





GAELIC PROVERBS
AND
PROVERBIAL SAYINGS

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WITH ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

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"DÀIN EADAR-THEANGAICHTE," "DÀIN AN AM A CHOGAIDH,"
"DÀIN AN DÉIDH A CHOGAIDH," ETC.

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

IN the preface to Henderson's "Proverbs of Scotland" it is stated that "few countries can lay claim to a more abundant store of these pithy sayings than our own ; and no people were at one time more attached to the use of these significant and figurative laconisms than Scotsmen." On the other hand, there are writers who say that the Celtic races were not much given to proverbs, and the explanation given is that a people gifted with the power of speech, like the Celts, are averse to their too frequent use. A proverb clinches the argument too abruptly, and gives no play to that metaphysical science said to be so dear to the heart of every Scotsman. The present writer would prefer to accept Mr. Henderson's opinion on the matter. From personal experience he can say that the

present-day Highlander finds the proverbs very useful in conversation, and frequently quotes them to good purpose, and very satisfied with himself does he look when he can introduce some saying or proverb with good effect. The Highlander has great regard for authority that is dignified by old age and long usage. For this reason the proverb has for him a double claim for his consideration : (1) its own intrinsic worth, and (2) its association with the past sages of his race. At the same time it must be admitted that we cannot compete with, say, the Spaniards, in the number of our proverbs. As regards quality we can hold our own, notwithstanding the reputed genius of the Spaniards for pithy sayings, and the unusual adaptability of the Spanish language in the use of them.

It is said that the proverbs of a people "contain the living traits of a peoples' character," its grave and its gay sides, and yet the definition of a proverb has puzzled men from the time of Aristotle to the present day. Lord Bacon described proverbs as "the genius, wit and spirit of a nation." Lord John Russell defined the proverb as "the wisdom of many and the wit of one." Cervantes, the Spaniard, is comprehensive but vague when he says that the proverb is "a short sentence drawn from

long experience." Better than any one of these is the definition of another Spanish writer, Capriano de Valera, where he describes it as "a short sentence, sententious and true, long since accepted by common consent." By this it will be seen that all proverbial sayings in the wider sense are not proverbs in the real sense of the term. While it is true that "both the proverb and the mere saying receive their authority and their dignity from the same source, that is, old age and long usage, the mere saying lacks the terseness, the pungency, and the general applicability of the true proverb." The saying :

He who runs may read,

would not be always applicable. Of far more general application is the Gaelic proverb which says :—

Is mall a mharchdaicheas

Am fear a bheachdaicheas.

He rides slowly who observes.

"The true proverb is never parochial, it has not any local patriotism, caring no more for one parish than another. It has neither father nor mother, and takes delight in shrouding its origin in mystery." Mere sayings, on the other hand, are frequently localised, applicable only

when associated with a particular locality, or the prototype of a particular individual. It is proposed to give selections from both in the following pages.

Matthew Arnold says that the sensibility of the Highlander gives him a peculiarly near and intimate feeling with nature. This is true; the Highlander seems in a special way attracted by the secret of natural beauty and natural magic; he feels close to it, he half divines it. Behind the visible he sees the invisible; he creates the latter in his mind's eye, his prophetic imagination travelling to the unseen beyond mountain, and torrent and loch. Science and modern thought "tell us of an all-pervading order, unchangeable amid the mutations of the things that are seen." It is felt by the sensitive Celt as a power irresistible and omnipotent, governing and controlling all things. The Celtic character is made for devotion, and loyalty and obedience. He is easily led, but cannot be driven. He craves for a leader, one in whom he can implicitly trust, and having found him, he will follow him to the gates of death. Forlorn causes have, as a consequence, found him, perhaps too often, their staunchest adherent.

It is, however, a mistake to suppose, as is too often glibly asserted, that he always allows

sentiment to run away with him. He can be as practical as most mortals when he likes, and many of his proverbs give ample demonstration of this, and these particular proverbs show every evidence of their having been composed by men of humble life. As Sheriff Nicolson says, they are the product of the thatched cottages, and not of the baronial or academic halls; poor in position, but rich in mother wit, reflecting a high moral standard, with an intelligence shrewd and searching; a singular sense of propriety and grace, and a distinct sense of humour never found among savages and clodhoppers. Nature's appeal to him is pointedly illustrated in his proverbs.

There is a beautiful combination of substance and humility conveyed to us by the following object lesson:—

Is ì 'n dìas ìs truime ìs ìsle 'chromas a ceann.
*The heaviest ear of corn bends its head the
 lowest.*

while the opposite is aptly portrayed thus:—

A chuisseag a dh' fhàsas as an òcrach
 'si 's àird' a thogas a ceann.
*The weed that's on the dunghill growing
 Will its head be highest showing.*

and there is some fine philosophy in the next:—

A bheinn is àird' a th'anns an tìr,
 'S ann oirr' is tric' a chithear an ceò.
*The highest mountain in the land
 Is oftenest covered with mist.*

The pointed truth in the following is thoughtful to a degree:—

Is sàmhach an obair dol a dholaidh.
Going to ruin is silent work.

Truly one might almost think that the noise accompanying the mere threats of revolution may not be so terrible after all. Like the pain felt in a part of the human body helping to locate the disease, and so leading to its diagnosis, and the resulting cure, a noise in the body-politic draws an attention that brings remedial or counteracting steps, with equally happy results. But the process of a silent decay, like that of a painless disease, is apt to be undetected until too late.

It has been truly said that “in the eternal relations of mankind, and their indestructible passions and feelings, the proverbs of all nations present a striking uniformity,” while “in other relations they illustrate the individual characteristics of the different races. Before letters were invented wisdom was abroad in the world. Proverbs were the germ of moral and political science. Things that marble and brass and

other devices of human invention have allowed to perish, proverbs, floating upon the living voices of the people, have perpetuated."

Paradoxical as it may seem, it has been truly said that "there is no surer sign of the oral knowledge of a people being on the wane than the attempt to secure it from oblivion by collecting its fragments and printing them in books." With the strenuous life of our present-day industrial civilisation oral transmission from mouth to mouth, "on the living voices of the people," ceases to be the rule. To-day, transmission, incision, and fruition in such matters depend upon the written or printed word, figure, or date.

A bhliadhn' a chaidh am buntàt' a
dhollaìdh.

The year of the potato famine,

is not now the epoch from which so many subsequent events are calculated.

If there is one medium more than another that will perpetuate for us the wit and wisdom of our forefathers, who belonged to a time when mother wit and native shrewdness took the place of present-day sharpness, that medium is the proverb.

There are substantial reasons to believe

that there is more than the common passions and feelings of mankind to account for the similarity of many of our Gaelic proverbs with those of other nations. Our Churchmen who received their education in the Scots Colleges at Madrid, Paris and Rome ; our Scottish soldiers of fortune, notably those with the famous Gustavus Adolphus ; and in a general way the well-known wandering habits of the Scots, in the famous days of old, as soldiers, scholars, or merchants, would have brought our countrymen into contact with the peoples of other countries. They easily assimilated with them, they quickly learned their language, they appropriated their thought, and returning would bring home with them a treasure more enduring than silver or gold, in the form of foreign culture.

But deduct these proverbs that are common to other peoples, and we still have a considerable number that are characteristically Highland ; that cannot be understood apart from the Highlands and the Highland people. But while the bulk of our proverbs are the product of the thatched cottages, and not of the baronial halls, a considerable number are as evidently the product of the better-to-do of the days of old. In the Highlands, in the days of the Clan System, class distinctions were not so hard and fast as

they were under the autocracy of Norman and Tuetonic feudalism. Quiet humour, shrewd insight, and homely truths with a large measure of deductive philosophy are enshrined in the proverbs, and it is a pity that along with the decline of oral transmission, already referred to, all our printed collections are out of print. The first of these, known as M'Intosh's Collection, appeared in 1785, and it contained 1305 Gaelic proverbs and proverbial sayings. A second edition appeared in 1819, in which the number was increased to 1538, while the late Sheriff Nicholson's more pretentious collection, published 1882, contained no less than 3900. The latter included the whole of M'Intosh's, and the additional 2392 indicated. Owing to the present cost of production and the consequent prohibitive selling price at which it could be offered, there is no attempt in this volume to equal, much less to improve upon the worthy Sheriff's patriotic achievement. But this volume is indebted to him to a considerable extent, while not always accepting his renderings of the original Gaelic, of which there are several current variants of some of them. The English equivalents adopted are also different in many cases. The exhaustive list given in the late Dr. Cameron of Brodick's "Reliquiæ Celticæ" ?

has also been largely drawn upon, as has also Professor Magnus MacLean's "Literature of the Scottish Highlands," and also the original of all collections of Gaelic proverbs, that of the Rev. Donald MacIntosh, already referred to. For a few hitherto unpublished proverbs and sayings, the writer is indebted to Mr. John N. MacLeod, The Schoolhouse, Kirkhill, and Mr. Donald Sinclair, Manchester, both well-known workers in the field of Gaelic activities. To the Rev. Alex. MacDiarmid, late of Morven, the writer is indebted for encouragement and advice.

Out of nearly 4000 Gaelic proverbs and proverbial sayings, known as current in the Highlands, including native and borrowed, the number included here is necessarily limited. This is on account of the exigencies of space in a volume intended for issue at a popular price. For the opportunity to do even this much, gratitude must be expressed to Mr. Mackay, of the firm of Mr. Eneas Mackay, publishers. Stirling, who is worthily upholding his late father's zeal in regard to Gaelic or Highland book undertakings, which appeal to so widely scattered and to not too numerous a constituency.

Opinions may differ as regards many of the proverbs here included, in preference to the

many others that might have been preferred from the large available stock. But—

Cha dean duine dona ach a dhìchioll.

A poor fellow can do but his best.

T. D. M.

FEBRUARY, 1926.

PART I.

MISCELLANEOUS.

MISCELLANEOUS.

- 1 Anail a Ghaidheil, air a mhullach!
The Gael's breathing place—on the summit!
- 2 Abair ach beagan is abair gu math e.
¹*Say but little and say it well.*
- 3 Abair sin, nuair a chaitheas tu cruach *
 mhòine còmhla ris.
*Say that, when you have spent a stack of
 peats along with it.*
- 4 A bhliadhn' is gainne a mhin, *
 Dean fuine mhòr aineamh.
*During the year when meal is scarce
 Let big bakings be few.*
- 5 A'chungaidh leighis is goirte, *
 'Si is moth' tha deaneamh feum.
*The medicine (or liniment) that hurts the most
 Is generally the best healer.*
- 6 A cur suas inisg, sa bun aig a bhaile. *
Spreading a fama, and its root at home.
- 7 A ghaoth ag iarraidh na'm port.
The wind seeking the harbours.
- 8 A h-uile cù air a chù choimheach.
All dogs down on the strange dog.

- 9 A sgaoladh na'n sguab 's a trusadh na'n siobag.
Scattering the sheaves and gathering the straws.
- 10 Aithnichear an leomhan air scriob de iongann.
The lion is known by the scratch of his claw.
- 11 An ràmh is fhaig air laimh, iomair leis.
The oar that's nearest at hand, row with it.
- 12 An neach nach cinn na chadal,
 Cha chinn e na dhuig.
*He who will not prosper in his sleep.
 Will not prosper when awake.*
- 13 A mhead 'sa gheibh thu gu math,
 Se'n lughad a gheibh thu de 'n olc.
*The more you get of what's good,
 The less you will get of what's bad.*
- 14 Am fear is fliuche, rachadh e do'n tobair.
He who is wettest, let him go to the well.
- 15 An luigh nach fhaighear cha'n i a chobhras.
The herb that cannot be found will not give relief.
- 16 A taomadh na mara le cliabh.
Bailing the sea with a creel.
- 17 A h-uile rud ach an rud bu chòir.
Everything but the right thing.
- 18 Adhaircean fada air a chrodh a bhios anns a cheò.
Long horns on the cattle that are seen through the mist.

- 19 Air gnothaich na cuthaig.
On the cuckoo's business.
 Al.—A chuir a ruith na cuthaig.
Sent to chase the cuckoo.
 S.P.—A gowk's errand.
- 20 An ceòl air feadh na fìdhle
The music throughout the fiddle.
- 21 An làmh a bheir 'si a gheibh,
 Mar a d'thugar do dhroch dhuin' e.
The hand that gives is the hand that will receive,
Except when given to a bad man.
- 22 Am fear is fhaide chaidh bho'n bhaile,
 Chual e'n ceòl bu mhilse leis nuair thill e
 dhachaidh.
Who farthest away e'er did roam
Heard the sweetest music on returning home.
- 23 A lion beag is bheagan, mar a dh' ith an
 cat an t-iasg.
Little by little, as the cat eat the fish.
- 24 An rud a nithear gu math,
 chithear a bhuil.
What is well done will be shown by results
- 25 A chuid de Fhlaitheanas dha.
His share of Paradise to him.

“Flaitheanas,” according to our etomologists, is from “Flath Innis,” “The Isle of Heroes,” the heaven of Celtic Mythology. Here the souls of the brave (none other were deserving), went for eternal and blissful repose, at the end of their warrior-careers. Cowardice was deemed a sin that barred the guilty from entering that coveted place. The other place, in those days, was not the brimstone-fueled

fire of later beliefs, but a desolated area of ice and snow ; cold, not heat, was the meted punishment.

26 Am facal a thig a Ifrinn—
Se a gheibh, ma 's e 's m^ò bheir.
*The message from hell—
Give to the highest bidder.*

27 An rud a thèid fad o'n t-sùil
Thèid e fad o'n chridhe.
*What goes far from the eye
Will go far from the heart.*

E.P.—*Out of sight out of mind.*

But even proverbs may be mistaken sometimes, as for instance :—

*“ Kind eyes may speak the heart's desire,
When heart for heart doth beat,
But fond hearts will communicate
When the eyes cannot meet.”*

28 An turadh, an t-anmoch, am muir-làn, 's
an Dòmhnach.
*Fair weather, the evening, high water, and
the Sabbath.*

Does this imply a choice of circumstances ?

29 An uair a bhios sinn ri òrach
Bidheadhmaid ri òrach ;
'S nuair a bhios sinn ri maorach,
Bidheadhmaid ri maorach.
*When we are seeking gold, let us be seeking
gold ;
And when we are seeking bait let us be seeking
bait.*

E.P.—*One thing at a time, and everything in its
own time.*

- 30 An uair a chluinneas tu sgeul gun dreach
na creid i.

*When you hear a tale that is not pleasant, do
not believe it.*

This means that one should turn a deaf ear to
scandal mongering.

- 31 Am fear nach gheidh na h-airm 'nam na
sìth,

Cha bhi iad aige 'n am a chogaidh.

*Who keeps not his arms in times of peace,
Will have no arms in times of war.*

- 32 An car a h' anns an t-seana mhaide,
Is duilich a thoirt as.

