

I.

NOTES ON THE RELICS PRESERVED IN DUNVEGAN CASTLE, SKYE,
AND THE HERALDRY OF THE FAMILY OF MACLEOD OF
MACLEOD. BY FRED. T. MACLEOD, F.S.A. Scot.

In the preparation of these notes I have been materially assisted by the Rev. R. C. MacLeod (of MacLeod), who has kindly lent me for the purpose a typewritten volume entitled "*The Dunvegan Charter Chest*, edited by R. C. MacLeod (of MacLeod), vol. i.—1298–1700." This interesting collection of papers, the result of many years of labour among the original documents in Dunvegan Castle, apart from its value as a reliable contribution to the history of an important West Highland family, contains many items of great value to students of antiquities. The documents described comprise Charters and Seisins, Notarial Instruments, Bonds of Friendship, Contracts of Marriage and of Fosterage, Personal Bonds and Discharges, Indentures, Tacks of Lands and of Teinds, Letters of Horning, and other legal diligence, Judicial Rentals, Lawyers' and Doctors' Charges, Tradesmen's Accounts, Rolls of Freeholders, and Papers upon Election Business, Burgess Tickets, and Correspondence, including several letters from Scottish kings. The illustrations accompanying my notes are, in most instances, reproductions of photographs taken by Mr MacLeod.

Dunvegan Castle (fig. 1), the home of the MacLeods of Dunvegan for many generations, has played many important parts in the history of Scotland.¹ It stands out prominently on the north shore of Loch Dunvegan, and although in many respects modernised, still retains

¹ An interesting paper on Dunvegan Castle was contributed to the Society in 1895 (*Proceedings*, vol. xxix. pp. 255–271) by Lockhart Bogle, F.S.A. Scot., illustrated by views of the Castle at various dates, a plan, and drawings of details. The illustration here reproduced is from a drawing by Mr Bogle made at that date.

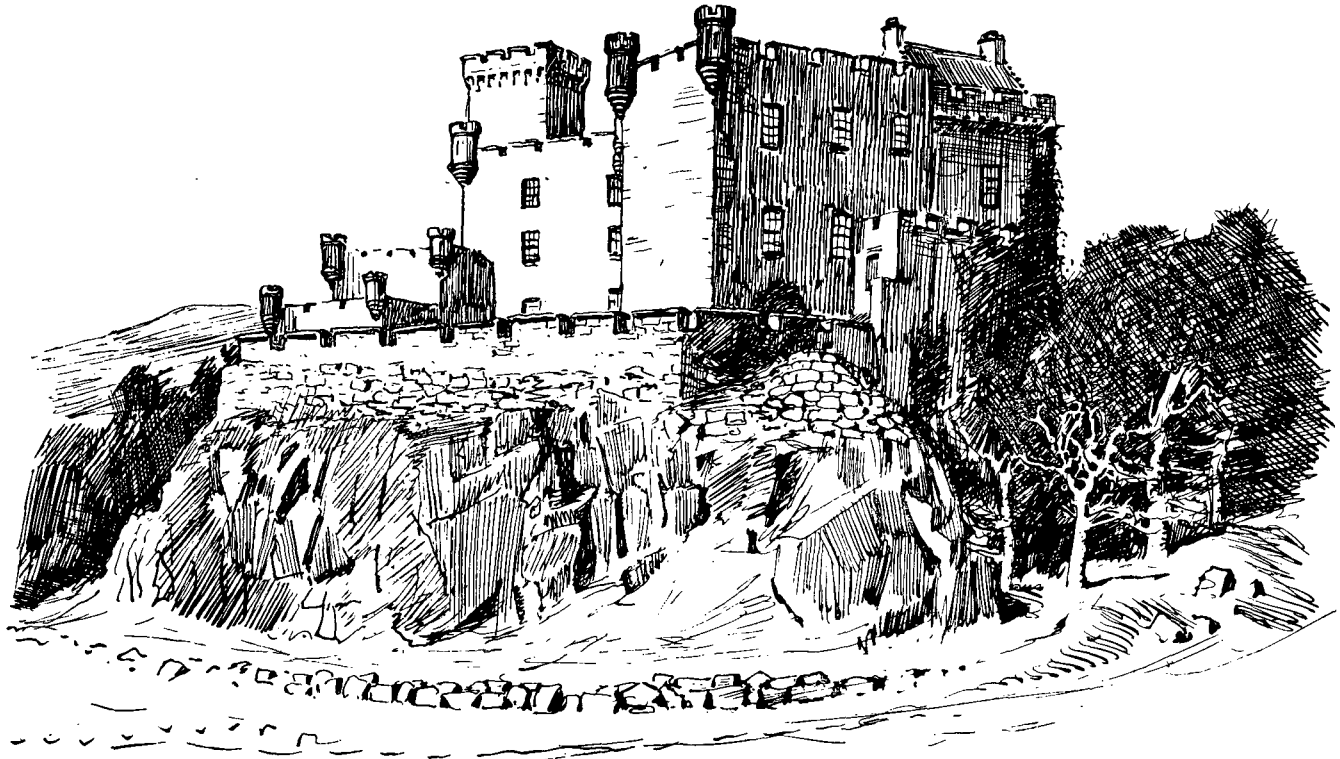


Fig. 1. Dunvegan Castle.

architectural features which clearly point to thirteenth-century construction. The legend that ascribes part of the building to the ninth century is undoubtedly fanciful. The sea-gate, the dungeon, and Alastair Crotach's Tower are all features of considerable interest, but do not call for more than passing notice in this paper. The Castle has passed through many vicissitudes : it has withstood storm, fire, and siege for many centuries. Gruesome legends linger persistently around its walls and dungeons, to the exclusion of brighter chapters in its history, when the sword was laid aside for a time, and its hospitable portals opened to the scholar, the poet, and the musician. A visit to the Castle made by the West Highland bard, MacVurich, is thus described by him in 1595 :—

“ The attendants of the house were on every side,
It was a cheerful, great clan ;
As quietness was better for the Prince's comfort,
The party of the tribe took their drink in retirement.

The merriment of the harp and of the full bowls,
With which hatred and treachery are not usually accompanied ;
The laughter of the fair-haired youngsters.
We had inebriating ale and a blazing fire.”

Dunvegan's hospitality, thus recorded, has continued a marked feature of the family ever since. Johnson “ tasted lotus in the Castle, and was in danger of forgetting that he was ever to depart,” and others of a later day, including Pennant and Sir Walter Scott, have gratefully acknowledged the unbounded welcome and the unstinted hospitality they received within its walls.

When General Middleton's army was defeated at Lochgarry in 1653, Dunvegan Castle was the place chosen by the Royalist leaders in which to hold a council of war ; and when, on the eve of the battle of Culloden, Lord Loudon and President Forbes were forced to retreat, MacLeod's stronghold was the place chosen by them as a temporary shelter.

