession on the part of the Chief of Sleat, the other became bound to assist in putting Donald Gorme in possession of Trouterness, against all the efforts of the Chief of Dunvegan and his tribe, the Siol Tormod, who had again contrived to seize that district. It is probable too, that Macleod agreed to co-operate with him in his endeavours to obtain the Earldom of Ross and Lordship of the Isles, to which, indeed, on the supposition of the illegitimacy of Donald Dubh, and setting aside the forfeiture, Donald Gorme was heir male. This was the foundation of a conspiracy which soon embraced a majority of the Island chiefs, and was only extinguished by the death of Donald Gorme, and the active measures adopted by the King. It is probable that Argyll's loss of influence may have led the Islanders to expect that their object was to be obtained by the favour of the Crown ; but, if so, they were disappointed, and their disappointment caused them to attempt seizing, by force, what they could not compass by other means.

“In the month of May this year (1539) Trouterness was invaded and laid waste by Donald Gorme, and his allies of the Siol Torquil, as we find from a complaint made against them by Alexander Macleod of Dunvegan.* From Skye, taking advantage of the absence of Mackenzie of Kintail, who was opposed to his pretensions, Donald Gorme passed over into Ross-shire, where, after ravaging the district of Kenlochewe, he proceeded to Kintail with the intention of surprising Mackenzie's castle of Elandonain. This fortress was, at the time, almost destitute of a garrison, and, had the insurgents succeeded in their attempt, a formidable rebellion in the Isles would have been the consequence. But their leader, trusting to the weakness of the garrison, and exposing himself rashly under the walls of the castle, received a wound in the foot from an arrow shot by the Constable of the castle which proved fatal ; for, not observing that the arrow was barbed, the enraged chief pulled it hastily out of the wound, by which an artery was severed ; and the medical skill of his followers could devise no means of checking the effusion of blood which necessarily followed. They conveyed him to an islet out of reach of the castle, where a temporary hut was constructed, in which this ill-fated representative of the Lords of

* Books of Adjournal, 16th December 1539.

the Isles closed his short career. The spot where he died is still pointed out, and receives from the natives the name of 'Larach tigh Mhic Dhonuill;' or, 'The site of Macdonald's house.' Discouraged by this event, the insurgents returned to Skye, after burning all the boats belonging to the Kintail men they could find."*

A more complete version of the attack upon Eileandonain Castle and of its gallant defence will be found in vol. iii., pp. 247-248 of the *Celtic Magazine*, as also at pages 106-108 of the "History and Genealogies of the Mackenzies," by the same author; and being thus already known to the reader it may here be passed over. It appears, however, from the Letterfearn MS. that this was not the first visit during Donald Gorme's rule paid by the Macdonald's to the Mackenzie country. According to the author of that MS., "a party of the Macdonalds, by command of Donald Gorme of Slate, broke in upon Kintail, took away herships, and killed many of the inhabitants. Sir Dugal Mackenzie, priest of Kintail, who lived in Achguirean in Glenshiel, was killed, leaving his widow, nien Dunchy Chaim, a Glenmoriston woman, and two sons, and one daughter called Isabell. This relict was married afterwards to John Dow MacMahon, a rich man who was made Governor of Islandonain after Gilchrist MacFhionlay's death. To revenge this on the Macdonalds, Mackenzie (of Kintail) sent his son Kenneth, who was married to Athole's daughter, with a strong party to the Isles, who harried Slate, and burnt and slew some persons there; but to requite this Macdonald broke in again upon some other of Mackenzie's (lands) more northward, came to Kenlochew, carried away a great deal of spoil, and killed Mulmoire MacFhionlay, brother to Gilchrist MacFhionlay, Governor of Islandonain, the relicts of whose monument are to be seen yet at Kenlochew in the place where he was killed, for which cause Kenneth, young Mackenzie, went the second time to Slate and burned and harried much of that country," and, it was only then, according to this authority, that Donald Gorme sailed to Kintail and attacked the Mackenzie stronghold in the manner, and with the result, already described. In consequence of his rebellious conduct his estates were, in 1540, forfeited to the Crown.

According to Douglas, Donald Gorme married Margaret, daughter of Roderick Macleod of the Lewis, while Gregory, a much more reliable authority, says that he married "the heiress of John MacTorquil Macleod, the representative of an elder, though forfeited, branch of the family of Lewis," who "had obtained possession of the estates and leading of his tribe" for a time, and who was a nephew of Malcolm Macleod, Lord of Lewis, at the period of which we now write. By this marriage he left a son,

XV. DONALD GORMESON MACDONALD, sixth of Sleat, who, at the time of his father's death, in 1539, was a minor of tender years. In the following year, 1540, the King determined upon an imposing voyage with the Royal fleet to the Western Isles, the preparations for and the progress of which is thus described by Tytler:—"He now meditated an important enterprise, and only awaited the confinement of the Queen to carry it into effect. The remoter portions of his kingdom, the northern counties, and the Western and Orkney Islands, had, as we have already seen, been

* Highlands and Isles, pp. 143-146.