*Straightening the bend in old wood
Is a difficult job.*

- 33 Air rèir do mheas ort fhéin
'S ann a mheasas càch thu.

*According as thou esteemest thyself
Others will esteem thee.*

- 34 Am boll 'air an sgillinn

Is gun an sgillinn ann.

*The boll (of meal) at a penny
And no penny in hand.*

- 35 A cheud sgeul air fear an taighe,
Is sgeul gu làth' air an aoidh.

*The first story from the host,
And tales till morning from the guest.*

This one recalls old Highland manners and
customs, with an "Arabian Nights" atmos-
phere about them.

- 36 Am fear a bhios fad aig an aiseig
Gheibh e thairis uaireigin.
*He that waits long at the ferry
Will get across sometime.*
E.P.—*Everything comes to him that waits.*
- 37 Am fear nach seall roimhe
Seallaidh e as a dheigh.
*He who will not look before him
Will look behind him.*
- 38 An triuir nach fuiling an cniodachadh,
Seann bhean, cearc, agus caora.
*Three that won't bear caressing,
An old woman, a hen, and a sheep.*
- 39 A bheairt sin a bhios cearr,
'Se foighidinn is fhear a dheanamh ris.
*The loom (or engine) that has gone wrong
Patience is best for putting it right.*
- 40 An ràthad fada glan, is an ràthad goirid
salach.
The long clean road, and the short dirty road.
The latter is taken by those who are in a hurry to
get rich, irrespective of the means adopted.
- 41 A bhò is miosa 'th' anns a bhuaile
'Si is cruaidh ni gèum.
*The worst cow in the fold
Lows the loudest.*
- 42 An rud nach gabh leasachadh,
'S fheudar cur suas leis.
*What cannot be helped
Must be put up with.*
E.P.—*Crying over spilt milk, etc.*

- 43 An ni 's an teid dàil theid dearmaid.
What is delayed will be forgotten.
- 44 An rud is fhiach a ghabhail, 's fhiach e iarraidh.
If it is worth taking, it is worth asking for.
- 45 An rud a thig gu dona falbhaidh e leis a ghaoith.
What is got by guile will disappear with the wind.
- 46 A mire ri cuilein, cha sgr e gus an sgal e.
Playing with a pup ends in a howl.
- 47 Be sin an conadh a chuir do 'n choille.
That were sending fuel to the wood.
E.P.—Sending coals to Newcastle.
- 48 Bu mhath an sgàthan sùil caraid.
A friend's eye is a good looking-glass.
- 49 Buinidh urram do'n aois.
Honour belongs to old age.
- 50 Bheir an èigin air rud-eigin a dheanamh.
Necessity will get something done.
E.P.—Necessity is the mother of invention.
- 51 Bheirear comhairle seachad ach cha toirear giùlan.
Council can be given, but not conduct.
- 52 Bheir duine beath' air èigin, ach cha toir e rath air èigin.
A man may force a livelihood, but he cannot force fortune.

- 53 Bheir aon fhear each gu uisge
 Ach cha toir a dhà-dheug air òl.
*One man can lead a horse to the water,
 But twelve cannot make it drink.*
*As man may lead a horse to the water,
 But one and twenty winna gar him drink.*
 —Allan Ramsay's Proverbs.
- 54 Bior a d' dhòrn na fàisg ;
 Easbhuidheachd ri d' nàmhaid na ruisg ;
 Ri gearradh-sgian a d' fheol na èisd ;
 Beisd nimheil ri d' bheò na duisg.
*A thorn in your grasp, do not squeeze ;
 Thy wants to thine enemy do not bare ;
 The dagger's point to your flesh do not hear ;
 A venomous reptile do not rouse.*
- 55 Bu mhath ìmpidh a choilich mu shiol a
 thoirt do na cearcan.
*Well was the cock's petition for corn for the
 hens*
- 56 Be sin ìm a chuir do thaigh àraich.
That were sending butter to the farmhouse.
- 57 Bithidh bean-mhuinntir aig an fheannaig
 's an Fhoghar.
The crow has her maid-servant at harvest time.
- 58 Beiridh caora dhubh uan geal.
A black ewe may have a white lamb.
- 59 Beus na tuath, far am bithear se nithear.
*The manners of the folk where thou art thou
 must adopt.*
E.P.—When in Rome do as the Romans do.

- 60 Balach, is balgaire tighearna,
 dithis nach còir a leigeil leòtha.
*A conceited fellow and a laird's tyke
 Two who should not be allowed their own way.*
- (61) Buail am balach air a charbad,
 Is buail am balgair air a shròin.
*Strike the knave on the neck,
 And knock the tyke on the nose.*
- 62 Is fhearr a bhi sàmhach na droch dhàn a
 ghabhail.
Better be silent than sing a bad song.
- 63 Bithidh sonas an lorg na caitheamh.
Felicity follows generosity.
- 64 Bhiodh sonas aig an strodhaire
 Na'm faigheadh e mar a chaitheadh e.
*The squanderer would be happy were he to
 get as he squandered.*
- 65 Bithidh cron duine cho mòr ri beinn mas
 leir dha fhèin e.
*A man's faults will be as large as a mountain
 ere he himself sees them.*
- 66 Bithidh na gabhair bodhair 's an fhoghar.
The goats will be deaf at harvest time.
*E.P.—There are none so deaf as those who will not
 hear.*
- 67 Brisidh an teanga bhog an cneath.
A smooth tongue will blunt wrath.
E.P.—A soft answer turneth away wrath.
 —Solomon.
- 68 Bithidh an osnaich dheireanach cràidhteach.
The last sigh will be painful.

- 69 Biodh earlas meirleach agad air gach neach,
Ach na dean meirleach de neach idir.
*Have the caution of a thief over every one,
But make no one a thief.*
- 70 Bha iasad ga ghabhail 's ga thoirt riamh air
feadh an t-saoghal.
*Borrowing and lending have always been
world-wide habits.*
- 71 B' olc-an-airidh gun deanadh aimsir thioram
dolaidh.
'Twere a pity that dry weather should do harm.
- 72 Bòidheach, cha'n ann dàicheil.
Pretty, not plausible.
- 73 Beiridh am beag tric air a mhòr ainmig.
*The little frequent will overtake the infrequent
large.*
- 74 B'i sin reul 's an oidhche dhoilleir.
That were a star on a dark night.
- 75 B'fhèarr a bhi gun bhreith na bhi gun
teagasg.
*Better be without being than without instruc-
tion.*
- 76 B'fhèarr gun tòiseachadh na sguir gun
chriochnachadh.
Better not to begin than stop without finishing.
- 77 Bheir eu-dochas misneachd do'n ghealtair.
Desperation will give courage to a coward.
- 78 Bidh an ùbhal is fhèarr air a mheangan is
àirde.
The best apple will be on the highest bough.

79 Cha bhi am bochd-soghail saoi bhir.
The luxurious poor will not be rich.

An apt companion to the above is:—

80 Cha bhi aon duine crionna
 'A measg mille amadan.
*There will not be one wise man
 Among a thousand fools.*

81 Cha tig as a phoit ach an toit a bhios innte.
*No fumes from the pot, but from what it
 contains.*

82 Cha bhi luathas agus grinneas an cuideachd
 a' chèile.
Quick and fine don't combine.

83 Cha d'thug gaol luath
 Nach d'thug fuath clis.
Quick to love, quick to hate.

84 Cha do chuir a ghuallainn ris
 Nach do chuir tùr thairis.
*None ever set his shoulder to
 That did not what he sought to do.*

85 Cha toir an uaisle goil air a phoit.
Gentility will not boil the pot.

86 "Cha'n eil mi na m' sgoileir, 's cha'n àill
 leam a bhi,"
 Ma'n d'thuairt a mhadadh-ruadh ris a
 mhadadh-allaidh.
*"I am not a scholar, and don't wish to be,"
 As the fox said to the wolf.*

There are several versions of the story from which the above saying originated. Campbell's "West Highland Tales," and Nicholson give slightly different versions.

The following is one:—The fox and the wolf, walking together, came upon an ass quietly grazing in a meadow. The fox pointed out an inscription on one of the ass's hind hoofs, and, addressing the wolf, said: "Go you and read that, you are a scholar and I am not." The wolf, flattered by the request, went proudly forward, and coming too close to the ass, got knocked in the head, leaving the fox to enjoy their common spoil.

87 Cha'n i a mhuc is sàimhche
Is lugh a dh'itheas de'n drabh.
It is not the quietest sow that eats the least.

88 Ceud mìlle fàilte.
A hundred thousand welcomes.

89 Cha robh naigheachd mhòr riamh
Nach robh na chall do dhuin'-eigin.
*There never was great news
But was a loss to somebody.*

Rather the opposite of the English proverb, which says:
" 'Tis an ill wind that blows nobody any good." But
the import is the same in both.

> 90 Chaidh theab le creag,
Is theab nach deachaidh.
*"Almost" went over a rock,
And almost didn't.*

91 Cha'n aithnich thu duine
Gus am bi do ghnothaich ris.
*You will never know a man,
Until you do business with him.*

92 Cha'n fhiach gille gun char,
'S cha'n fhiach gille nan ear.
*The man without a turn is worthless,
And the man of many turns is worthless.*

The man of many turns implies a "twister."

93 Cha'n eil mòran lochd 's an cridh a bhios
a gabhail òran.

*There is not much guile in the heart that is
aye singing songs.*

94 Cha'n eil ùaill an aghaidh tairbh.

Pride is not against profit.

95 Cha'n eil bàs fir gun ghràs fir.

*There is no man's death without another
man's gain.*

96 Cha sheas càirdeas air a lèth-chois.

Friendship will not stand on one leg.

97 Coin bhadhail is clann dhaoin eile!

Stray dogs and other people's children!

98 Cha'n fheum an ti a shealbhaicheas an
toradh am blàth a mhilleadh.

*He who would enjoy the fruit must not spoil
the blossom.*

99 Cha'n fhiach bròn a ghnàth,

'S cha 'n fhiach ceòl a ghnàth.

Sorrowing always is not good,

And music (mirth) always is not good.

100 Cha cheòl do dhuin' a bhròn uil' aithris.

It is no music to a man to recite all his woe.

101 Cha toir muir no mònadh a chuid bho
dhuine sona,

Ach cha ghleidh duine dona allt.

*Neither main nor mountain can deprive a
prosperous man of his possessions,
But the unfortunate man cannot retain a
rivulet.*

- 102 Cha do bhris deagh urram ceann duine riamh,
 Agus is mòr-am-beud a bhi uair 's am bith
 as aonais.
*Due civility never broke a man's head,
 And great the pity to be at any time without it.*
- 103 Cha chuirear gad air gealladh.
A promise can never be tied (or tethered.)
- 104 Cha'n eil fealladh ann cho mòr ris an
 gealladh gun choimhlionadh.
*There is no deceit so great as a promise unful-
 filled.*
- 105 Cluinnidh am bodhar fuaim an airgead.
The deaf will hear the clink of money.
- 106 Cha dean cridh misgeach breug.
The inebriated heart will not lie.
- 107 Cha robh na sgeulaiche nach robh breugach.
*There ne'er was a tale-bearer but was un-
 truthful.*
- 108 Cha'n uaisle duine na cheird. *cf. WGP 293.*
No man is above his trade.

The tradition associated with the above is that, when Alastair MacColla (Alexander MacDonald), the Great Montrose's principal lieutenant, found himself pent up with a handful of followers, surrounded by the Covenanters, a tinker of the name of Stewart, from Athol, made his appearance among MacDonald's men, and with his claymore hewed down the Covenanters till but few were left. MacDonald, astonished at the timely succour and the successful onslaught of the unknown warrior, bade him be called to his presence after the fray, and asked him who and what he was. The tinker modestly replied that he was but a tinker, and hardly deserved to be named among men, far less

among such brave men as were then present. MacDonald, turning round to his followers, proclaimed the heroic tinker's praise, citing the words quoted, and which are now a proverb, as above.

109 Cuiridh aon bheart as an duine gu lom, is
gun bhonn fo cheill,
Is cuiridh bheart eil' e ann, ach a ghabhail
na am féin.

*One hapless act may undo a man,
And one timely one will re-establish him.*

110 Cumaidh a mhuc a foil fhéin glan.
The pig will keep its own sty clean.

111 Cha toill iarratas achmhasan.
A request merits no reproof.

112 Cha bhi fuachd air ualachan air fuaraid an
làtha.
*The coxcomb feels no cold no matter how cold
the day.*

113 Cha mhisde sgeul mhath aithris da uair.
A good tale is not the worse of being twice told.

114 Ceannaich mar t-fheum,
Is rèic mar's àill leat.
*Buy according to your needs,
And sell as you may desire.*

115 Cha deanar buanachd gun chall.
There is no profit without loss.

116 Cha d' dhùin dorus nach d'fhosgail dorus.
No door closes without opening another door.

117 Còrdadh a reubeadh reachd.
Agreements breaking the law.

- 118 Ceilichidh seirc aineamh.
Friendship conceals blemishes.
- 119 Cha d'thainig eun glan riamh a nead a chlamhain.
There ne'er came a clean bird out of a kite's nest.
- 120 Cha bhi uail gun dragh.
Vanity is not without trouble.
- 121 Cha bhris mallachd cnaimh.
A curse breaks no bones.
- 122 Cha bheathaich beannachd neach 's am bi.
A blessing feeds no one.
- 123 Cha'n fhaighear math gun dragh.
Good is not obtained without trouble.
- 124 Cha'n eil cleith air an ole,
Ach gun a dheanamh.
*There is no concealment of evil
But by avoiding it.*
- 125 Cha'n eil saoi gun choimeas.
There is no hero without compare.
- cf. 82. 126 Cha bhi luathas is grinneas còmhla.
Quickness and neatness do not go together.
E.P.—The more hurry the less speed.
- 127 Cha'n eil air a mheirleach ach dà shùil,
Ach tha dà-shùil-dheug ga fheitheamh.
*The thief has only two eyes,
But there are a dozen eyes watching him.*
- ceileach
: breugach. 128 Cha robh ceileach nach robh breugach.
There ne'er was reticent, but was untruthful.

- 129 Cruinneachadh cruaidh is sgapadh farsuinn.
Hard gathering and wide scattering.
- 130 Cha dean duine dona ach a dhìchioll.
A poor fellow can do but his best.
- 131 Co air bith a phàigheas math le olc
Thig an t-olc air fhéin.
*Whoever pays good with ill
Bringeth ill upon himself.*
- 132 Cha sgeul rùin e is fios aig triuir air.
It is no secret when three know it.
- 133 Dean tàir air do sheana bhrògan
Nuair a gheibh thu do bhìògan ùire.
*Despise your old shoes when you get your new
ones.*
- 2/
feille
134 Deireadh feile fàg.
Leave the fag-end of a fair.
- 135 Diolaidh saothair ainfhiach.
Industry pays debt.
- 136 Dleasaidh airm urram.
Arms merit honour.
- 137 Eallach mhòr an duine leisg.
The heavy burden of the lazy man.
- 138 Eadraiginn nan ceaird.
Going between tinkers.
- 139 Eiridh tonn air uisge balbh.
Waves will rise on silent water.
- 140 Eug is imrich a dhearbhas taigheadas.
Death and flitting are hard on house-keeping.