The Castle itself is undoubtedly the most interesting antiquity in the possession of the Dunvegan family, but within its walls there are many relics of bygone days, all more or less closely associated with the history of the family. Two or three of these relics have not

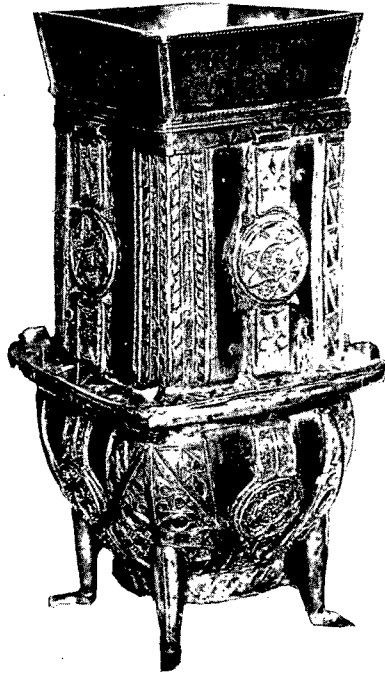


Fig. 2. The Dunvegan Cup (10 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches in height).

infrequently been on exhibition, and have been described in archaeological journals; but, so far as I know, no attempt hitherto has been made to place on record a complete list of the Dunvegan relics, and an account of the history of each so far as known.

The Dunvegan Cup.—This interesting specimen of ancient Irish workmanship (fig. 2) is first noticed in the *Proceedings* of this Society

in a short contribution by Dr Wilson, as far back as 1851. Prior to that date, the only published account of the Cup was that contained in Sir Walter Scott's note to *The Lord of the Isles*, explanatory of the lines :—

“ ‘ Fill me the mighty cup,’ he said,
‘ Erst owned by royal Somerled.’ ”

It is singular that not one of three earlier visitors to the Castle—Dr Johnson, Boswell, and Pennant—makes any reference to having seen this relic. Scott's description, ascertained by Dr Wilson to be inaccurate as regards the rendering of the inscription and date, is as follows :—

“ This very curious piece of antiquity is nine inches and three-quarters in inside depth, and ten and a half in height on the outside, the extreme measure over the lips being four inches and a half. The cup is divided into two parts by a wrought ledge, beautifully ornamented, about three-fourths of an inch in breadth. Beneath this ledge the shape of the cup is rounded off, and terminates in a flat circle, like that of a tea cup ; four short feet support the whole. Above the projecting ledge the shape of the cup is nearly square, projecting outward at the brim. The cup is made of wood (oak to all appearance), but most curiously wrought and embossed with silver work, which projects from the vessel. There are a number of regular projecting sockets which appear to have been set with stones ; two or three of them still hold pieces of coral, the rest are empty. At the four corners of the projecting ledge, or cornice, are four sockets, much larger, probably for pebbles or precious stones. The workmanship of the silver is extremely elegant, and appears to have been highly gilded. The ledge, brim, and legs of the cup are of silver. The family tradition bears that it was the property of Neil Ghlune-dhu, or Black-knee. But who this Neil was, no one pretends to say. Around the edge of the cup is a legend, perfectly legible, in the Saxon black-letter, which seems to run thus :—

UFO : JOHIS : MICH : MGN : PNCIPIS : DE :
HR : MANAE : VICH : LIAHIA : MGRYNEIL :
ET : SPAT : DO : JHU : DA : CLEA : ILLORU OPA :
FECIT : ANO : DI : IX : 930 ONILI : OIMI :

The inscription may run thus at length : Ufo Johanaïs Mich Magni Principis de Hr Manae Vich Liahia Magryneil et Sperat Domino Ihesu Dari Clementiam Illorum Opera. Anno Domini 993 Onili Oimi. Which may run in English : Ufo the son of John, the son of Magnus, Prince of Man, the grandson of Liahia

Macgryneil, trusts in the Lord Jesus that their works (*i.e.* his own and those of his ancestors) will obtain mercy. Oneil Oimi made this in the year of God nine hundred and ninety-three.

“But this version does not include the puzzling letters HR before the word *Manae*. Within the mouth of the cup the letters *JHS* (*Jesus*) are repeated four times. From this and other circumstances, it would seem to have been a chalice. This circumstance may perhaps account for the use of the two Arabic numerals 93. These figures were introduced by Pope Sylvester, A.D. 991, and might be used in a vessel formed for church service so early as 993. The workmanship of the whole cup is extremely elegant, and resembles, I am told, antiques of the same nature preserved in Ireland.”

The following general description of the Cup, by Mr Alexander Nesbitt, is of interest :—

“It is a cup of wood, probably either yew or alder, such as in Ireland is called a ‘*mether*,’ square above and rounded below, placed on four legs, and almost covered with mountings of silver, decorated with niello and gilding ; the whole measures $10\frac{1}{4}$ inches in height, $4\frac{1}{4}$ inches in breadth at the mouth, and $5\frac{1}{2}$ at the broadest point, which is somewhat below the middle. Dr Wilson (*Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, 1852, part i. p. 8) surmises that the cup is older than the inscription, which is on a broad silver rim at the mouth, and bears the date of 1493 ; however this may be, there can be no doubt that the whole of the ornamental mounting is of the same period, or that this period is not far distant from the date given by the inscription. The same ornaments in niello are to be found upon the rim at the mouth and on the lower part, and the pierced work of parts shows an evident imitation of the tracery and foliations of a late period of Pointed architecture ; mixed, however, with these are to be found the filigree ornaments and the knotwork which in England characterise the work of very early times, but which are well known to have remained in use in Ireland until native art was entirely superseded by English, and in the Celtic parts of Scotland almost until our own time. There are no traces of that singular ornamentation produced by the interlacing of animals so much used in Irish work of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. That dislike of uniformity and the ingenuity in inventing new varieties of ornament, which are manifested in Irish work of all dates, are fully displayed here ; with very few exceptions, all the corresponding parts, though alike in form, have entirely different ornaments.”

Dr Wilson extends the inscription on the Cup to read as follows :—

“*Katharina nig Ryneill, uxor Johannis Meg Maguir principis de Firmanach, me fieri Fecit Anno Domini 1493. Oculi omnium in te sperant Domina, et tu das escam illorum in tempore opportuna.*”

Nesbitt extends the inscription to read as follows :—

“ Katherina ingen ui Neill (O'Neill's daughter) uxor Johannis Meguighir (MacGuire) principis de Firmanach (Fermanagh) me fieri fecit. Anno Domini 1493°. Oculi omnium in te spectant Domine et tu das escam illorum in tempore opportuno.”

Nesbitt points out that the latter part is the fifteenth verse of the 144th Psalm.

These two renderings differ slightly from each other, and, in my view, an examination of the illustrations of the inscriptions on the four sides of the Cup, from photographs (figs. 3 to 6), discloses slight inaccuracies in both, but the general sense is the same. It reads consecutively along the first lines on the front, right side, and back of the cup, followed by both lines on the left side, and concluding with the date (1493), the first two figures (14) of which are given at the end of the line, the old Arabic numeral for 4 being used, while the last two (93) are transferred to the beginning of the second line on the front, before the beginning of the verse from the 144th Psalm, which then reads consecutively along the second lines on front, right side, and back of the Cup, being greatly contracted in the latter part.