grievously neglected during his minority ; they had been torn by the contentions of hostile clans ; and their condition, owing to the incursions of the petty chiefs and pirate adventurers who infested these seas, was deplorable. This the monarch now resolved to redress, by a voyage conducted in person, and fitted out upon a scale which had not before been attempted by any of his predecessors. A fleet of twelve ships was assembled, amply furnished with artillery, provided for a lengthened voyage, and commanded by the most skilful mariners in his dominions. Of these, six ships were appropriated to the King, three were victuallers, and the remaining three carried separately the Cardinal (Beaton), the Earl of Huntly, and the Earl of Arran. Beaton conducted a force of five hundred men from Fife and Angus ; Huntly and Arran brought with them a thousand, and this little army was strengthened by the royal suite, and many barons and gentlemen who swelled the train of their prince, or followed on this distant enterprise the banner of their chiefs. It was one laudable object of the King in his voyage, to complete an accurate nautical survey of the northern coasts and isles, for which purpose he carried with him Alexander Lindsay, a skilful pilot and hydrographer, whose charts and observations remain to the present day. But his principal design was to overawe the rebellious chiefs, to enforce obedience to the laws, and to reduce within the limits of order and good government a portion of his dominions, which for the last thirty years, had repeatedly refused to acknowledge their dependence upon the Scottish crown.

“ On the 22d of May, to the great joy of the monarch and his people, the queen presented them with a prince, and James, whose preparations were complete, hoisted the royal flag on board the admiral's ship, and, favoured with a serene heaven and a favourable breeze, conducted his fleet along the populous coasts of Fife, Angus, and Buchan, till he doubled the promontory of Kennedar. He next visited the wild shores of Caithness, and crossing the Pentland Firth was gratified on reaching the Orkneys by finding these islands in a state of greater improvement and civilisation than he had ventured to expect. Doubling Cape Wrath, the royal squadron steered for the Lewis, Harris, and the isles of North and South Uist ; they next crossed over to Skye, made a descent upon Glenelg, Moidart, and Ardnamurchan, circumnavigated Mull, visited Coll and Tiree, swept along the romantic coast of Argyle, and passing the promontory of Cantire, delayed a while on the shores of Arran, and cast anchor beside the richer and more verdant fields of Bute. Throughout the whole progress the voyage did not exhibit exclusively the stern aspect of a military expedition, but mingled the delights of the chase, of which James was passionately fond, with the graver cares and labours of the monarch and the legislator. The rude natives of these savage and distant regions flocked to the shore, to gaze on the unusual apparition, as the fleet swept past their promontories ; and the mountain and island lords crowded round the royal pavilion, which was pitched upon the beach, to deprecate resentment and proffer their allegiance. The force which was aboard appears to have been amply sufficient to secure a prompt submission upon the part of those fierce chieftains who had hitherto bid defiance to all regular government ; and James, who dreaded lest the departure of the fleet should be a signal for a return of their former courses, insisted that many of them should accompany him to the capital and remain

there as hostages for the peaceable deportment of their followers. Some of the most refractory were even thrown into irons and confined on board the ships, whilst others were treated with a kindness which soon substituted the ties of affectionate allegiance for those of compulsion and terror. On reaching Dumbarton, the King considered his labours at an end, and giving orders for the fleet to proceed by their former course to Leith, travelled to court, only to become exposed to the renewed enmity of his nobles."

Gregory is more particular in some of the details of this royal expedition, and informs us that Donald Mackay of Strathnaver was seized "without much difficulty." From Sutherland "the fleet proceeded to the Isle of Lewis, where Ruari Macleod, with his principal kinsmen, met the King, and were made to accompany him in his further progress. The west coast of the Isle of Skye was next visited; and Alexander Macleod of Dunvegan, lord of that part of the island, was constrained to embark in the royal fleet. Coasting round by the north of Skye, the King came to the district of Trouterness, so lately desolated by the Chief of Sleat. Here various chieftains, claiming their descent from the ancient Lords of the Isles, came to meet their Sovereign—particularly John Moydertach, captain of the Clanranald, Alexander of Glengarry, and other of 'Ma Coneyllis kyn.' These chieftains hoped to secure the royal favour by coming to meet the King before the course of his voyage led him to their own districts. From Trouterness James proceeded, by the coast of Ross, to Kintail, where he was joined by the Chief of the Mackenzies; and then sailing southwards by the Sound of Sleat, he visited, in succession, the Isles of Mull and Isla, and the districts of Kintyre and Knapdale, taking with him, on his departure, Hector Maclean of Dowart, and James Macdonald of Isla, the two principal leaders in the south Isles.

. . . It is not the least remarkable circumstance connected with this important expedition, that the Earl of Argyle had no prominent command, if, indeed, he was employed at all, which is very doubtful."

Some of these Island lords were soon after set at liberty on giving hostages for their peaceful behaviour, while the more turbulent of them were kept in confinement until some time after the King's death in 1542. The Lordship of the Isles, with North and South Kintyre, were, as part of the King's policy towards the Islanders, in 1540, inalienably annexed to the Crown. The long cherished hopes of the western chiefs to establish the Lordship in its ancient glory were thus for the time blasted, and a long peace in those remote regions was expected to succeed the successful voyage of the King; but these expectations were soon disappointed, for, two years after, James V. died in the flower of his age, when he was succeeded by his infant daughter, the unfortunate Mary, during whose reign Scotland was so much distracted, not only by foreign aggression, but by domestic feuds among the powerful factions that contended so keenly for power during her minority.

During the rule of this chief Donald Dubh again makes his escape from prison, is proclaimed Lord of the Isles, and supported by all the vassals of the ancient Lordship in a second rebellion, the particulars of which will be given in our next.