- 141 “ Dheanadh e rud-eigin do dh’aon fhear
Ach’s beag a chuid do dhithis e,”
Mar a thuirt Alasdair Mòr mu’n an t-
saoghal.
*“ It would be something for one man,
But a small portion for two,”
As Alexander (the Great) said about the world.*
- 142 Duine mòr beag, is duine beag mòr.
A big-little man, and a little-big man.
- 143 Dh’ fheòirich i de’n ghaoithe
“ Ma chailleas mi thu càit’ an am faigh mi
thu ? ”
A ghaoth—“ Air mullach na’n càrn.”
Dh’ fheòirich i de’n cheò—“ Ma chailleas mi
thu, càit’ am faigh mi thu ? ”
A cheò—“ Air mullach nam beann.”
Dh’ fheòirich mi bho Chliù—“ Ma chailleas
mi thu, càit’ am faigh mi thu ? ”
’Cliù—“ Caill mise aon uair, ’s cha’n fhaigh
thu gu brath tuilleadh mi.”
*She asked of the wind—“ If I lost you, where
could I find you ? ”
The wind—“ On the top of the cairns.”
She asked of the mist—“ If I lost you, where
could I find you ? ”
The Mist—“ On the top of the mountains.”
She asked of Fame—“ If I lost you, where
could I find you ? ”
Fame—“ Lose me once, and you will never
find me again.”*
- 144 Eug is imrich a chlaoidheas taigheadas.
Death and flittings the bane of good husbandry.

- 145 Èsan nach fuilig dochainn, cha'n fhaigh e
socair.
He who cannot suffer pain will not get ease.
- 146 Faodar an t-òr fhéin a cheannach tuille is
daor.
Gold itself may be too dearly bought.
- 147 Fialachd do'n fhògarach,
Is cnaimhean brist' do'n èucoireach.
*Hospitality to the exile,
And broken bones to the oppressor.*
- 148 "Falbhaidh mis' a màireach," ars' an rìgh ;
"Fanaidh tu riumsa," ars' a ghaoth.
*"I will go to-morrow," said the king ;
"You will wait for me," said the wind.*
- 149 Fanaidh duine sona ri sith,
Ach bheir duine dona dubh-leum.
*The fortunate man waits for peace,
And the unfortunate takes a leap in the dark.*
- 150 Far is sàimhche an uisge,
'S ann is doimhne e.
Where the water is stillest it is deepest.
E.P.—Still waters run deep.
- 151 Far is tainne an abhain
'S ann is mò a fuaim.
*Where the river is shallowest
It will make the most noise.*
- 152 Fòdaidh càt sealltainn air an rìgh.
The cat may look at the king.

The writer recalls hearing this proverb quoted by a woman to her husband, when his quick retort was :—

Faodaidh an rìgh na sùilean a chuir as a chàt. *a*
The king may put the eyes out of the cat.

- 153 Furan an t-aidh a thig, greas an t-aidh
tha fáibh.
Welcome the coming, speed the parting guest.
The above has its counterparts in many languages.
- 154 Fuachd caraid is fuachd ainairt,
Cha do mhair iad fada riamh.
*The coldness of a friend, and the coldness of
linen,*
They never lasted long.
- 155 Far am bi toil bidh gnìomh.
Where there's a will there will be deeds.
E.P.—Where there's a will there's a way.
- 156 Fear a cheud riarachaidh, cha robh e riamh
falamh.
The first served was never empty.
- 157 Fìor no breuge, millear bean leis.
True or false, 'twill injure a woman.
A reproof to scandal mongering and meddlesome
tattling.
- 158 Feuch gu bheil do theallach fhéin sguuibte
Ma's tog thu luath do choimhearsnaich.
*See that your own hearth is swept,
Before you lift your neighbour's ashes.*
- 159 Faodaidh breith luath a bhi lochdach.
A hasty judgment may be harmful.
- 160 Feumaidh gach beò a bheathachadh.
All living creatures must be fed.
- 161 Feumaidh na fithichean fhéin a bhi beò.
Even the ravens must live.

This last would make the motto for a "Red Army," but its significance goes deeper than any superficial interpretation.

162 Feitheamh an t-sionnaich ri sìthionn an tairbh.

The fox's waiting for the bull's flesh.

163 Feumaidh am fear a bhios na éigin
Beart air chor-eigin a dheanamh.

He who is in straits must make a shift some way.

164 Fhuair e car t-roimhn deathaich.

*He got a turn through the smoke.**

165 Gun gleidheadh an 'Tighearna a ghealach
bho na coin.

May the Lord preserve the moon from the dogs.

166 Gleidhidh airc innleachd ged nach gleidh i
oighreachd.

Necessity incites inventiveness although it may not win a fortune.

167 Glòir mhòr a cholainn bhig.

Great praise (sound) from a little body.

168 Gabhaidh gach dath dubh,
Ach cha ghabh dubh gach dath.

*Any colour will take black,
But black will not take any colour.*

*Founded on a very old custom of putting a newly christened child in a basket, and handing it over and round the fire in order to counteract evil spirits.

169 Glac ciall, gabh biadh, iarr Dia's cha'n eagail duit.

Have sense, take food, seek God, and there's no fear of you.

170 Gluais faicilleach le cupan làn.

Move warily with a full cup.

171 Gheibh loman an dorus.

The niggard will be dismissed.

172 Gum bidheadhmaid air ar gleidheadh Bho lagh's bho lighichean.

May we be preserved from lawyers and from doctors.

Truly a very fervent wish, this one.

173 Gheibh thu e, nuair a gheibh thu nead na cuthaig.

You will get it when you'll find the cuckoo's nest.

It is well-known that the cuckoo never makes a nest for itself. A Scots parallel is:—

It is ill to take the breeks off a Hielan' man.

This Lowland saying had force only when all Highlanders wore the kilt. In this connection the fact may be recalled that it required an Act of Parliament to take the kilt off the Highlander, and another Act of Parliament to repeal the previous one. In this respect the Highland garb is unique. The Irish National dress was prohibited by an Act of the English Parliament, and this Act has never been repealed, although now dead from inanition.

174 Gheibh foighidinn furtachd.

Patience will be comforted.

's gheibh trusdar bean

- 175 Gheibh an t-uaibhreach leigeadh an uair is àirde e.
The proud will get a fall when at their highest.
- 176 Glòir mhillis a mheallas an t-amadan.
Sweet words beguile a fool.
- 177 Ged is beag an dreathan-donn nì e fuaim.
Although the wren be small it will make a noise.
- 178 Gheibh baoth baobh a guidhe
Ged nach fhaigh a h-anam tròcair.
*A wicked woman will get her wish
But her soul will not get mercy.*
- 179 Ged a bheirteadh a bhò do'n an dorus mhòr,
Reachadh i fhéin do'n bhàthaich.
*Though a cow be taken to the mansion door,
She, herself, will go to the byre door.*
- 180 Ged is àird 'oscionn nam bochd
A sheallas an saibhir,
Bidh iad an cuideachd a a chèile fhàthast.
*Though high above the poor the rich may look,
They will be all together yet.*
- 181 Gealladh gun a choimhghealladh,
Is miosa sin na dhiultadh.
*Promising but not fulfilling,
Is worse than refusing.*
- 182 Ged is grinn an sioda
Is coma leis co air am bi e.
*Though the silk be fine,
It cares not who wears it.*

183 Is sleamhain an leac aig dorus an taighe mhòr.

Slippery is the flagstone (doorstep) at the mansion house door.

A hint of the uncertainty of depending on favours from those in high places, and that one's own efforts should be depended upon as the means to success. There are, however, exceptions to this as to every other rule, note, for instance, the following —

Is fhearr caraid 's a chùirt na crùn 's an sporran.
A friend at Court is better than a crown in the purse.

The proverb notwithstanding, money talks to-day as it never did before, and with plenty in one's purse, one need not trouble about the mansion house's slippery doorstep. Money is also better distributed than at any time before, despite the clamour by some self-obsessed folk against so-called Capitalists. In these altered circumstances the more general application of some old-wise sayings may have lost some of their force, but they still retain a meaning and a moral worthy of attention.

184 Is fhearr na'n t-òr sgeul air inns' air chòir.
Better than gold is a tale well told.

185 Is fhearr bloigh bheag le 'bheannachd
Na bloigh mòr le mallachd.
*Better a small portion with a blessing
Than a large portion with a cursing.*

186 Is fhearr a bhi leisg gu ceannach
Na ruighinn gu pàigheadh.
*Hesitation in buying
Is better than delay in paying.*

187 Is fhearr an cù a bhogas earball
Na cù a chuireas drang air.
*Better the dog that dips its tail
Than the dog that snarls.*

- 188 Is ladurna gach cù air a shitig fhéin.
Every dog is bold on his own midden.
- 189 “ Is bigead e sud,” ars’ an dreathan donn,
Nuair a thug e làn a ghuib a loch mòr uisge.
*“ It is less for that,” as the wren said, when
it took the full of its bill from the large lake.*
- 190 Is olc an t-iasad nach fhiach a chuir dhach-
aidh
’Tis a bad loan that’s not worth sending home.
- 191 Is mòr an eire an t-aineolas.
Ignorance is a great burden.
- 192 Is fhearr còmhairl na thrath, na tiodhlac
fadalach
A timely advice is better than a late gift.
- 193 Is fhearr deagh eiseamplair na cronachadh.
Better a good example than a reproof.
- 194 Is uaisle am breid na toll.
*The patch is more respectable than a hole
(rent).*
- 195 Is cam ’s is dìreach an lagh.
*Crooked (uncertain) and straight (sure) is the
law.*
- 196 Is e eagail an Tighearna toiseach an eòlais.
*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of know-
ledge.*
- 197 Is bòidhche leis an fhithich a garraiche-
gorm féin.
The raven thinks its own chic the prettiest.

198 Is i a chiall cheannaichte is fhearr.
Bought wit is best.

199 Is tric a chaidh feala-dhà gu fealla-rìreadh.
Jesting frequently turns to earnest.

200 Is mairig a dheanadh èibhneas ri dubhachas
fir eile.
*Woe to him who would make light of another
man's grief.*

201 Is ann air a shon fhéin an ni an cat crònan.
It is to please itself that the cat croons.

v. 184

202 Is fhearr na'n t-òr sgeul air inns' air chòir.
Better than gold is a tale well told.

203 Is sona cuideachd aig a bhùird,
Is mairg a bhios ri bhiadh na aonar.
*'Tis pleasant with company at the table,
Woe to him who feeds alone.*

204 Is fhearr beagan storais na mòran chàirdean.
Better a little of one's own than many friends.

205 Is fhearr caitheamh na meirgeadh.
Better wear than rust.

206 Innleachd Shasuinn, is neart Alba.
England's art, and Scotland's force.

207 Is buan gach olc.
Evil is lasting.

208 Is buaine na gach ni an nàire.
More lasting than all else is shame.

209 Is fhearr duine na daoine.

A man is better than men.

In this is heard the cry, a yearning for a leader, a man for the moment; the man for an emergency, when quick decision and action is required. There are, however, conceivable circumstances when the council, or, according to the terminology of present day politics, the Conference is preferable, and so, the proverb again comes in:—

Is fhearr dà cheann na aonan.

Two heads are better than one.

210 Is duine còir e, ach na iarr a chuid.

He is a fine man, but do not ask off him.

The foregoing shows that the niggardly were the butt and scorn of the good old folk in "the good old days."

211 Is fhearr a bhi cinnteach na bhi cailteach.

Better be sure than be a loser.

212 Is miosa droch earbsa na bhi gun earbsa idir.

A shaken trust is worse than no trust at all.

213 Iallan fada a leathar chàich.

Long laces from other people's leather.

214 Is math an seirbheiseach teine,

Ach's olc a mhaighstir e.

Fire is a good servant, but a bad master.

215 Is leisg le leisgein a dhol an laidhe,

Ach's seac leisg leis èiridh.

*Lazy is lazy in going to bed,
But seven times lazier to rise.*

216 Is fhearr greim caillich na tagar ri h.

*Better an old woman's bite than the craving
of a king.*

217 Is mòr a dh' fhuilingeas cridhe ceart mas
bris e.

*The upright heart endures a great deal before
it breaks.*

218 Is fhearr diol farmaid, na diol truaighe.

*Better the recompense of envy than the wages
of woe.*

219 Is fhearr a bhi na d'aonar na'n droch
chuideachd.

Better be alone than in bad company.

220 Is coma leis an rìgh Eoghann, is coma le
Eoghann co-dhiù.

*The king doesn't care for Ewen,
And Ewen doesn't care a straw.*

221 Is math am buachail' an oidhche,
Bheir e dhachaidh gach beathach is duine.
*Night is a good shepherd, it bringeth home
man and beast.*

X 222 Is minig a dh'fhosgail beul uaigne
Taobh-cruaiche do fhear eile.

*Opening a grave has frequently been another
man's opening to possession.*

Literally, "opening to a stack's side," stacks of corn
being the sign of possessions in those days, when all wealth
was from the land.

223 Is mairg a shineadh làmh na h-airce
Do chridh na circe.

*Woe to him who stretches poverty's hand
To the hen-hearted.*

224 Is tric a bheothaich srad bheag teinne mòr.
A small spark has often kindled a great fire.

- 225 Is ionnan a bhi ad' thosd ri aideachadh.
Silence is equivalent to confession.
- 226 Is dall duine an cùisean dhaoin eile.
A man is blind in another man's concerns.
- 227 Is duilich seann cheann a chuir air guallain
òga.
*'Tis difficult to put an old head on a young
shoulder.*
- 228 Is labhrach na builg fàs.
Empty bladders are loquacious.
E.P.—An empty pail makes most noise.
- 229 Is mairg air nach bi eagal na breuge.
Woe to him who is not afraid of falsehood.
- 230 Is e'n cunntas ceart a dh'fhàgas càirdean
buidheach.
Correct reckoning satisfies friends.
- 231 Is minig a bha còmhairle rìgh an ceann
amadain.
Counsel fit for a king often comes from a fool.
- 232 Is fheirde cù cù a chronachadh.
*A dog is the better of another dog being re-
proved.*
- 233 Is sona cuid an comuinn,
Ach is mairg a chromar na aonar.
*'Tis enjoyable to share in company,
But 'tis wretched to be partaking alone.*
- 234 Is ùasal mac-an-t-ùasail an tìr na meirleach,
Ach cha'n ùasal mach an t-ùasal mar bi e
treubhach.