With one's mind informed of the correct reading of the inscription, it is difficult to understand how Scott committed not only one but many mistakes. Scott's initial blunder arose from the difficulty which faced him at the outset, as to the order in which the lines were to be read, and which were the commencing and ending words. There was the further difficulty of the similarity of many of the letters, particularly *i*, *m*, *n*, and *u*. A less gifted and less imaginative man could not have produced so intelligent yet absolutely worthless a result—a false reading of an inscription which he describes in his Notes as “ perfectly legible,” involving the manufacture of false history. That Scott brought his best judgment to bear upon the inscription is clear from his note: “ But this version does not include the puzzling letters ‘ HR ’ before the word ‘ Manae,’ ” which Dr Wilson, prior to



Fig 3. Inscription on the Dunvegan Cup—Front.



Fig. 4. Inscription on the Dunvegan Cup—Right Side.



Fig. 5. Inscription on the Dunvegan Cup—Back.

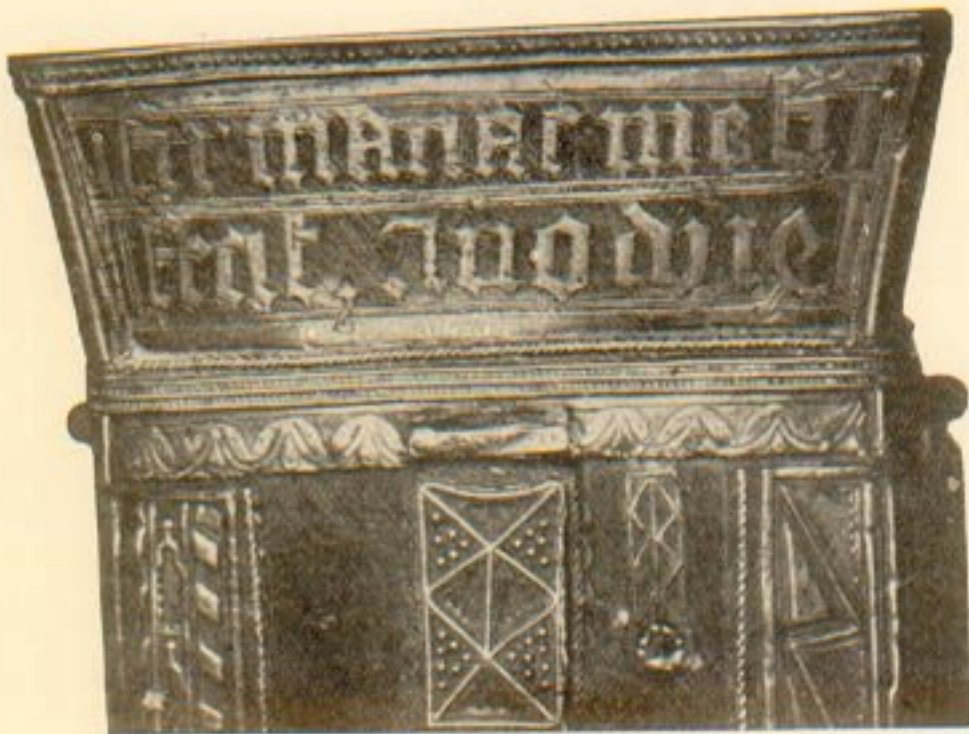


Fig. 6. Inscription on the Dunvegan Cup—Left Side.

obtaining exact information, thought should read "HI," an island; the letters, in fact, being "FIR" of the word "FIRMANACH." Further, Scott gives his reasons for believing the date to be 993, the correct date being 1493. That Scott's deciphering of ancient writing and figures is not to be relied upon is further shown by the fact that he misread the date on the tomb in Rodil Church of Alastair Crotach, 8th Chief of Dunvegan.

Nesbitt, in his article already referred to, reads the opening words of the inscription as "Katherina ingen ui Neill," and concludes that the lady was the daughter of an O'Neill. The Rev. R. C. MacLeod adopts this reading, and states in his notes, as his conception of the passage, "Katherina, the daughter of King Neill," adding: "Tradition assigns the cup to Neill Gluin Dhu, who was King of the North of Ireland in 915 A.D., and was the great hero of the O'Neill family; and as the inscription shows that in 1493 it belonged to a lady of that name, it might be actually a relic handed down from him, or be attributed to him by his descendants." On the other hand, Wilson reads the words as "Katharina nig Rynell," and concludes that the lady was the daughter of a MacRannal. In support of this theory he states: "John, son of the Maguire—probably the person referred to on the Cup—is mentioned in the *Annals of the Four Masters*, in 1484, when Gillpatrick was murdered by his five brothers, of whom he was one, at the altar of the Church of Aghalurcher, in consequence of a dispute about the succession to the Chieftainship. He died in 1511. His wife's name does not occur, but a Catherine, daughter of MacRannal, who was also married to a Maguire, is mentioned in the year 1490, in which she died."

That Scott's inaccurate account of the Cup is still persistently followed is clear from the fact that his description, and no other, appears in the catalogue of exhibits in the Glasgow Exhibition (1911).

It is impossible to ascertain when the Dunvegan family first came into possession of what Wilson describes as a rare example of the skill

of ancient Irish silversmiths. I can find no reference to the matter in the Dunvegan papers before me. Family tradition ascribes its connection with the house of Dunvegan to the good offices of the fairies, and there are one or two legends by the repetition of which this account has been handed down through many generations. The more likely explanation, I think, is that during the Irish wars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, in which history relates the MacLeods of Dunvegan took part, the Cup fell to its present possessors as a prize of war, or was gifted in reward for services rendered.

The Fairy Flag.—On the occasion of a visit by me to the Castle in 1898, this ancient and romantic banner (fig. 7) was carefully preserved by being enclosed in a glass case. Owing to its age, and the lack of careful treatment prior to the nineteenth century, its texture is exceedingly fragile. Its condition forbids of its temporary removal for purposes of exhibition. The early history of the Flag is by no means certain, but there are certain oral traditions still repeated, and at least one account in a manuscript, not hitherto published, written in the beginning of last century, which are of more value than mere speculation upon whether it is a relic of the Crusades, in the wars of which the island legends state the Dunvegan Chiefs took part, or whether it is a spoil of war captured from Danish invaders, or a pennon made by daughters of the house to encourage the MacLeods in their many inter-tribal engagements.

The Rev. R. C. MacLeod states that he heard in his boyhood two distinct legendary accounts of how the Flag came into the possession of his forefathers. The first relates that an early Chief espoused a fairy, whose married life was limited to a period of twenty years. Summoned to leave him at a spot about three miles from Dunvegan, which now bears the name "Fairy Bridge," she flew away, dropping in her flight a portion of her silken attire—the Fairy Flag—which was found and preserved by the Chief.

The other relates that on the occasion of the birth of an heir to a former Chief great rejoicings were held in Dunvegan Castle ; that, as the child was slumbering peacefully, the nurse, who was anxious to join in the festivities, slipped away and left the infant alone. Being restless, the clothes in which the infant had been wrapped fell off,



Fig. 7. The Fairy Flag, the Cup, and Rory Mor's Horn.

and he lay exposed to the cold. The fairies watched over the sleeping babe, and wrapped his body in the Flag. Meanwhile the clansmen had been clamouring to see the young heir, and the nurse, returning, found him thus clothed, and brought him into the hall. As she entered, an invisible choir was heard singing the magic powers of the Flag.