Gentle is the son of the gentleman among thieves,

But the gentleman's son is no gentleman if he be not dexterous.

In the olden times dexterity in action was deemed the supreme attainment. It was frequently so necessary if one were to get away with a whole skin.

- 235 Is cliùtach an onair na 'n t-òir.
Honour is more renowned than gold is precious.
- 236 Labhraidh a bheul, ach se'n gnìomh a dhearbhas.
The mouth will speak, but deeds are the proof.
- 237 Làmh fhad, is cead a sìneadh.
A long arm, and leave to stretch it.
- 238 Lionar bearn mòr le clachan beaga.
Great gaps may be filled with small stones.
- 239 Leig leis na marbh laidhe.
Let the dead lie.
- 240 Leaghaidh a chòir am beul an anamhainn
Justice melts in the mouths of the faint-hearted.
- 241 Làmhnan leanabh is goile seann duine.
A child's hands and an old man's appetite.
(*Insatiable.*)
- 242 Làn beòl a bhiadh, is làn bail' a nàire.
A mouth full of food and a town full of shame.
- 243 Mar comas dhuit teumadh, na ruisg do dh'eudadh.
If you cannot bite, do not show your teeth.
E.P.—*Discretion is the better part of valour.*

- 244 Muin air mhuin thig an trioblaid,
 Miann air mhiann thig an t-slàint.
*Troubles come one by one,
 Health will come by force of will.*
- 245 Mar a theil agad ach aon sùil
 Faic leis an t-sùil a th'agad.
*If you have but one eye
 Look with the eye you've got.*
- 246 Meath am facal ma' leig thu 'mach e
 'S cha chuir e dragh ort fhéin no air duin' eile.
*Temper the word before giving it utterance,
 And it will not trouble yourself or any other
 man.*
- 247 Mar is sine 'sann is miosa, coltach ri cuil
 eanan a mhadadh ruaidh.
The older the worse, like the fox's cubs.
- 248 Ma 's ann ortsa tha feum,
 Bidheadh an t-saothair ort.
*If its you that's needed,
 Let the labour be yours.*
- 249 Millidh droch comh-luadair deagh bheusan.
Bad conversation spoils good manners.
- 250 Mas math leat sith, càirdeas agus cluain,
 Eisd, faic, is fuirich sàmhach.
*If thy wish be for peace, friendship, and
 appeasement,
 Listen, look, and keep quiet.*
- 251 Ma bhualas tu cù na balach, bual gu math
 iad.
If you strike a dog or a lout, strike home.

Mion

v. Rob Down

- 252 Na las sop nach urrainn duit féin a chuir as.
*Do not light a whisp (a fire) you cannot
 yourself put out.*
 There is a rebuke here to the foolhardy.
- 253 Ni èiridh subhach gnuis shuilbhir.
A glad heart makes a cheerful countenance.
- 254 Ni àirc ìnnleachd.
Necessity devises.
- 255 Na tog toghail air an aineoil.
Do not quarrel with a stranger.
- 256 Na toir breith air réir coltais,
 Faodaidh cridh beartach a bhi fo chòta
 bochd.
*Judge not by appearances,
 A rich heart may be under a poor coat.*
- 257 Na toir iasad air an iasad.
Do not lend a loan.
- 258 Na'n deanadh mo làmh
 Mar a dh' iarradh mo shùil.
*If my hand would but do
 As my eye would desire.*
- 259 Na'm faighteadh ceud sagairt gun 'bhi
 sanntach ;
 Ceud tailleir gun 'bhi sunndach ;
 Ceud griasaiche gun 'bhi breugach ;
 Ceud figheadair gun 'bhi bradach ;
 Ceud gobha gun 'bhi pàiteach ;
 Is ceud cailleach nach robh riamh air
 chèilidh,
 Chuireadh iad an crùn air an rìgh gun aon
 bhuille.

If there could be found —

*A hundred priests who were not greedy ;
A hundred tailors who were not hilarious ;
A hundred shoemakers who were not un-
truthful ;*

*A hundred weavers who were not theivish ;
A hundred blacksmiths who were not thirsty ;
And a hundred old women who were never
gossiping ;*

*They could put the crown on the king's head
without striking a blow*

260 Nuair is mò a fhuair mi 'sann is lugha bha
agam.

The more I got, the less I had.

261 Nuair a bhristeas aon bho an gàradh,
Theid a-dhà-dheug a mach air.

*When one cow breaks the dyke
Twelve will go through (the breach).*

262 Ni airc innleachd.

Necessity will find a way.

E.P.—Necessity is the mother of invention.

263 Na mol neach 's am bith tuilleadh 's a chòir,
Gus nach bi rùm agad a chàineadh.

*Do not praise any one too much ;
Leave room to decry him.*

264 Na spion fiasaig fir nach aithne dhuit.

Do not pluck the beard of a stranger.

265 Nuair a bhios ni aig a chat ni i dùrsdan.

When the cat gets anything it will purr.

266 Oran na cìrce beadaidh.

The song of the pert hen.

267 Ochain an aois, is fhaid' i na'm bàs!

Ochone old age, 'tis longer than death!

268 Ruisgeadh e a thaigh fhéin a thuathadh
thaigh a choimhearsnaich.

*He would bare his own house to thatch his
neighbours.*

This last illustrates the spirit of co-operation that was inherent in the clan system, and which can still be seen and felt wherever is found a community of the old stock still settled on the land. This was the spirit that made possible the economy of small holdings. In most rural parts to-day the population is so sparse, and among the few that are there there are so many incomers who are alien to the old customs and habits, with the result that the old spirit is dying out. Life on the land is becoming more prosaic, more difficult, less pleasing; hence one of the contributory causes to the depopulation of the rural areas. In conjunction with, and in reality, an essential part of the old spirit was the old Highland hospitality which had become proverbial. A delightful example of it is to be found recorded in the late Dr. Charles Fraser-MacKintosh's book, *Inverness-shire, Parish by Parish*. We are told there of an old worthy of the Keppoch Clan who had been out in the Forty-five with "Prince Charlie." He was known as MacDonald of Tullochchrom. Tullochchrom was a farm within the confines of Lochaber and Badenoch. His dwelling was on a lonely spot, but near the high road, which could be seen for a considerable distance while looking either to the right or to the left from his front door. In the evening of his days he would sit outside watching for the approach of pedestrians, and on seeing one he would at once repair inside to inform his wife, and preparations would be made for providing the wayfarer with a meal. No matter who he might be he must needs have travelled a

considerable distance before passing Tullochchrom. Sometimes it happened that the wayfarer would pass without calling, upon which the old worthy would wax indignant, remarking that the stranger must surely be "a dog at his his own home when he would pass another man's door without calling."

269 Ruigidh each mall a mhuilean,
Ach cha ruig an t-each a bhristeas a chnaim-
hean.

*The slow horse will reach the mill,
But the one that breaks its bones will not.*

270 Se barail an duine ghlic is tinne théid air
an fhìrinn.

*The wise man's opinion comes nearest the
truth.*

271 Cur sìod air cabar is bidh e breagh.
Put silk on a stick and it will look fine.

272 Sionnach ag iarraidh a ruagaidh.
The fox asking to be chased.

273 Sìreadh sop an cònlaich.
Searching for a whisp among straw.

274 Sìth do d' anam, is Clach air do Chàrn.
Peace to your soul, and a stone on your cairn.

"Clach air do chàrn" (a stone on your cairn) is one of our best-known sayings, and it is founded on a custom that was common until recent years, probably still practised in some parts. At funerals, the coffin resting on bearers carried in relays by the mourners, sometimes miles having to be traversed in this way, there were certain recognised stages where halts were made, a rest and refreshments taken. A cairn was erected on the spot, each individual contributing a stone to the erection, being synonymous

with a stone to the memory of the deceased. Any friend unavoidably absent from the funeral would take advantage of the first opportunity to make his individual contribution in the same way. Hence the origin of the saying: "*A stone on your cairn.*"

275 Sliob am bodach is sgròbaidh e thu ;
Bual am bodach is nì e ùmhlachd dhuit.
*Stroke the churl, and he will scratch you,
Strike him and he will do obeisance to you.*

276 Suidh gu h-iosal is diol gu h-uasal.
Sit lowly and pay nobly.

277 Smaointich gu math an toiseach,
Deanadar an sin.
*Consider well in the first place,
Then act.*

278 Tha thapadh air teanga an Eirionnaich,
Ach 's ann an dèigh làimh th'an Gaidheal
glic.
*The Irishman's wit is on (the tip of) his
tongue,
The Gael is wise after the event.*

> 279 Tha taobh dubh is taobh geal air,
Mar a bh'air bàta Mhic-Iain Ghearr.
*He has a white side and a black side,
Like M'Ian Ghearr's boat.*

The M'Iain Ghearr and his boat, upon whose story the foregoing saying is based, is localised in different localities by different versions of the story. The substance, however, is the same. Mac-Iain-Ghearr was a notable sea rover of the western coast. His galley was painted white on one side and black on the other side. As a consequence, when seen on the way to harry a particular locality, and a watch was set for his return, MacIain Ghearr's boat

having a different appearance on his return journey, was unsuspectingly allowed to pass without challenge. In this manner he frequently contrived to outwit his sorely-tried enemies. Hence the saying. The plan of comou-
flaging our sea-craft did not originate with the Great War. a

- 280 Tachraidh na daoine,
Ach cha tachair na cnuic.
Men will meet,
But the hills will not.
- 281 'Tha beagan tròcair aig an fhairge,
Ach cha'n eil tròcair idir aig na creagan.
The waves have some mercy,
But the rocks have no mercy at all.
- 282 'Theid aig neach air e fhéin a ghleidheadh
bho'n mheirleach
Ach cha'n urrainn e e fhéin a ghleidheadh
bho'n a bhreugaidear.
One can protect himself from a thief,
But not from a liar.
- 283 'Tha'n uaisle mar a chumar i.
Nobility is as it is kept.
- 284 'Tha'n uaill na bleidire cho mòr ris an eas-
bhuidh,
Agus mòran ni 's uaibhriche.
Pride is as importunate as poverty,
And much more arrogant.
- 285 Tha mi na's eòlaiche air coille,
Na bhi fo eagal na caillich-oidhche.
I am too accustomed to a wood
To be afraid of an owl.

286 Tha fios fithich agad.

You have a raven's knowledge.

Supernatural knowledge was attributed to the raven by both the Gael and the Norse. Tradition records that Odin, the hero-god of the Norse, was kept informed of coming events by two ravens in his possession.

287 Tha smùdan féin an ceann gach fòid

Is dòruinn ceanagailt ris gach math.

*Every peat-end has its own smoke,
And there's something awanting in everything
good.*

288 Tha sealladh dhiot na leighis do shùilean
goirt.

A sight of you is a cure for sore eyes.

289 Trod chàirdean is sith nàimhdean,

Da rud air nach leigear a leas feart a thoirt.
*Quarrelling among relatives and peace among
enemies.*

Two things that need not be considered.

290 Tha iongantas air a chat earball a bhi air.

The cat wonders at its having a tail.

291 “Tha biadh is ceòl an so,” mar a thuirt a
mhadadh ruadh,

’S e ruith air falbh leis a phiob.

*There is meat and music here,
As the fox said, when running away with the
bagpipes.*

292 Tàlaidhidh am biadh fiadh na beinne.

Food will entice the mountain deer.

- 293 Tagh do chomhludair ma'n tagh thu do dheoch.
Choose your company before you choose your drink.
- 294 Taisg bonn is cosg bonn, is bidh tu sona ;
 Taisg bonn 's na cosg bonn, is bidh tu dona.
Save a coin and spend a coin, and you'll be happy.
Save a coin and spend one not, unhappiness will be your lot.
- 295 Thig crìoch air an saoghal,
 Ach mairidh gaol is ceòl.
*The world will pass away,
 But love and music last for aye.*
- 296 Thig math a mulad, 's thig sonas a suaimhneas.
Good will come from sadness, and happiness from quietness.
- 297 Thig eairleigeadh air na rìghrean.
Exigencies come on kings.
- 298 Theid seòltachd thar spionnadh.
Cunning overcomes strength.
- 299 Theid an t-anmhunn dìchiollach thar an làidir leisg.
The diligent weak will win o'er the lazy strong.
- 300 Teisteanas a choimhearsnaich air gach neach.
The testimony of neighbours is everybody's test.

} *Complet of John
 Campbell v. Reeves
 in An Gaidheal, July, 1926.*

- 301 Thoir an tarbh do'n Tigh-mhòr,
Is iarraidh e do'n bhàthaich.
*Take the bull to the mansion,
And it will want to the byre.*
- 302 Trian a thig gun iarraidh
Eagal, iadach, is gaol.
*Three that come unsought—
Fear, jealousy, and love.*
- 303 Truisidh cnaimh feòil fhad's is beò an smior.
*Bones will gather flesh while the marrow is
sound.*
- 304 Theid an dìchioll thar neart.
Diligence will overcome strength.
- 305 Thoir do chuid do dhuine falamh is gheibh
thu air ais e dùbailte.
*Give to the needy, and you will get it back
double fold.*
- 306 Uaisle gun chuid, is maragain gun gheir.
*Birth without means, and puddings without
suet.*
- 307 Urram a bhleidire do'n stràcair.
The sneak's difference to the swaggerer.

PART II.

MEN, WOMEN, MARRIAGE.

MEN, WOMEN, MARRIAGE,

BURCKHARDT, in his preface to his notable collection of Egyptian proverbs, makes the melancholy observation regarding them that he found only one proverb among the hundreds recorded by him that expresses any faith in human nature. Such a comment could not be justifiably made about our Gaelic proverbs. As Sheriff Nicolson observes :—their view of human nature is keen but kindly, critical, but not contemptuous. Our proverbs truly portray the character of the Highland people as a mixture of diverse qualities, some admirable, some not so, but on the whole very respectable; seldom repulsive, oftener attractive, and rarely indicating selfishness, stupidity, heartlessness, or treachery. Indeed, such faults are repeatedly reprov'd in our proverbs with antipathy, contempt, and abhorrence.

On the other hand, all the virtues of Truthfulness, Honesty, Fidelity, Self-restraint, Self-esteem, Sense of Honour, Courage, Caution, Generosity, Hospitality, Courtesy, Peaceableness,

Love of Kindred, Patience, Promptness, Industry, and Providence are highly commended. Manliness, in its every phase, is revered in our proverbs, and all the virtues will be found prominently in such proverbs as are evidently native to the soil, that smack of the heather and the homely hearth-fires of the common people.