By far the most circumstantial and detailed account of the Flag is that which is given in a manuscript history of the MacLeods, written about the year 1800. It is as follows :—

“THE BRATTACH SHIE OR THE WIZZARD FLAG OF
THE MACLEODS.

“The real history of this antient banner so famous among the MacLeods is involved in all the obscurity of Highland mist. The honor and very existence of the Clan MacLeod was supposed for ages to depend almost entirely on its preservation. The highest and purest blood of the race as well as the most renowned and powerful heroes were selected to guard it when dire necessity called for its display. Twelve men held each with one hand (the other holding a naked sword) the staff to which it was attached. These stood directly in rear of the Chief, who put himself always immediately in front of the sacred banner, which he was bound to guard with his life.

“One family, the male line of which is now extinct, were the hereditary keepers of it, nor could it be unfurled by any one else than the eldest male living of that single family. The greatest honours which it was in the power of the Chief to bestow were lavished both during life and after death on him who unfurled it. The first of these was buried in Iona in the same grave with his Chief, and the second and last person who did the same office (in the time of Allister Crottach in the reign of James IV. of Scotland) had a very handsome monument built over his remains in the church of the Monastery at Rawdale, still extant. The stone coffin in which his body was deposited was six feet deep—a moveable iron grating resting on a ledge about two feet from the lid ran through its whole length. This man’s male descendants were always deposited in this coffin. The bones and dust of the last occupier, being shaken through the iron grating, fell to the bottom of the coffin and thus made way for another, whose body was always clothed in a style unique and magnificent for the times and country. The last of the race was interred, within the recollection of my father, when the tomb was shut up forever by this man’s daughter, whose race had no longer any right to this honour so highly valued by the family.

“The charm attached to the banner was to vanish on its third display, when one of two things was to happen, viz. a complete victory by the Clan over their foes or their total extinction for ever. This third trial was always avoided, nor is there much likelihood now of its ever being attempted, for the flag, which was once large, is reduced to a few shreds (of which I possess a fragment). The staff, which was as sacred as the banner, is lost, and the male line of the keeper is extinct.

“It was formerly deposited in an iron chest in the Castle of Dunvegan, the key of this chest being always in the possession of the family of the Standard Bearer—whose race were called Clan Tormad Vic Vurichie—a Macleod of the Seil Torquil race—whose descendants even before the male line became

extinct had become so miserably poor and obscure that it would be no easy matter now to discover the trace of any one of their race. Upon the death of Tormad Macleod, the son of Iain Break Macleod, the succession to the Chiefship had nearly fallen to the family of the Macleods of Tallisker. The young widow of the last Chief resided in the Castle of Dunvegan, which she refused to give up to the next heir knowing herself to be enceinte, although married but six weeks previous to her widowhood. She in due time became the mother of Tormad Macleod, the great-grandfather of the present Chief.

“It was during this period that a man who wished to curry favour with the expectant heir (Macleod of Tallisker) attempted to steal the Flag from Dunvegan Castle. The banner was afterwards found, but both the staff and iron chest could never be discovered.

“The legend of its origin is that a MacLeod who had gone on a Crusade to the Holy Land when returning home in the garb of a pilgrim was benighted on the borders of Palestine in a wild and dangerous mountain pass, where by chance he met a hermit who gave him food and shelter. The hermit told him that an evil spirit guarded the pass and never failed to destroy the true believer; but by the aid of a piece of the true Cross and certain other directions given by the hermit this MacLeod vanquished and slew the ‘She Devil’ called Nein a Phaipen, or Daughter of Thunder, around whose loins this banner had been tied; and that in reward for conveying certain secrets which she wished some earthly friends to know she revealed the future destinies of the Clan to her conqueror, in whose family this knowledge was supposed to be deposited to its final extinction, and desired that her girdle should be converted into this banner, which was to be attached to her spear, which became the staff which is now lost. The secrets were never known and are likely to remain unknown forever, although many editions have been recited.

“The Flag was most probably a banner made use of in the Holy Land and was conveyed home by the individual concerning whom this tradition has been narrated.”

Tradition relates that the Flag has been twice waved at critical junctures in the history of the MacLeods, on both occasions successfully. Having been exhibited to Pennant in 1772, apparently the Flag was locked away in an iron chest, and seven years later was again examined under the following interesting conditions. The following letter explanatory of the occasion was written by the well-known Gaelic scholar and writer, Dr Norman MacLeod, known through the Highlands as “*Caraid nan Gaidheal*” (the friend of the Highlanders):—

“In the summer of 1799, the late General Norman MacLeod (grandfather to the present Chief) came to the manse of Morven on his way to the Isle

of Skye. My father (the Rev. Norman MacLeod, then Minister of Morven) had at one time been tutor to this brave and talented man, who had been a distinguished soldier in the American war and had afterwards obtained great renown in India during the conflicts with Tippoo Sahib and other rebellious chiefs. MacLeod insisted that my father should allow me to go along with him to Dunvegan, and I was delighted at the prospect of visiting the place of which I had heard so many traditionary legends. There were no steamers at that time, and we took passage in a small wherry from Oban.

MacLeod was accompanied by Mr Hector MacDonald Buchanan, his man of business, and Mr Campbell of Gombie, his commissioner. We arrived at Loch Bracadale next day after leaving Morven, where we found horses and carts and crowds of people waiting us. On reaching the old Castle of Dunvegan we were met by many of the gentlemen, tacksmen of the MacLeod estates, and MacLeod was welcomed to the home of his fathers by Captain Donald MacCrimmon (the representative of the celebrated MacCrimmon pipers who had for ages been connected with the family), who had gained his commission and no small share of renown with his Chief during the American war.

"I can never forget the impression which the whole scene made on my youthful mind, as MacCrimmon struck up 'Failte Ruari Mor,' the famous tune of the clan.

"Dinner was served in the great dining-room, the keys of the cellar were produced and a pipe of claret was broached, also some Madeira, said to be of choice quality and brought by MacLeod from India—the wine was carried up to the dining-room in flaggons.

"I was put to sleep in a small closet off MacLeod's own bedroom, and I never shall forget the affectionate kindness which my beloved Chief showed me during the three months I was with him in his Castle.

"The number of visitors who came there was great. Among others I remember MacLean of Coll, Grant of Corriemoney, Mr Grant the father of Lord Glenelg, Principal MacLeod of Aberdeen, Colonel Donald MacLeod, father of the present MacLeod of St Kilda. I had a special regard for Major MacLeod of Ballymeanach, who had been a distinguished officer in the Dutch wars, and who kindly entertained me with many interesting anecdotes regarding the warfare in which he had been engaged.

"A circumstance took place at Dunvegan Castle at that time, which I think it worth recording, especially as I am the only person living who can attest the truth of it. There had been a traditionary prophecy written in Gaelic verse regarding the family of MacLeod which on this occasion received a most extraordinary fulfilment. This prophecy I have heard repeated by several persons, and I now very much regret that I did not take a copy of it when I could easily have got it. My father had a very beautiful version of it, so had Mr Campbell of Knock in Mull, and also, I think, the Rev. Dr Campbell of Kilinver. There are few old families in the Highlands of whom such prophecies are not current. The family of Argyll are of the number, and there is a prophecy yet unfulfilled regarding the Breadalbane family which I hope

may remain so. The present Marquis of Breadalbane is fully aware of it, as are also many of the connections of the family.

“Of the MacLeod family it was prophesied at least a hundred years prior to the circumstances I am about to relate, that when Norman—the third Norman (Tormaid n’an tri Tormaidean), the son of the hard-boned English-woman (Mac na maighdean caol Sassanaich), would perish by an accidental death, when the ‘MacLeod Maidens’ (certain well-known rocks on the coast of the MacLeod country) would become the property of a Campbell, when a fox had her young ones in one of the turrets of the Castle, and particularly when the Fairy enchanted banner should be exhibited for the last time, that then the glory of the MacLeod’s family should depart, a great part of the estate would be sold to others, so that a small curach (a wicker boat) would be sufficient to carry all the gentlemen of the name of MacLeod across Loch Dunvegan; but in times far distant another John MacLeod should arise who would redeem those estates, and raise the power and honour of the name of MacLeod to a higher pitch than ever. Such, in general terms, was the prophecy.

“And now as to the curious coincidence of its fulfilment:

“There was at this time an English smith at Dunvegan, with whom I became a favourite, and who told me in solemn secrecy that the iron chest which contained the Fairy Flag was to be forced open next morning, and that it was arranged by Mr Hector MacDonald Buchanan that he (the smith) was to be at the Castle with his tools for that purpose. I was most anxious to be present and asked permission of Mr Buchanan, who granted me leave on condition that I should not inform anyone of the name of MacLeod that such a thing was to be done, and especially to keep it a profound secret from the Chief. This I promised to do and most faithfully acted on.

“Next morning we proceeded to the chamber in the east turret where the iron chest containing the ‘Fairy Flag’ was kept. The smith tore up the lid with great violence, but in doing so a key was found under part of the covering of the chest, which would have opened it, had it been discovered in time. There was an inner case in which the flag was found enclosed in a box of strongly scented wood. The flag consisted of a square piece of very rich silk with crosses wrought on it with gold thread, and several elf spots stitched with great care on different parts of it. After it was closely examined it was returned to its old case as before, where for many years it had been neglected, and when brought to light it soon went to tatters, pieces of it being carried away time after time, so that I fancy there is not a remnant left. [In this the writer is mistaken.] At this time the news of the death of the young and promising heir of MacLeod reached the castle; this Norman, ‘the third Norman,’ was a lieutenant on board of H.M. Ship the *Queen Charlotte*, which was blown up at sea, and he along with all the rest perished; at the same time the rocks called ‘The MacLeod Maidens’ were, in the course of that week, sold to Campbell of Ensay, and are still in the possession of his grandson; a fox in the possession of a Lieutenant MacLean, residing in the west turret of the Castle, had cubs there which I saw and handled, and thus it happened that all that was said in the prophecy was literally fulfilled.

“ I merely state the facts as they occurred, without expressing any opinion whatever as to the nature of these traditionary legends with which they were connected.

“ My father is known by his well-deserved title of ‘ Caraid nan Gaidheal,’ for truly he was such.”

Sir Rory Mor's Horn.—This old drinking-horn (shown in figs. 7 and 8) is one of the treasured heirlooms of the family. The illustrations sufficiently disclose its construction and style, without the necessity for any further detailed description. Until comparatively recent

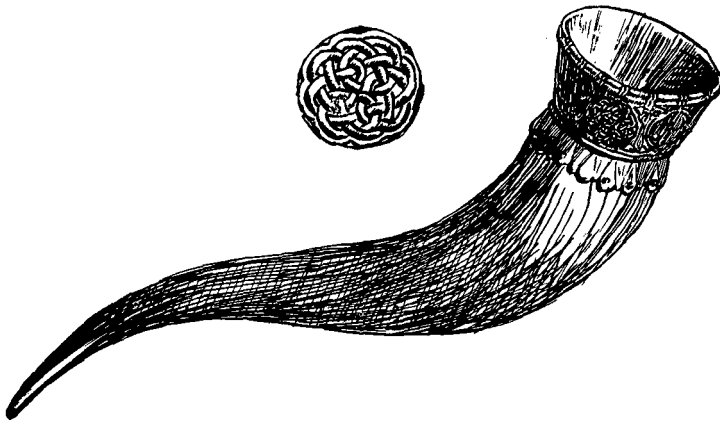


Fig. 8. Sir Rory Mor's Horn.

times, it was the duty of each Chief, as he succeeded to the Chiefship, to drink the full measure of the Horn in wine. Interesting in itself, the Horn is doubly so in consideration of the important part played by its owner not only in the concerns of the MacLeods of Dunvegan, but in various difficult situations which confronted the Government of Scotland during the period of Sir Roderick's Chiefship—1590–1626. Sir Roderick, popularly known as Sir Rory Mor, not on account of the greatness of his physical parts so much as on account of his qualities of head and heart, held the position of Chief for over thirty-six

years, proving himself a brave warrior and prudent counsellor, maintaining in times of trouble and peace the best traditions of his princely house. His name occurs with great frequency in the Privy Council records of the period. The old papers preserved in the Dunvegan Charter Chest afford interesting glimpses of his many-sided activities. His signature stands out in striking clearness in not a few of the old documents.

It is impossible in this paper to do more than indicate the many important matters with which his name is associated, involving many disagreeable duties of State thrust upon him by the Privy Council. In 1594 he voluntarily enlisted his services in the support of Hugh O'Donnell in Ireland, who at that time was in rebellion against Queen Elizabeth, Sir Roderick's action on this occasion being looked upon by the Scottish Court as a grave indiscretion. He wrote a most interesting letter to King James VI., in response to a demand by that King that he should present himself with all his followers at Islay on the 20th of September 1596, he having received the royal command only two days before. Notwithstanding that on many occasions his estates were declared forfeited and he himself a rebel, because of his non-attention to, or disregard of, orders by the Privy Council, MacLeod, by his strong character and tenacity of purpose, retained his ancient estates intact, and also the freedom of his person. His dealings—this time on behalf of the Government—in connection with the unfortunate Neil MacLeod, the Bastard, who was in open rebellion in the Lewis; his refusal to be "drawn" on board the King's ship, the *Morn*, thereby alone among many chiefs eluding capture; his stubborn resistance to the attempted colonisation of certain districts in the West by a band of "Lowland Adventurers," men of position to whom the Scottish Parliament had delegated extensive powers; his many enforced visits to Edinburgh; his journey to London and knighthood by the King; the great assistance he gave to the Privy Council in connection with the rebellion by Sir James MacDonald; the open house