Like all nations, the Celts have many proverbs essaying to portray the "unscrutable" ways of woman. But unlike most nations their proverbs regarding them are never coarse or sensuous. Sarcastic they are to a degree, but kindly even in their sarcasm. Matthew Arnold asserts that there is something feminine in the character of the Celt, and that to this affinity to the feminine temperament is attributed that inborn chivalry and courtliness admitted to be characteristic of the race. This is a matter upon which there may be two opinions, but the writer believes that Highlanders would prefer to admit this alleged feminine trait than be without that chivalry and that courtliness said to be the result of it.

The sacredness of marriage, parental control, and the dutiful rearing of their offspring; homilies for the education of the child, and for the conduct of the adult, between man and man, and between the individual and the community,

are given in that terse and effective language so characteristic of the proverb.

There is also a vein of quiet humour throughout our proverbs which satisfactorily belies the charge, too widely believed in, that the Highlander is wanting in that saving grace.

- 308 Am fear a bhios beudach e fhéin,
 Cha sguir e a dh' èigneachadh chàich.
*He who is guilty himself
 Will always be urging others.*
- 309 Am fear a bhios carach 's a bhaile so bidh e
 carach 's a bhail' ud thall.
*He who is tricky in one place will be tricky
 in that other place.*
- 310 Am fear a bhios modhail,
 Bidh e modhail ris a h-uile duine.
*He who is mannerly
 Will be mannerly to all.*
- 311 Am fear a phòsas air son earraisa
 Tha e reic a shaorsa.
*He who weds for dower
 Resigns his power.*
- 312 Am fear a labhras olc mu mnai tha e cuir
 mì-chliù air fhéin.
Who speaks ill of his wife dishonours himself.
- 313 An duine a bhios fada gun phòsadh caillidh
 e a phròis.
He who is late in marrying will lose his pride.
- 314 Am fear a gheibh ainm na moch-eiridh,
 faodaidh e cadal fada.
*He who gets the name of being an early riser
 May take a long sleep.*
- 315 Am fear a gleidheas long
 Gheibh e là ga seòladh.
*He who will keep a boat
 Will get a day for sailing it.*

- 316 Am fear a sheallas roimhe cha tuislich e.
He who looks before him will not stumble.
E.P.—Look before you leap.
- 317 Am fear is isle bruidhinn
 'Se 's fhearr a chluinneas.
He who speaks the lowest
Hears the best.
- 318 Am fear is clis gu gealladh,
 'Se's clis gu fealladh.
He who is quickest to promise
Is also the quickest to deceive.
- > 319 Am fear nach do dh'ionnsaich aig a ghlùn,
 Cha'n ionnsaich e ris an uilean.
He who has not learned at the knee,
Will not learn at the elbow.
- 320 Aithnichear am ballach 's a mhaduinn,
 Briste e barrall a bhròige.
The clown is known in the morning
He will break his shoe lace.
- 321 Am fear a bhios air dheireadh beiridh a
 bheist air.
The beast will overtake him who is last.
- 322 Am fear a bhios air thoiseach theid e'n sàs
 anns an làthaich.
He who is first will stick in the mud.
E.P.'s—Slow but sure.
The more hurry the less speed.
Fools will dare where angels fear to tread.
- 323 Air a mhàgan roimh na casan.
Crawling before walking.

- 324 Aithnichear duine air a chuideachd.
A man is known by his company.
 S.P.—*Tell me the company you keep,*
And I'll tell you your character.
- 325 Am fear a bhios fada gun èiridh,
 Bidh e na leum fad' an làtha.
He who is late in rising
Will be in a hurry all day.
- 326 Am fear a gheibh bàs gach làtha 'se's
 fhaide bhios beò.
He who is dying every day will live the longest.
- 327 Am fear nach cluinn air chòir,
 Cha fhreagair e air chòir.
He who will not listen right
Will not reply a-right.
- 328 Am fear is tiuighe claigeann
 Se 's lugha eanchainn.
He who has the thickest skull
Has the smallest brain.

A companion to the foregoing is :—

Ceann mòr air duine glic
 Is ceann circ air amadan.
A big head on a wise man,
And a hen's head on a fool.

The latter is not to be taken too literally, as witness the one immediately preceding it. The shape of the head is to be taken into account.

- cf. 427 329 Am fear a thig air na's leir dha,
 Thig e air na 's nàir dha.
He who speaks of all he sees,
Will hear what will shame him.

- 330 Am fear nach gleidh an sgillinn
 Cha bhi an guinea aige.
*Who will not keep the penny
 Will not possess the guinea.*
- 331 Am fear nach teich, teichear roimh.
Who will not flee, will be fled from.
*Come one, come all, this rock shall fly
 From its firm base as soon as I.*
- Scott.
- 332 Am fear a ghleidheas a theanga
 Gleidhidh e a charaid.
He who holds his tongue keeps his friend.
- 333 Am fear nach eil olc air aire cha smaoinich
 e olc air chàich.
*He who is not evil-minded will not think evil
 of others.*
- 334 Am fear nach fhreagair athair no a mhàthair,
 Freagairidhe an nì is tàire leis—craicionn
 an laogh.
*He who will not list to father or mother,
 Will listen to what will please him less, the
 calf's skin (the strap).*
- 335 Am fear a laidheas anns an pholl togaidh
 e an làthaich.
*He who lies in the mud, part of it will stick
 to him.*
- 336 Am fear nach leir leas, is mòr de chèill a
 chailleas e leis.
*He who sees not his chance loses sense and
 does not advance.*

- 337 Am fear aig a bheil, cumadh e ;
 Am fear aig nach eil, tarruinneadh e.
*He who has, let him hold ;
 He who is without, let him pull.*
*The good old rule, the simple plan,
 That he should take who has the power,
 And he should keep who can.*
 —Wordsworth.
- 338 Am fear is fhaide bha beò riamh fhuaire 'm bàs.
The oldest man that ever lived, died at last.
- 339 Air cho fada 'sa theid thu o'n taighe
 Na toir droch sgeul ort fhèin dhachaidh leat.
*However far you roam, no ill report of yourself
 bring home.*
- 340 Am fear nach guth a ghuth, cha rath a rath.
*Whose word is not his bond, his luck will never
 stand.*
- 341 Am fear nach eisd ris nach toigh leis
 Cha'n fhaic e na 's fhearr leis.
*He who will not listen to what he does not like
 Will not see what will please him.*
- 342 Am fear nach fosgail a sporran fosgailidh e a bheul.
*He who does not open his purse opens his
 mouth.*
- 343 An am an éigin dearbhar na càirdean.
In time of need friends will be tested.
E.P.—A friend in need is a friend indeed.

- 344 An car a bhios 's a mhàthair is gnàth leis a bhi 's an nighean.
The mother's failings will naturally be seen in the daughter.
- 345 “ A chaillich, an gabh thu 'n rìgh ? ”
“ Cha ghabh, 's nach gabh e mi.”
“ *Crone, will you have the king ?* ”
“ *I won't, as he won't have me.* ”
- 346 Aisigidh leannanachd an tochradh.
Sweet-hearting brings the tochar (dower).
- 347 Aisling caillich—mar a dùrachd.
An old wife's dreams—according to her desires.
- 348 A pògadh an leanabh air sgàth na banaltrum.
Kissing the child for the sake of (while wooing) the nurse.
- 349 Aon mhac caillich, agus aon mhart muilleir.
An old woman's only son, and a miller's one cow.
- 350 Aon mhac na truaighe,
Is dualach gun teid e' dholaidh.
*The unfortunate only son,
Naturally goes to the dogs.*
- 351 Aon nighean caillich,
Aon eun teallaich.
*The old wife's only daughter,
The one hearth chicken.*
- 352 An leanabh a dh' fhàgar dha fhéin.
Cuiridh e air a mhàthair nàire.
*The child that's left to himself
Will put his mother to shame.*

- 353 A thoil fhéin do gach duine,
'S an toil uile do na mnathan.
*His own wish to every man,
And all their wishes to the women.*
- 354 Am fear a phòsas bean pòsaidh e dragh.
He who marries a wife marries trouble.
Sheriff Nicolson says : " I have found no Gaelic proverb expressing anything more unfavourable to marriage than this one, which is more than can be said of the proverbs of any of the greater nations of Europe."
- 355 Aithnichear fear domeisg air faire.
The slattern's husband is known from afar.
- 356 Aithnichear leanabh air a bheusan.
A child will be known by its manners.
- 357 Aithnichear duine air a chuideachd.
A man will be known by his company.
- 358 Beiridh bean mac, ach se Dia a ni an t-oighre.
A woman may bear a son, but God makes the heir.
- 359 Bidh an luairgean-luatha na uallachan gillie.
The child that grovels in the ashes, will become a jaunty lad.
- 360 Cha'n fhuirich muir ri uallach ;
Cha dean bean luath maorach,
Cha dean bean gun nàire cugainn, |
'S cha dean bean, fhuaras eudach. ^{as}
*The sea ne'er waits for a burden ;
A restless woman will not get bait ;
A shameless woman no kitchen makes,
And a leisureless woman no sewing can do.*

- 361 Bheir duine glic breith bliadhna
 Air fear na h-aon oidhche.
*A wise man will form a year's judgment
 From one night's knowledge of another man.*
- 362 Bheir na daoine beaga rud as an speur
 Cho luath ris na daoine mòra.
*The small men will take a thing from the sky
 As soon as the tall men.*
- 363 Bu àluinn a gnuis na'm b'iul-mhor a bheus.
*The countenance were beautiful were the
 behaviour good.*
- 364 Bean ruadh, dhubh-shùileach ;
 Cù lachduinn, las-shùileach ;
 Fear an fhuilt dhuibh 's na fiasaige ruadh,—
 Na trì còmhlaichean is mios air bith.
*A red-haired, black-eyed woman ;
 A dun, fiery-eyed dog ;
 A black-haired, red-bearded man—
 The three unluckiest to meet.*
- 365 Bidh an duine foghainnteach beò
 Ged a b'e a chlobh a chòir.
*The able man will make a living
 Had he be a tongs to start with.*
- 366 Comhairle caraid gun iarraidh,
 Cha d'fhuair i riamh a mheas bu chòir d'ì.
*A friend's counsel, unasked,
 Is never esteemed as it ought to be.*
- 367 Cha robh thu 's an taighe nuair a bha ciall
 ga roinn.
*You were not at home when sense was being
 divided.*

- > 368 Cha deanar beanas-taighe air na fraigheamh falamh.
House-keeping is not possible on empty shelves.
- 369 Cha'n eil feum air gliocas an bhochd,
 Na air pàlein am fàsach.
*There is no need for the poor's wisdom,
 Nor for a palace in the wilderness.*
- 370 Cha tuig òig àimheart, 's cha tuig amadan àimhleas.
Youth perceives not poverty, and a fool discerns not misfortune.
- 371 Cha do leig duine dha dheòin a chòir-bhreith do dhuine beò.
No man willingly parts with his birthright to any other living man.
- 372 Cha teich ach cladhaire,
 Cha'n fhuirich ach seapaire.
*None but a craven will flee,
 None but a sneak will tarry.*
- 373 Cridh cìrc'an gob na h-airc.
A hen's heart goes with misery.
- 374 Cha dean tùirse ach truaghan,
 'S cha'n fhaigh fear an lag mhisnichidh bean ghlic gu là luan.
*Only a poor creature wails ;
 And the non-courageous will never get a prudent wife.*
- 375 Cha robh math na olc riamh gun mnai uime.
There never was good or ill without a woman being concerned in it.

- 376 Cha leig an leisg d'a deòin duine air slighe
chòir am feasd.
*Indolence never consents to a man rightly
pursuing his way.*
- 377 Ceist bradaig air breugaig.
Sly boot's query concerning tell-tale.
- 378 Cha'n eil an uail 's an eudaidd,
Ach 's an fhear a cheannaicheas i.
*There is no vanity in the dress,
But in the one who buys it.*
- 379 Cha'n nàir' do dhuine 'bhi lag,
Ach 's nàir' dha a bhi bog.
*No shame on a man to be weak,
But shame on him to be soft.*
- 380 Cha bi an t-suiridh bean gun chosdas.
Wooing is a costly dame.
- 381 Ceannaichidh a h-uile fear an droch bhean
Ach an duin' aig am bi i.
*Everyone can rule a shrew
Except the one she's married to.*
- > 382 Fear dubh, dàna ; fear bàn, bleideil ;
Fear donn, dualach ; 's fear ruadh sgeigeil.
*A dark man, bold ; a fair man, officious ;
A brown man, tortuous ; and a red man,
scornful.*
- 383 Fear am bi an deagh dhuine,
Is duin' e an cuideachd no na aonar.
*Where a good man is, he is a man, in company
or alone.*

- 384 Faodaidh duine 's am bith gàir a dheanamh
air cnoc.
Any man can laugh on a hillside.
- 385 Faodaidh fearg sealltainn a stigh air cridh
an duine ghlic,
Ach còmhnachidh i an cridh an amadain.
*Anger may look in on a wise man's heart,
But it abides in the heart of a fool.*
- 386 Fàinne mu'n mheur 's gun snàithne mu'n
mhàs.
A ring on the finger and no clothes on the loins.
- 387 Fàgaidh siod, is sròl, is sgàrlaid,
Gun teinne, gun tuar an fhàrdach.
*Silk and satin, and scarlet,
Leave a fireless, colourless hearth.*
- 388 Feadaireachd bhan, is gairm chearc-
Dà nithean tha toirmisgte.
*Whistling women, and cackling hens,
Two things forbidden.*
- 389 Far am bi bò bidh bean,
Is far am bi bean bidh buaradh.
*Where there's a cow there will be a woman,
And where there's a woman there will be
trouble.*
- 390 Far nach bi na mic-uchda
Cha bhì na fir-feachda,
*Where there are no boys in arms,
There will be no arméd men.*
*Ill fares the land to hastening ills a prey,
Where wealth accumulates and men decay.*
—Goldsmith.

- 391 Far nach bì na failleanan
 Cha bhi na cnothan.
*Where there are no suckers
 There will be no nuts.*

The foregoing two convey the same idea.

- 392 Fear nach reic 's nach ceannaich a chòir.
A man who will neither sell nor buy the right.

- 393 Fuilingidh gach beathach a bhi gu math
 ach mac an duine.
*Every creature will suffer being good but the
 son of man.*

The Gaelic proverbs can be sarcastic to a degree, as
 for instance :—

- 394 Foighidinn nam ban—ach an cùinntar a trì.
Woman's patience—'till you count three.

This is pointed, and pithy, and true—sometimes. It bears the stamp of the Gael's manner towards women, in so much that it indicates tolerance, without being coarse. Sentimental, or, say amorous—an amorousness of a romantic kind—is a prominent feature where the proverbs of other nations are too often sensuous. Hence their trueness of spirit, and justness of appreciation.