kept by him at Dunvegan; his interest in his vassals and tenants, and other matters of equal interest, are graphically narrated in the Privy Council records and extant family papers. In a letter dated 1st June 1613, King James VI., having knighted MacLeod, refers to his good carriage while in England, and recommends him to the special favour of the Scottish Privy Council, who were directed to further him in all his lawful affairs. In 1616 James gave and granted liberty and licence to Sir Roderick "to coome oute of our Kingdome of Scotland and repaire to our Courte at aine time or times which he shal think conveniente: Provided alwise that he coome not at such time as he shal be by our Counsall of Scotland required to coome before them." There is also among the Dunvegan papers the original Remission by King James VI. to MacLeod, dated 6th June 1610. Another exceedingly interesting document is the Edinburgh burgess ticket, dated 13th December 1623, certifying that "Sir Rory Makeloid of Harris, Knycht, is maid Burgess and Gildbrother of this burgh." Involved in frequent litigations, his lawyers' bills represent large sums. Interest on borrowed money was allowed to accumulate for many years, and there are frequent indications that in those old days, as at present, men were not inclined to pay their tailors' bills until pressure was brought to bear. His bedroom in Dunvegan Castle was occupied by Sir Walter Scott. It was chosen by Sir Roderick because the tuneful falling of an adjacent cascade induced the knight to slumber. There are many interesting and valuable portraits in the Castle, but Dunvegan's greatest Chief is not represented. Nor does his dust repose in the island with which his life was so closely identified. His death is thus simply recorded in the manuscript Red Book of Clan Ranald: "In the same year (1626) Rory MacLeod died in the Chanonry of Ross (Fortrose)"; and a further entry states that the death of "MacLeod of Harris was greatly deplored among the Gael at that time." In Fortrose Cathedral a recumbent slab (fig. 9), surmounted by what were evidently then regarded as the family arms, a galley, a castle,

and a sword, bears the following inscription: "Heir lyes the Richt Worshipfull Sir Rorie MacLeod of Dunvegan, Knicht, 1626." The



Fig. 9. Rory Mor's Tombstone at Fortrose.

deep affection and regard in which he was held by his retainers are eloquently reflected in the composition of what is regarded by pipers as one of the most plaintive laments known in pipe music. It was composed by Patrick Mor MacCrimmon, members of whose family for generations before and after held the office of hereditary pipers to the MacLeods of Dunvegan. It is entitled "Cumha Rory Mor," and tradition states that, the news of his patron's death having reached MacCrimmon, he relieved his surcharged feelings by the composition of this lament.

Sir Rory Mor's Claymore, Ancient Armour, the Castle Key, and the Colours of the 42nd.—In the centre of the interesting group in fig. 10 is shown Sir Rory Mor's claymore. There is no family account of the old chain armour. The key, which is 10 inches in length, is exceedingly ponderous. The colours shown are those of the 42nd Regiment, raised in 1780 by the twentieth Chief. This regiment afterwards became the 73rd, but once more it has become the 2nd battalion of the 42nd or Black Watch. There is also hanging on the walls a dirk from the battlefield of Cuddalore (1787), found in a native hut in Mysore in 1899.

The arms of Sir Rory (fig. 11) appear on the well-known Durinish Communion Cups, already noted in the *Proceedings*.



Fig. 11. Arms of Sir Rory Mor on
Communion Cup.

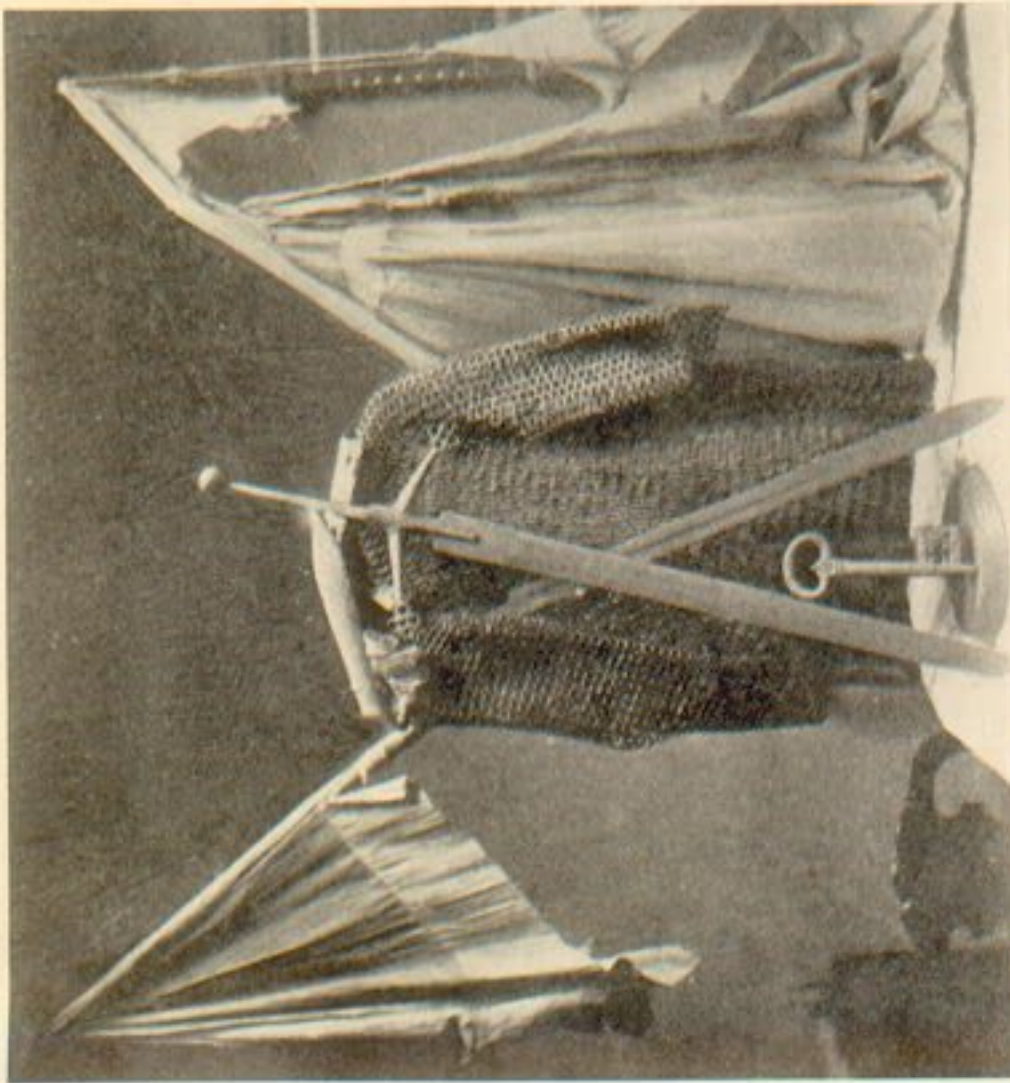


Fig. 10. Group of Arms and Armour, Castle Key, and Colours of
the 42nd, preserved at Dunvegan.

The last of the articles associated with the life of Sir Rory Mor, preserved in the Castle, is an ancient gourd, mounted in silver, bearing the armorial devices (fig. 12) of a lion rampant, stag's head, galley, and castle. It bears the initials "S. R. M." Subsequent to receiving the honour of knighthood in 1613, Sir Rory always inserted "S."



Fig. 12. Coat of Arms on an ancient Gourd.

before his signature, and we are thus enabled to fix the date of the gourd fairly accurately. The Rev. R. C. MacLeod states that the gourd is fitted with silver hasps, his opinion being that the purpose of these hasps was to enable the gourd to be suspended round the body by a chain or strap, in order to enable it to be used as a flask.

Sword of Sir Norman MacLeod of Bernera.—In the rising which ended so disastrously for the Highlanders on the field of Worcester, the clan,

their Chief being a minor, were led by Sir Roderick MacLeod of Talisker and Sir Norman MacLeod of Bernera, sons of Sir Rory Mor. So great was the decimation of the MacLeods on that occasion that it was agreed among the other clans that the MacLeods were to be relieved from further service, in order to give them time to recruit their shattered forces. Fig. 13 shows the sword used by Sir Norman

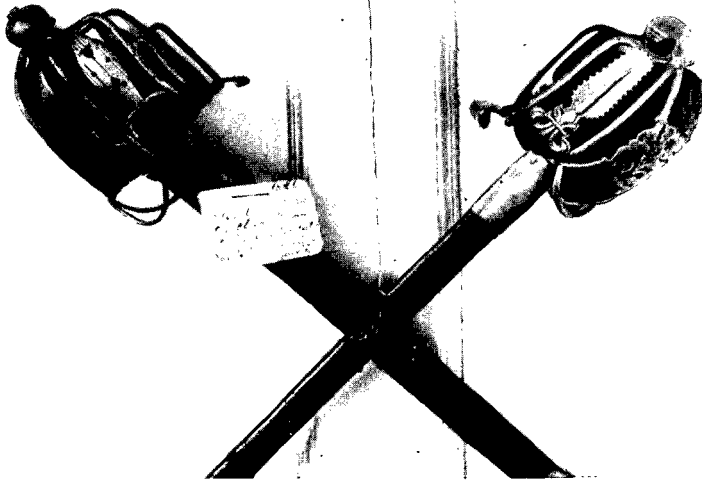


Fig. 13. Sword of Sir Norman MacLeod of Bernera.

MacLeod throughout the campaign and at the battle of Worcester. Few men have been so highly praised in contemporary song as Sir Norman. A well-known seventeenth-century poetess (Mairi Nighean Alastair Ruaidh) sang his youthful praises in glowing language. The following lines are a translation from the Gaelic, chosen from many others, composed by the bard MacVurich on the occasion of Sir Norman MacLeod's death :—

“The hospitality, the pure generosity,
The joyous exclamation, the ready welcome
Have all gone with him into the earth—
For an age after him there will be but lamentation.”

Female Effigy in Stone.—The stone effigy shown in fig. 14 now stands in the courtyard of the Castle. What its original position was cannot



Fig. 14. Effigy in Stone at Dunvegan.

now be ascertained. The popular belief is that it is a representation of Isabella, wife of Sir Rory Mor. In this connection, I give for what it is worth the following statement by M'Ian in his *Costumes of the Clans*. Unfortunately the author does not give the authority for the statement he makes:—"Sir Roderick MacLeod built that

portion of Dunvegan which is called Ruarie Mor's Tower, on which were placed curious effigies of himself and his lady, the last of which still exists, but is thrown from its original position."

Isabella, the wife of Sir Rory Mor, is occasionally referred to in the Dunvegan papers. That she could not write is evident from a notary's docquet to that effect preserved among the papers.

Commemoration Stone.—This stone, which is also preserved in the courtyard of the Castle, is now almost undecipherable. Its condition in 1773, however, was such as to enable the observant Boswell to place on record in his Journal his reading thereof. The Rev. R. C. MacLeod has satisfied himself that in the case of one word Boswell was at fault. Mr MacLeod states that "lafactatam" should read "labefactatam." The following is a translation of the inscription:—

"John MacLeod, Lord of Dunvegan, Chief of his Clan, Baron of Durinish, Harris, Waternish, etc., joined in matrimonial bond to the Lady Flora Macdonald, restored in the year of the common era 1686 this tower of Dunvegan, by far the most ancient abode of his ancestors, which had for a long time been completely ruined. Let him whom it delights to establish the ancient dwelling-place of his ancestors avoid all wickedness and cultivate justice. Virtue turns hovels into lofty towers, while Vice turns superb houses into lowly cottages."

Sideboard.—Experts who have examined this sideboard (fig. 15) are clearly of opinion that it is a genuine example of the period, *i.e.* early seventeenth century. It bears the date 1603, and was no doubt purchased by Sir Rory Mor on one of the many occasions when he visited Edinburgh at or about that time.

Correspondence.—Any account of the items of interest in the Castle would be incomplete without reference to the various letters received by former Chiefs from King James VI. of Scotland and King James II. of the United Kingdom between the years 1588 and 1690. Unfortunately, save in the case of one letter, which curiously enough forms part of the contents of Lord Macdonald's charter chest, all the originals have been lost, copies of each, however, having been pre-

served. The original letter is dated from "Our Courte at Dublin Castle the 29th day of May 1690," bears the signature "James R.," and is addressed to "Our Trustie and well-beloved McLoud."

There are many documents and a good deal of correspondence

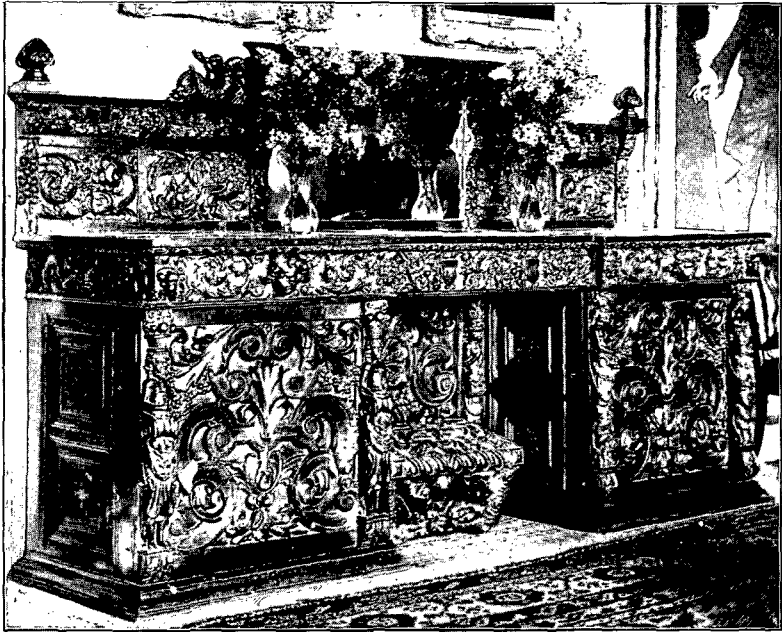


Fig. 15. Carved Sideboard at Dunvegan Castle.

bearing upon the times of the Commonwealth and the 'Forty-five of vital importance to students of these periods.