- 395 Ged nach duine an t-aodach,
 Cha duin' e as eugmhais.
*Though the raiment be not the man,
 He is no man without it.*

- 396 Glas-labhradh air nighean gun fhios—
 Ach lasar na sùil ga innse clis.
*The tongue-tied maid—too shy to speak,
 But 'tis told by the eyes, and the glance so meek.*

- 397 Ged is dubh an dearcag, is milis i ;
 Ged is dubh mo chaileag, is bòidheach i.
Though black the berry, 'tis sweet ;
Though black my lassie, she's bonny and neat.
- 398 Gillie firionn 's e fàs
 Dh' itheadh e mar mheileadh bràth.
The feeding of a growing boy
Would a quern-mill aye employ.
- 399 Gabh duine air fhacal agus each air aghartas.
Judge a man by his word, and a horse on its
going.
- 400 Is fhearr bean ghlic na crann is fearann.
Better a wise wife than plough and land.
- 401 Is fhasa deagh ainm a chall na chosnadh.
A good name is easier lost than gained.
- 402 Is mòr a dh' fhaodar a dheanamh fo laimh
 deagh dhuine.
Much may be done under the guidance of a
good man.
- 403 Is olc a thig do shaor a bhi sàr-bhuileach ;
 Do ghobh' a bhi crith-làmhach ;
 'S do leigh a bhi tiom-chridheach.
It ill becomes a carpenter to be heavy-handed ;
A smith to be shaky-handed ;
Or a physician to be tender-hearted.
- 404 Is treise dithis a dol thar an atha, na fad'o'
 chèile.
Two are stronger together, than far apart, in
crossing a ford.

- 405 Is trom an uallach an aois.
Old age is a heavy burden.
Old age, thou art not to us kindly,
'Gainst thee there is none can hold ;
Thou wilt bend the straightest, and the
Bravest soldier must grow old.
- 406 Is beo duine an deidh a shàrachadh,
 Ach cha bheo e'n deidh a nàireachadh.
A man may live after being harassed,
But not after being disgraced.
- 407 Is e'n t-ionnsachadh òg
 An t-ionnsachadh bòidheach.
The learning in youth
Is the pretty learning.
- 408 Is dìleas lotan caraid,
 Ach 's mealltach pògan nàmhaid.
Faithful are the wounds of a friend,
But an enemy's kisses are deceitful.
- 409 Is daoì nach gabh còmhairle,
 Is deamhain nach gabh seòladh.
He is wicked who will not be advised,
He is a demon who will not be guided.
- 410 Is fearr a bhi 'n iomall a phailteas
 Na 'n deis-meadhon na bochdainn.
Better be bordering on plenty
Than be in the very middle of poverty.
- 411 Is lag gualainn gun bhràthair,
 Nuair a thig na fir a làthair.
Weak is the shoulder without a brother,
When men come against one another.

412 Is duilich duin' a lorgachadh troimh abhainn.
It is difficult to track a man through a river.

413 Is mòr le doimeig a cuid abhrais,
Cha'n e a mhothaid ach a dhorad.
*Formidable to the slut her possession of stuff—
Not the quantity of it, but the trouble of it.*

This was first said in reference to spinning, in the days when housewives generally excelled in home-carding, home-spinning, and home-weaving. Darning, it is pleasing to say, is still practised by all good housewives.

414 Is fhearr a bhi marbh na bhi na d' thràill
reamhar.
Better be dead than be a fat slave.

415 Is minig a thug teanga duine greim mòr ri
chagnadh.
*A man's tongue will often give him a big bite
to chew.*

416 Is minig a bha pòsadh luath na pòsadh
truagh,
Is am posadh mall na pòsadh dall.
*The hurried marriage is often a tragedy,
And the slow to marry are often blind.*

There seems nothing left here but to take one's chance, by risking it. Note the following, it would make one furiously to think ; but note also the proverbs immediately following, and the risk will be found worth taking.

417 Is diù teine, fearn ùr,
Is diù an duine, mì-rùn ;
Is diù dithe, fion sean ;
Ach's diù an domhain droch bhean.

*Worst of fuel, alder green ;
 Worst thing human, malice keen ;
 Worst of drink, wine without life,
 But worst of all things, a bad wife.*

The foregoing singles out an individual, what follows has a general application.

418 Is mìne min na gràn,
 Is mìne mnai na fir.
*Meal is finer than grain,
 Women are finer than men.*

A very delicate and pretty comparison, characteristically Celtic. And here there is conveyed a lesson.

419 Is i an t-àilleantachd maise nam ban.
Modesty is the beauty of women.

The Gael regards woman as of finer mould, therefore he is courteous towards her ; she is of more tender sensibility, therefore he is deferential towards her. He is not, however, too servile in his admiration of her ; he is not insensible to her faults, and he does not hesitate to condemn them in his proverbs. The more exceptionable they be the more conspicuous will they be, and hence the severity of his condemnation, but there is rarely any coarseness in his expression of it.

It would be difficult to pay a higher compliment to the sex, and it would be equally difficult to do it more forcibly than in the following :—

420 Tagh nighean an deagh mhàthair
 Ged a b'e an Diabhuil a h-athair.
*Choose the good mother's daughter
 Were the Devil her father.*

The same idea is more tenderly conveyed in the beautiful English proverb :—

The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world.

He knows nevertheless that perfection is not to be expected, Burns' "Lass of Ballochmyle" notwithstanding : and so he says :—

- 421 Na gabh te air bith mar mnai
 A sheallas i fhèin gun mheang.
*Take no woman for a wife
 Who presents herself without a flaw.*

He is still more persistent when he says :—

- 422 Nuair a chì thu bean oileanach,
 Beir oirre, beir oirre ;
 Mar a beir thus' oirre,
 Beiridh fear eil' oirre.
*When you see a well-bred woman,
 Catch her, catch her ;
 If you don't do it,
 Someone else will match her.*

- 423 Lùb am fàillean nuair a tha e maoth.
Bend the sapling while it is young.

- 424 Leig leis na marbh laidhe.
Let the dead lie.

- 425 Mar a mheasas duin' e féin,
 'S ann a mheasas càch e.
*As a man esteems himself
 So will he be esteemed by others.*

- 426 Mas fearail thu, na biodh gruaim ort.
If you are manly, don't be gloomy.

- cf 329. 427 Ma dh' innseas duine na's lèir dha
 Innsidh e na's nàir' dha.
*If a man tells all he sees, he'll tell what will
 shame him.*

- 428 Ma's math leat do mholadh, faigh bàs ;
 Ma's math leat do chàineadh pòs.
*If you wish to be praised, die ;
 If you wish to be decried, marry.*
- 429 Mac màthaireil, is nighean àthaireil.
*A son like the mother, and a daughter like the
 father.*
- > 430 Mar a chaitheas duin' a bheatha,
 Bheir e breith air a choimhearsnaich.
*As a man leads his own life,
 So will he judge his neighbours.*
- > 431 Math air seann duine, math air feall duine,
 Is math air leanabh beag, trì maithean caillte.
*Good done to an old man, good done to a
 worthless man,
 And good done to a little child, three goods
 thrown away.*
- Unless there be some hidden philosophy here, the present writer would question the truth of all three assertions. There is surely a balm of self-satisfaction, a joy to one's soul in doing good to an old man ; doing good to a worthless fellow may not be so good, but if any good act can do even a worthless fellow good, by all means do it. Nothing can be good if it cannot do good. Doing good to a little child is surely the most praiseworthy act conceivable.
- 432 Measar an t-amadan glic ma chumas e a theanga.
*The fool may pass for wise if he holds his
 tongue.*
- 433 Miann an duine lochdaich,
 Càch uile a bhi contrachd.
*The wicked man's desire—
 Evil to all others.*

- 434 Millidh bò buaile, mille bean baile.
A cow will spoil a fold, a woman will spoil a township.

The following shows the other side of the picture, and proves the truth of another saying which says: "There are two sides to everything."

- 435 "Mo chuid fhéin," "mo bhean fhéin,"
 Is "tiugainn dhachaidh," na tri faclan is
 blaisd' a th' ann.
 "My own property," "my own wife," and
 "come home,"
The three sweetest sayings there are.

*'Tis the true pathos, and sublime,
 Of human life,
 To make the home fireside chime,
 Wi weans and wife.*

—Burns.

The comparisons in the following are not all that could be desired, but who will deny that they are humorously truthful.

- 436 Nàdur circe, nàdur muice, is nàdur mnatha—
 Gabhaidh iad an doigh fhéin.
*The nature of a hen, of a sow, and of a woman,
 To take their own way.*

*E.P.—Convince a woman against her will,
 She's of the same opinion still ;
 For if she will, she will, you may depend on't ;
 And if she won't, she won't, and there's an
 end on't.*

437 Na tagh Binneagag, no Grinneagag, no
Gaogag ;

Ach ciarag bheag air dhath na luch, na sir,
's na seachan i.

*Choose not the smooth-tongued one, the girning
one, or the squint-eyed one ;*

*But the little, fallow, mouse-coloured one,
neither seek nor shun her.*

It looks like Punch's advice to those about to marry—
" Don't."

438 Na toir bean a taigh mòr,

Na bò bho ghàradair.

Do not take a wife from a mansion,

Or a cow from a gardener.

The idea here may be fairly guessed, but one need not agree with it. In any case there will be the exceptions that prove the rule. In giving an address on the proverbs, and quoting this one, the writer was reproved by one of his hearers who admitted having done what the proverb advised us against doing, and he did not regret his action. There is nevertheless a good deal to be said for the proverb's advice.

439 Na dean tàir chabhagach

Air giullan luideagach,

No air loth pheallagach.

Do not quickly disparage

A ragged laddie, or a shaggy filly.

440 Ni òigeir leisg bodach brisg.

A lazy youth will make a lively old man.

441 Na chì na bige 'se ni na bige,

Na chluinneas iad 'se chanas iad.

*What the little ones will see the little ones will do,
And what they hear they will repeat.*

- 442 Na dean uail a t-athair no a do mhàthair,
Ach dearbhadh do ghiùlan fhéin
Gur duin' uasal thu.
*Do not boast of your father, or of your mother,
But prove by your own conduct that you are
a gentleman.*
- 443 Nì màthair iasgaidh nighean leisg.
*A light-heeled mother makes a leaden-heeled
daughter.*
- 444 Phòs mi luid air son a cuid,
Dh' fhalbh a cuid is dh' fhan an luid.
*I married a trollop for her gear ;
Her gear has gone, but she's still here.*
- 445 Sealladh àrd an seann mhaighdinn.
The disdainful (high) look of the old maid.
- > 446 Suiridhe fada bho 'n taighe is pòsadh am
bun an doruis.
Wooring far from home and marrying next door.
- 447 Socraichidh am pòsadh an gaol.
Marriage will sober love.
- 448 Tha 'n duin' ionraic ionraic eadar bhun is
bhàrr.
The upright is upright from head to foot.
- 449 Theid duine gu bàs air sgàth an nàire.
A man will die to save his honour.
- 450 Treubhantas an duine bhig—fead is fuaim.
The small man's valour—a whistle and a noise.
- 451 Tuigidh bean bean eile.
One woman understands another.

- 452 Tha breith uasal na thogail mùirneach,
 'S tha deagh fhoghlum taitneach ;
 Ach 's fhearr an cliù a chosnas duine dha
 fhéin.

*Genteel birth is good rearing,
 And a good education is desirable,
 But better the good name earned by one's self.*

When birth, rearing, and education fails to make a man, then comes the force of the following :—

- 453 Tha feum aig a shròin air fuarachadh.
His nose is the better of cooling.
- 454 Tagh do bhean 's a currachd-oidhch' oirre.
Choose your wife with her night-cap on.
- 455 Tapan gòraig air cuigeal criontag.
*The foolish one's tuft of wool
 On the thrifty one's distaff.*
- 456 Tagh eun a nead glan.
Choose a bird from a clean nest.
- 457 Teagaisg ga thoirt do mhnaoi bhuirb,
 Mar bhuille ùird air iarunn fuar.
*Teaching a turbulent woman is like strokes of
 hammer on cold iron.*
- 458 Teinne chaoran is gaol ghiullan,
 Cha do mhair iad fada riamh.
*Peat-fragment fire and boy's love
 Never were lasting.*
- 459 Thig dànadas gu droch òilean.
Boldness leads to bad manners.
- 460 Taigh gun chu, gun chat, gun leanabh beag,
 Taigh gun ghean, gun ghàire.
*A house without a dog, a cat, or a little child,
 Is a house without joy or laughter.*

PART III.

WEATHER AND SEASON LORE—OBJECT LESSONS
FROM NATURE—THE DEITY—THE DEVIL.

WEATHER AND SEASON LORE—OBJECT
LESSONS FROM NATURE—THE DEITY—
THE DEVIL.

INDUSTRIAL communities, whose environments, and whose whole worldly existence depend upon human exertions—human handiwork on hard materials, and according to cold material laws, to such communities, through no fault of their own, nature is almost a closed book. This is generally speaking. There are exceptions to all rules. It is otherwise among rural communities, and among no surroundings does the book of nature appeal so strongly as it does amidst the savage grandeur, the sublime solitude, and the giant strength of the mighty mountains. Thus it is that the people of mountainous countries are more imaginative.

Witness that natural phenomenon so common in such parts, when distant objects seem to be creeping nearer. It must have been a source of wonder and awe to primitive man. Long usage to it taught him that it presaged rainy weather. He probably did not understand that the change had already taken place with the advent of the phenomenon thus presented; that the atmosphere had become so impregnated with floating globu-

lar particles of moisture, collectively acting as magnifying glasses, thus enlarging those distant objects, and making them appear so much nearer to the view.

“Mountains are the great cathedrals of the earth, with their gates of rock, pavements of clouds, choirs of stream and stone, and altars of snow,” and they have a fascinating glamour that is uplifting in its influence. Among them the mystery of a great beyond becomes intensified. Natural phenomena of every kind have a powerful influence on the human intellect until and when that intellect becomes so obsessed with its own powers of penetration into the why and wherefore of everything, when it is apt to go to a too self-satisfied extreme in the opposite direction.

Primitive man, no matter how savage, and how fearless in the face of physical pain and danger; no matter how reckless in battle, he is timid to a degree when faced with the eruptions of nature. One of the earliest proverbial sayings associated with the Celts is recorded in the Third Book of the Ethics of Aristotle, a work dating from 400 B.C. Here it is recorded that it was even then a proverbial saying of the Celts of Asia Minor, that—

They feared neither an earthquake
Nor a storm upon the sea,

these having been, apparently, the most dreaded of nature's eruptions, as indeed they are unto our own day.