An examination of the papers relating to the 'Forty-five might result in throwing considerable light upon MacLeod's association with Prince Charles Edward. At the present day the actings of that Chief are regarded as not creditable to him; but whatever truth there is in the oft-repeated statement that he encouraged the Prince

to land in Scotland, and thereafter he himself joined forces with the Government, it cannot be disputed that the example set by that Chief in those critical days in great measure contributed to the stamping out of the Rebellion. Had MacLeod supported the House of Stuart, the Government would have been confronted with a situation of much greater danger and complexity.

The romantic circumstances associated with the Prince's exile and Flora MacDonald are recalled by the preservation in the Castle of the waistcoat worn by the Prince when he attended the ball in Holyrood on the night prior to the battle of Prestonpans, his drinking-glass, and articles of dress worn by Flora MacDonald.

The eighteenth-century correspondence is of considerable interest, including letters received from President Forbes, Warren Hastings, Tippoo Sahib, Dr Johnson, Pennant, Sir Walter Scott, the Ettrick Shepherd, and others. Scott, in forwarding to the Castle a copy of *The Lord of the Isles*, wrote: "The poem owes its best passages to MacLeod's kindness and taste in directing me to visit the extraordinary scenery between his country and Strathaird, which rivals in grandeur and desolate sublimity anything that the Highlands can produce."

Reminiscences of the tragic fate of Lady Grange, wife of one of the Lords of Session, who was surreptitiously removed from Edinburgh to St Kilda because it was believed she knew too much about the Jacobite plans, her subsequent immurement in a cave near "MacLeod's Maidens," and her death and burial at Trumpan in Skye, are conjured up by the presence in the Castle of her oil cruise and an account detailing her board and funeral expenses.

THE ARMS OF THE DUNVEGAN FAMILY.

The illustrations which accompany this part of my paper show clearly that the question of what were the exact arms of the MacLeods of Dunvegan was a matter in regard to which different Chiefs held different views. In my view, the question whether or not the Dunvegan family are entitled to use the Legs of Man, or a lymphad,



Fig. 16. Arms granted in 1753.

or both, in addition to the Castle, cannot now arise, because of the fact that on the 12th of January 1753 the Lyon King at Arms certified and declared that the ensign armorial (fig. 16) pertaining and belonging to Norman MacLeod of MacLeod was Azure, a castle triple towered and embattled Argent, masoned Sable, windows and ports Gules, supporters two lions regardant of the last, each holding a dagger proper; crest a bull's head cabossed between two flags; motto *Murus Aheneus*; and for device Hold Fast.

These arms in their main features are identical with the arms given in an illuminated volume, another of the relics within the Castle. This book is described in the catalogue of the Heraldic Exhibition held in Edinburgh in 1891 as a Scottish Armorial, remarkable for the perfect condition of the burnished gold and silver of many of the shields. It contains the arms of the Scottish nobility and of 241 of the minor gentry.

The latter part of the volume is a *liber amicorum* containing autographs of several envoys of rank to the Court of King James VI., the earliest inscription dating from 1585. No record exists of the date when this Armorial came into the possession of the MacLeods. In all probability it figured as evidence when MacLeod's blazon was certified in 1753. John MacLeod, son of Norman, nineteenth Chief, married Emilia, daughter of Brodie of Brodie, Lord Lyon King at Arms, about the middle of the eighteenth century, and if, as is not improbable, the book was originally the property of the Lord Lyon, in his official capacity, it may have been gifted by him to MacLeod, or lent and not returned.

Without further discussing the matter, I introduce the following illustrations, which show clearly the different ideas of the family arms held by different members of the Dunvegan family.



Fig. 17. Shield of Arms above Entrance to the Castle.



Fig. 18. Arms from an Armorial of late Sixteenth Century.



Fig. 19. Arms in Bookplate.

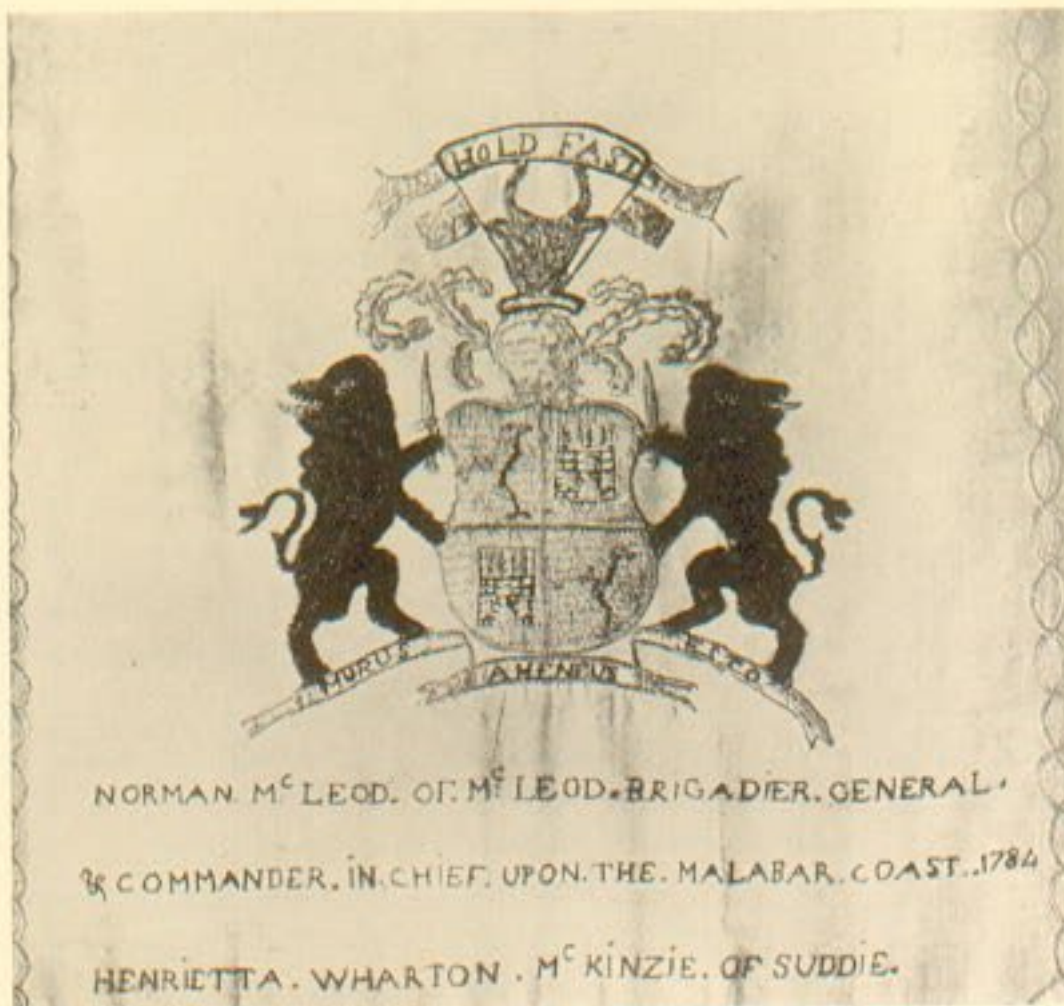


Fig. 20. Arms of Norman MacLeod in Needlework.
 VOL. XLVII.