In the same manner, the passing of the seasons gave food for thought to primitive man, and superstitions took shape in the course of his thinking. The following sounds ominous in its eeriness :—

461 Nuair is ceud-aoineach an t-samhuinn,
Is iargaineach fir an domhain.
*When Hallowmas falls on a Wednesday,
All men are uneasy.*

Why this should be so it is hard to guess. October we know to be the dusk of the year, and Hallowmas was taken as heralding dreary winter. An old saying ran :

462 Is Foghair gu Nollaig,
Is Geamhradh gu Fheill-Padruig,
Earrach gu Fheill-Peadair,
Is Samhuinn gu Fheill-Martainn.
*Autumn until Christmas Day,
Winter 'till St. Patrick's,
Spring until St. Peter's Day,
And Summer until Martinmas.*

But although October may be associated with a melancholy feeling owing to the general decay of nature, it not infrequently includes some of the finest and most exhilarating weather of the

year. Frosts in the mornings and evenings are common, whilst the middle of the day is enlivened by all the sunshine of July without its oppressiveness, and the clearness of a frosty day in January or December without its piercing cold. But nearly all our singing birds have departed for sunnier lands far over the sea, and the swallows are preparing to follow them, while other birds visit us who have been absent all spring and summer. These habits were observed and noted, and deductions made that are perpetuated in our proverbs.

When the occupations of a people are almost wholly pastoral, both the vegetable and the animal kingdoms are wide fields spread by nature before them, nor was a knowledge of the mineral world entirely absent. An observant people, such as our ancestors really were, assimilated the wisdom thus inculcated. Before human invention acquired the knowledge of letters, and sought to record maxims and events on marble or brass, proverbs perpetuated the wisdom thus acquired. There is thus more in the eeriness attributed by them to Hallowmas than at first appears. In our own day this time of the year enforces its depressing thoughts. The advent of November, the month of fogs and of flittings, the severing of many ties all making

gloomier a gloomy time of the year. Science had its beginnings among all such peoples. Their deductions and conclusions may have been primitive in the light of the more advanced knowledge of our own day, but the spiritual and the material were to them interdependent, a happy combination in which the spiritual remained unchallenged as the guiding star and motive power. To their receptive senses the beauties of nature conveyed meanings and messages unconceivable to-day to all but the select few whose opportunities and inclinations induce them to revel in nature studies. In the olden times such knowledge was common to all. To them—

The rainbow in the morning
Was the shepherd's warning,
The rainbow at night
The shepherd's delight.

Not only were natural objects their teachers, but communings with nature were frequent in their philosophy, and so —

Thinkest thou how that low sighing heard
By Ossian, when the wind was stirr'd,
Filled his old sightless eyes with tears,
His soul with thoughts of other years ;
The spirit of the men he mourned
In that low eerie sound return'd.

Weather signs, season lore, and the object lessons of nature, in all their various and varying moods, were observed, and inwardly read with zest and to good purpose. The influence of weather conditions on plants was particularly noticed.

Tha seamrag Muire a dùineadh a sùil.
Mary's shamrock is closing its eye.

This small flower, known in Gaelic as "Mary's Shamrock," is the common wild pimpernel, to be seen in much more profusion in England than in Scotland, where its habits were also noted. In rural England it used to be known as "the poor man's weather glass," and also as "the shepherd's cloak." These native names of flowers, whether in Gaelic or English, are full of beauty and of poetry, frequently descriptive of some healing virtue, or some natural characteristics displayed by them under certain weather conditions, and some times conveying other meanings and associations which are entirely absent from the classical names imposed upon us to-day. In those days, when people read more deeply into nature's book :

A yellow primrose was to them .
More than a blossom on a stem.

Nature worship is but a step to the worship

of the Deity, and is the very antithesis of the materialism becoming so prevalent to-day among our huge industrialised communities. Hence is it that the object lessons of nature are so beautifully inspiring.

The impress of the Highlander's religion will be found prominently in his proverbs, and, as Nicolson truly says, the providence and the merciful forbearance of the Almighty is shown without any of the Jewish notion of vengeance. On the other hand, such references as are made to the Devil are not all so severe as might be expected. As Professor MacLean says, the general conception of the Devil as appearing in our Gaelic proverbs make him no more than just "a tricky rascal, instead of the incarnation of evil." His Gaelic cognominal appellatives are, to say the least, mild:—

463 Dòmhnall Dubh,
Black Donald.

463a Maoisean.
Nasty fellow.

The next would seem to be pre-Christian in origin; indeed a few others would indicate in the same direction.

464 Is ionnan aithreachas crìche
Ri 'bhi cuir siol mu Fheil-Màrtainn.
Death-bed repentance is
Like sowing seed at Martinmas.



This is not in keeping with the belief that "while the lamp holds on to burn the greatest sinner may return."

The necessitarian point of view of the world is rather prominent in our proverbs, probably a legacy of pagan times. Many such beliefs were adopted during the transition period from Paganism to Christianity, much of the "Conversion" having been by command, as was the case with the Saxon King of Kent, who boasted of his having made ten thousand Christians by force majeure.* This necessitarian view is illustrated by sayings still common in the vocabulary, such as:—

465 Bha e'n dàn dha.

It was his fate.

466 Bha uair ga ruith.

His hour was pursuing him.

But more prominent in the Gael's philosophy was absolute trust in the Almighty, his necessitarian view notwithstanding, or, perhaps, on account of it.

467 An ni a gheall Dia, cha mheall duine.

What God has promised man cannot prevent.

468 Am fear nach teagaisg Dia cha teagaisg duine.

Whom God will not instruct, man cannot teach.

469 Bidh gach ni mar is àill le Dia.

All things will be as God will have them.

The object lessons of nature are particularly noted, and the beauty of the expressions in conveying ideas with regard to them are very fine.

*Bede's History of England.

- 470 A b'èinn is àird' a th' a anns an tìr,
 'S ann oirre 's tric a chithear an cèò.
*The highest mountain in the land
 Is ofteneft covered with mist.*

The philosophy here cannot be mistaken. Nor is the adverse side less trenchant.

- > 471 A chuisseag a dh' fhàsas as an òcraich,
 'Sì is àird' a thogas a ceann.
*The weed that grows from the midden
 Lifts its head the highest.*

And then :—

- 472 Is i'n dias is truime is ìsle chromas a ceann.
*The heaviest ear of corn bends its head the
 lowest.*

Here we have substance and humility delicately portrayed, as has already been observed.

- 473 Aiteamh na gaoth tuath,
 Sneach is reodhadh anns an uair.
*The thaw that comes while north winds blow
 Will followed be by frost and snow.*

- 474 Am fear nach cuir 's a mhàirt
 Cha bhuan e 's an Fhoghair.
*Who doesn't sow in March
 Will not reap in Autumn.*

- 475 Am feur a thíg a mach 's a mhàrt
 Theid e stigh 's a Ghiblein.
*The grass that grows in March
 Will shrink away in April.*

- 476 Am mios buidh. *The yellow month (July).*
 Am mios dubh. *The black month (November).*
 Na miosan marbh. *The dead months*
(December and January).
- 477 An sneachd nach tig mu shamhuinn
 Thig e gu reamhar mu Fheill-Brìghde.
The snow that comes not at Hallowmas,
Will come thickly at Candlemas.
- 478 A cheud là de'n mhàirt leig seachad ;
 An dara là ma's fheudar,
 'San treasa làtha,
 Ged nach reachadh clach ceann a mhedir
 An aghaidh na gaoth tuath,
 Cuir an siol anns a Mhàirt.
The first of March let pass ;
The second of March, if need be ;
But the third of March,
Though you could not send a stone
A nail's breadth against the north wind,
Sow your seed in March.

To appreciate the full force of this saying, we must reckon time by the Old Style. The first week of April to-day would coincide with what was the third week of March then.

It is here implied that although Spring work should be urged on during March, much growth was not wished for in that month. The seed should nevertheless be in the ground, ready for the first call from April's sun and showers. In many parts of the West Highlands and Islands Spring work may be seen in our day in active operation well into the month of May. This the present writer believes to be a very bad habit. Given a too dry summer, a condition not unknown even in the Highlands, the yet red ground, but recently sown on account of the too late Spring work,

becomes parched, and a poor crop is the inevitable result. Were the growth far enough advanced to form a natural cover and shade to the ground, and the roots already gone deep enough in the soil, a subsequent dry summer would not be so harmful. There are of course exceptions to be allowed in all general rules. Low-lying land that cannot be effectively drained off the winter's slush and wet would necessarily have to be considered, and separately treated ; and a dry summer would not affect such land to the same extent in the manner described.

- 479 An seanfhacal fada, fìor ;
 Cha bhreugnaichear an seanfhacal.
*The old proverb, long proved true,
 Shall never be belied.*
- 480 An Inid, a cheud Dimàirt an deidh an solus
 Èarraich.
*Shrovetide, the first Tuesday after the first
 spring moon.*
- 481 B'fhèarr a chreach a thighinn do'n tìr
 Na maduinn mhìn 's an Fhaoilteach fhuar.
*Better a foray o'er the land
 Than a mild morning in cold February.*
- 482 Breac a mhuiltein air an àthar -
 Bidh là math a màireach ann.
*There is a dappled sky to-day,
 There will be a good day to-morrow.*
- 483 Bì gu subhach, geamhnaidh,
 Moch-thrathach 'san t-samhradh ;
 Bì gu currachdach, brògach,
 Brochanach 's a Gheamhradh.
*In Summertime be cheerful, chaste,
 And early out of bed ;
 In wintertime, well-capped and shod,
 And be on porridge fed.*

The above advice is attributed by some authorities to the Druids. Others give it a later origin, ascribing it to the famous "Ollamh Muileach," Dr. John Beaton of Mull, who was physician to the MacLeans, and died in 1657. The name Beaton in Mull is still known in Gaelic as Mac-an-leigh, son of the physician. One of the tribe settled in the Island of Lismore, and his family became hereditary Almoners to the Bishops of Lismore and Argyle. At a later date, and in deference to their then Superior, James Livingstone, Keeper of the Privy Seal of Scotland, who, in 1640, received from Charles I. a fifty-seven years' lease of the temporalities of Argyle and the Isles, and of the tiends of the Kirk of Kilespic-Kerral in Muckairn, the "Mac-an-leighs" assumed the name "Livingstone" as the English equivalent of their name, although the Gaelic "Mac-an-leigh" and the Lowland "Livingstone" have nothing in common as regards origin and meaning. Hence the numerous Livingstones in the district of Lorn, Argyle. Off these Highland Livingstones was descended David Livingstone, the great Missionary-Explorer, whose fame has added lustre to the name.

484 Cha lugha air Dia deireadh an làtha na
thoiseach.

*The end of the day is no less in God's sight
than the beginning.*

484a Cia air bith mar bhios an sian

Cuir an siol anns a Mhàirt.

Be the weather what it will

Sow the seed in March.

This again insists on an earlier spring work than is sometimes practised.

485 Cha do chuir Dia riamh beul chum an t-
saoghal

Gun a chuid fo chòmhair.

God never sent a mouth to this world

Without its portion having been provided.

486 Cha d' òrdaich Dia do 'n duine bhochd
 Dà làtha cho olc.
*God ne'er fore-ordained two consecutive days
 So ill for the poor man.*

487 Cha'n eil port a sheinneas an Smeòrach 's an
 Fhoilteach
 Nach caoin ma'n ruith an Earrach.
*For every song the mavis sings in February
 She'll repent e'er Spring be over.*

This implies that too early a Spring-like weather forebodes an unseasonable return of wintry weather, and the consequent destruction of a too advanced growth. Quite recently an old man and a young man were listening to the merry carolling of what was apparently a young mavis of the previous year's brood. It was early in February, and the young man remarked to the old man that it was strange to hear such merry bird-singing at such an unseasonable time. "Tuts," replied the old man, "that's only a young mavis that never saw a spring before!"

488 Cha tig air crannaibh gu'n tig Càisg.
No tree will bloom till Easter come.

489 Cha tig fuachd gu'n tig Earrach,
 Le gaoth-tuath 's le cruaidh ghaillionn.
*Cold will not come till Spring
 Its north-wind hurricanes doth bring.*

490 Cha robh Samhradh riamh gun ghrian ;
 Cha robh Gearradh riamh gun sneachd ;
 Cha robh Nollaig Mòr gun fheadail ;
 No bean òg le 'dedìn gun fhear.
*There ne'er was summer without sun ;
 There ne'er was Winter without snow ;
 No Christmas without feast and fun,
 No maid content without her beau.*

- 491 Cha do shèid gaoth riamh nach robh an seòl cuideigin.
No wind ever blew that did not fill someone's sails.
E.P.—'Tis an ill wind that blows nobody any good.
- 492 Cho fad' 's a theid a ghaoth anns an dorus là Fheill-Brìghdé,
 Théid an cathadh anns an dorus là Fheill-Pàdrùig.
Just as far as the wind enters through the door on St. Bride's Day,
So far will the snow drift enter on St. Patrick's Day.
- 493 Earrach fad an deigh Chàisg, Fàgaidh e na saibhlean fàs.
A long Spring after Easter Will leave empty barns.
- 494 Eisd ri gaoth nam beann Gus an tràigh na h-uisgeachan.
Listen to the mountain winds Until the streams abate.
- 495 Faoilteach, faoilteach, crodh air theas, Gal is gaoir nitear ris ;
 Faoilteach, faoilteach, crodh am preas, Failte 's faoilte nitear ris.
February, if cows in heat, Wailing, sorrowing, folk will meet ;
February, if in woods they stay, Forward look to Summer gay.

There are several other versions with the same import.

- 496 Feath Faoilteach is gaoth Iuchair
 Cha mhair iad fada.
*A February calm or a Dog Days' wind
 Never will be lasting.*

The various winds, according to their direction on the last day of the year portended the weather for the coming year as follows:—

- 497 Gaoth deas, teas is torradh ;
 Gaoth an iar, iasg is bainne ;
 Gaoth tuath, fuach is gaillionn ;
 Gaoth an ear, meas air chrannaibh. *oramadh*
To south winds, heat and plenty cling ;
West winds fish and milk will bring ;
North winds bringeth gales and snow ;
East winds mean (more) fruit (will grow.) *shrivelled*

Another is :

- > 498 Geamhradh reòdhtaineach,
 Earrach ceòthaineach,
 Samhradh breac-riabhach,
 Is Foghair geal grìanach,
 Cha dh' fhàg gort riamh an Alba.
A frosty Winter, a misty Spring,
A chequered Summer following,
A sunny Autumn with ripen'd corn
Ne'er left Scotland famine shorn.

- 499 Gabhaibh suipeir an soills' an là,
 Oidhche Fheill-Brìghde ;
 Theirig an làidhe an soills' an là
 Oidhch' Fheill-Pàdrùig.
On St. Bride's Eve, supper in daylight,
On Eve of St. Patrick's Day, go to bed in
daylight.

- 500 Gaoth an iar gun fhrois
 Bidh e 'g iarraidh gu deas.
*A west wind without showers
 Will be seeking the south.*
- 501 Is e'n Geamhradh luath an Geamhradh buan.
The early Winter is the long Winter.
- 502 Is e'n ceò Geamhraidh ni an càthadh
 Earraich.
Winter mists portend Spring snow-drifts.
- 503 Is fhearr aon là 's a Mhàirt na trì là 's an
 Fhoghair.
*One day in March is better than three days in
 Autumn.*

This must imply that one good Spring day's work will give more than three day's harvesting.

- 504 Is math an còcair' an t-acras,
 Is mairg a nì talcuis air biadh ;
 Fuarag eòrn a sàl mo bhròig,
 Am biadh is fhearr a fhuair mi riamh.
*Hunger a very good cook is,
 Woe to him who would food despise;
 This barley gruel in my shoe heel
 Is the best I've found in all my time.*

The original Gaelic lines here quoted are attributed to the Earl of Mar, who commanded the Royal Forces at the first Battle of Inverlochy, in 1411. Mar's forces were routed by Donald Balloch, of the Isles, and his Highland host, and the Earl was compelled for a time to live the life of a fugitive among the hills of Lochaber and Badenoch. Being in sore straits for sustenance, he approached a humble dwelling, inhabited by a lonely old man, whose condition seemed to have been only a little better than that of

the Earl. All he had in the way of food was some barley meal, and he had not as much as a dish in which this could be prepared. But the Earl was starving, and necessity knowing neither law nor convention, he took off one of his brogues (shoes), and made barley gruel in it. Having partaken of this homely fare, he expressed his gratitude to the old man by reciting the foregoing lines. He also disclosed his identity, and he invited the old man to partake of his hospitality if ever he found himself in the vicinity of Mar Castle. It is related that the opportunity did afterwards occur, and that the Earl was as good as his word.

Even the ways of the raven, and what happens to it in adverse weather conditions, becomes the subject of a proverbial saying, and it is not, as Sheriff Nicolson says, without a note of solicitude for the ravenous bird, so frequently destructive when on its foraging expeditions.

505 Nead air Brìghde, ubh air Inid,

Eun air Chàisg,

Mar a bì sin aig an Fhitheach, bidh am bàs.

*A nest at Candlemas, an egg at Shrovetide,
And a chic at Easter ;*

If by then the raven has not these,

Death betide it.

506 Oidhche Challuinn, bu mhàth cuilinn is
calltuinn

A bhi bualadh a chèile.

On Hogmanay's Night 'twere well

That holly and hazel were striking one another.

This implies that a stormy night were wished for.

507 Ri fuachd Calluinn, 's math clò òllainn.

Ri fuachd Fheill-Brìghde, fòghnaidh cis-
fheart.

In January cold, clothe with wool ;

Mixed stuff at Candlemas may be the rule.

- 508 Reodhadh an Iodain làn.
Freezing when floodpools are full (never lasting).
- 509 Reòthairt na Feill-Muire,
 Is boile na Feill-Pàdrraig.
*The Lady Day Springtide,
 And blustering St. Patrick's Day.*
- 510 'San Earrach, 'nuair a bhios a' chaora caol
 Bidh am maorach reamhar.
*In Spring, when the sheep are lean,
 The shell-fish will be fat.*

There is here a rather pathetic indication of the straits for subsistence to which the people were sometimes reduced in the so-called "good old days." It recalls the custom, at one time common, of bleeding the cattle of their blood for human food, also in the Spring, when they could not give milk. Probably this would be more common inland, where no shell fish could be found.

- 511 Is minig a bha 'n donas dàicheil.
The Devil was often attractive.
- 512 Tha'n t-seamrag a pasgadh a còmhdaich
 Roimh thuiltean dòirteach.
*The shamrock is folding its garments
 Before heavy rain.*
- 513 Tha'n cat 's an luath, thig frasan fuar.
The cat is in the ashes, cold showers are coming.
- Quite a common belief is that if a cat sits with its back to the fire it is a sign of coming snow.
- 514 Tha'n deala a snàmh, thig frasan blàth
 roimh fheasgair.
The leech is swimming, warm showers will come ere evening.

- 515 Tha'n seillein fo dhion,
Thig gaillionn is sìan.
*The bee has taken shelter,
A storm and rain are coming.*
- 516 Tàirneanach an deigh nòine, tairneanach
an toraidh mhòir ;
Tàirneanach roimh nòine, tàirneanach gort
is fuachd.
*Thunder in the afternoon, peace and plenty ;
Thunder in the forenoon, want and cold.*
- 517 Theid cathanach earraich
Troimh bhòrd daraich.
*A Spring snow-drift
Will go through an oak plank.*
- 518 Tha larach buain fhoid air an àthar,
Ni e là math a màireach.
*There's the appearance of turf clearing in the
sky,
'Twill be a fine day to-morrow.*
- 519 Tha currachd air a bheinn
Sud an t-uisg' a tighinn.
*The mountain has a cap on,
There's the rain coming.*
- 520 Tha'n còmhachag ri bròn,
Thig tuiltean òirnn.
*The owl is mourning,
Floods are coming.*
- 521 Thig Dia ri àirc
'S cha'n airc nuair a thig E.
*God comes in distress,
And distress goes when He comes.*

PART IV.

LAND AND LABOUR.

LAND AND LABOUR

522 Is treasa tuath na Tighearna.

The tenantry are stronger than the lord.

SKENE tells us in his "Celtic Scotland," that the above saying must have originally read: "The tribe is stronger than the Chief." It is one of our oldest and best-known sayings, and it concentrates as in a nutshell the old Highland conception of the respective positions of Chief and Clansmen before the time when the feudal absorbed the clan or patriarchial system. To appreciate its force one must bear in mind that there is no proper Gaelic word for the English term "tenantry." The present-day equivalent, made use of here, viz., "tuath," meant simply a community of husbandmen, tillers of the soil, and generally understood as a peasant proprietary. Their so-called "lord," the Clan Chief, was their leader in war, when their common rights were in danger, and, sometimes, perhaps, when they tried to extend those rights at the expense of some other Clan, or community. The gospel here enunciated is delightfully portrayed in the Gaelic Muse of "Linn an Aigh "

(The Happy Age). The following verses from Mr. Lachlan MacBean's excellent English translation gives a good idea of the whole :—

When all the birds in Gaelic sang,
Milk lay like dew upon the lea ;
The heather into honey sprang,
And everything was good and free.

No tax or tribute used to fall
On honest men, or any rent ;
To hunt and fish was free to all,
And timber without price or stent.

There was then no distress or strife,
For none were wronged, and none
oppress'd,
But everyone just led the life,
And did the things that pleased him
best.

This "happy age," if it ever existed, could only be applicable to the degree one would like to believe, to each Clan circle as a separate entity. Inter-Clan relations would, we may suppose, be different. True or not, and if true only to a limited extent, the fond belief in its erstwhile existence could not help having an influence for good on their descendents, something for them to aspire to, to try and emulate. But notwithstanding appearances to the contrary, this state of society did not imply the

principle of communism as preached to-day. The old proverb (found in its place elsewhere) says :

“ There is no partnership in women or in land.” This breathes the very spirit of individualism, and that spirit is still ingrained in what may be termed the Highland body politic. It is indeed strongly asserted. The desire for individual rights is shown by the following :—

*It is easy to put him out,
Whose own the house is not.*

Sustenance was described as “ Teachd an Tir,” “ the yield of the land.” While the belief that the produce of one’s labour should be one’s own individual property was strong, there was the equally strong belief that all natural produce, not the result of man’s labour, whether fish, flesh, or fowl, was equally the property of him whose exertions procured the trophy, those exertions being accounted as equal to labour in the more accepted sense, and hence :—

523 Breac a linne, slat a coille,

Is fiadh a fireach,

Meirle anns nach do ghabh

Gaidheal riamh nàire.

*A fish from the river, a wand from the wood,
And a deer from the mountain,
Actions no Gael was at any time ashamed of.*

The idea of freedom here implied is very truly pictured by Wordsworth in his poem, "At Rob Roy's Grave." Wordsworth must have imbibed deeply of the prevalent Highland belief on the subject during his tour in the north. This individual "Claim of Right" to the land, so inherent in the Highlands, has been tacitly admitted—even more, it has received Statutory Recognition in an Act of Parliament, "The Crofters' Act of 1886." Had the claims then admitted been in the nature of a claim for communal, instead of individual rights, there would never have been the recognition embodied in the Crofters' Act, because such a claim would have had no historical or traditional backing in support of it. Community of interest was nevertheless recognised, and practised to the only practical extent of the principle, and that was by co-operation in labour, in spring work and harvest work. This co-operation was inherent among all communities of small holders, and without it no small-holding community can flourish. It also implies the impossible position of an isolated smallholder. Hired labour he cannot afford, and co-operative labour is ungettable by him on account of his isolated position. Hence the non-success of many sparsely-placed new small holdings. Nevertheless, the love for

a life on the land, for husbandry, is inherent in the Celt, while his dash of Norse blood gives him his love of the sea, and a life on the ocean wave, in which he takes a leading share out of all proportion to his numbers in the homeland nursery.

- 524 Am fear a ni obair na thràth,
 Bìdh e na leth-thàmh.
*He who does his work in time
 Will always have leisure time.*
- 525 Am fear is fhearr a chuireas,
 'Se is fhearr a bhuaineas.
He who soweth best reapeth best.
- 526 Am fear nach dean cuir 'sa Mhàrt
 Cha bhuaib e 's an Fhoghair.
*He who will not sow in March
 Will not reap in the Autumn.*
- 527 Am fear nach cuir ri là fuar,
 Cha bhuaib e ri là teth.
*He who will not sow on a cold day
 Will not reap on a warm day.*
- 528 Am fear nach dean obair na gnìomh
 Cha'n fhaigh e biadh air feadh nam preas.
*He who will not work or act
 Will ne'er find food on any track.*
- 529 Am fear nach dean treabhadh aig baile.
 Cha dean e treabhadh bho'n bhaile
*He who will not plough at home
 Will not plough where'er he roam.*

530 Am fear a tha na thàmh,
Tha e na leth-trom air an fhearain.
He who is idle is a burden on the land.

531 Airde na daileach is isle na h-àirde.
*The highest parts of the meadow
And the lowest parts of the ridges.*

These were considered the choicest parts for arable land. It was, however, a belief that left uncultivated the richest soil, the lower lying parts, because a knowledge of reclaiming by a system of drainage was not practised, perhaps unknown.

532 Am fear nach treabh air muir
Cha treabh e air tir.
*He who will not plough (labour) on sea
Will not plough on land.*

533 Am fear a theid a gnà a mach le lion
Gheibh e eun uaireigin.
*He who always sets his net
Will get a bird sometime.*

534 Am fear nach dean baile air a bheagan,
Cha'n àiridh e air a mhòran.
*He who does not work the small farm
Is unworthy of a big one.*

535 Am fear nach cuir snaimh
Caillidh e a cheud ghreim.
*He who will not tie a knot
Will lose his first stitch.*

536 Bheir fear beag a chuid as an talamh,
Ma's toir fear mòr a chuid as an àdhar.
*A little man can take his share from the land,
When a tall man cannot take his from the sky.*

- 537 Bidh mìr a ghille grùndail air gach mèis.
The industrious lad's morsel is on every dish.
- 538 Diolaidh saothair ainfhiach.
Industry pays debts.
- 539 Dùnan math innearach
Màthair na ciste-mine.
*A good dung heap
Mother to the meal-cist.*
- 540 Caillidh am fear chadalach molt,
Ach caillidh am fear cèlidheach mart.
*Sleepy fellow will lose a wedder,
But gad-about will lose a cow.*
- 541 Cha bhi toradh gun saothar.
There will be no produce without labour.
- 542 Cha do shoirbhich dithis riamh air an aon
chnoc.
Two never prospered on the same hill.
- This is another illustration of the individualism
ingrained in the Highlander.
- 543 Cualach mor a ghillie leisg.
The lazy fellow's big (bulky) load.
- 544 Ceann mòr is casan caola, comharradh an
droch ghamhain.
*A big head on lean legs are the marks of the
bad stirk.*

- 545 Biadh a thoirt do'n fhearain ma's tig an
t-acras air ;
Fois a thoirt d'à ma fàs e sgìth,
A ghart-ghlanadh ma's fhàs e salach,
Comharran an deagh thuathanaich.
*Feeding the land before it gets hungry ;
Giving it rest before it gets weary ;
And weeding it well before it gets dirty,
The marks of a good husbandman.*
- 546 Cha leasachadh air droch obair-làtha
A bhi fada gum toiseachadh.
A late beginning will not mend a bad day's work
- 547 Caithidh bò ri bleothain,
Agus each ri treabhadh.
*A cow will wear with milking,
And a horse with ploughing.*
- 548 Fàs a ghrunnd -air reir an uachdrain.
*The yield of the ground will depend on the
landlord.*

This may be interpreted in more than one way. At the time when coined it may have been a reproof at rack-renting and insecurity of tenure ; it may also imply bad factoring, the want of proper supervision, and a consequent impoverishment of the soil.

- 549 Far nach be nì, caillidh an rìgh a chòir.
*Where there are no cattle, the king will lose his
rights.*

The foregoing is undoubtedly old, and belongs to the time before the days of unearned increment ; when all wealth was derived direct from the land. Riches were calculated according to the amount of live stock on the land, and a well-stocked land pre-supposes a well-peopled land. The King's means depended on the amount of tribute received, mainly in kind, from the tillers of the soil.

550 Fear a dol an àite fir, a fàgail an fhearain daor.

Tenant replacing tenant leaves the land dear.

There was no Crofters' Act, and the consequent fixity of tenure when the foregoing was first said.

551 Feumaidh an talamh a chuid fhéin.

The land must receive its own portion.

The rules of good husbandry, good cultivation, are much neglected, generally speaking, among small holders, and a more rigid supervision would be for the good of all.

552 Ged is e'n duine an tuathanach, is e'n t-each an saothraiche.

Though the man be the farmer, the horse is the labourer.

553 Is math an t-each a thoilicheas a mharcaiche.

It is a good horse that pleases the rider.

554 Is iomadh ni a chailleas fear na h-imrich.

Many a thing is lost in the flitting.

555 Is fhearr èiridh moch na suidh anmoch.

Better to rise early than sit up late.

*E.P.—Early to bed and early to rise,
Makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise.*

Land-workers are proverbially early risers, and early at going to bed.

556 Is fhearr làn an dùirn de cheird

Na làn an dùirn a dh'òir.

*Better a handful of craftsmanship
Than a handful of gold.*

557 Is tom gach tulaich 's an t-Samhradh ghorm.

Each hill is a knoll in Summer green.

558 Is olc a thig do shaor a bhi sàr-bhuileach;
Do ghobh' a bhi crith-làmhach;
'S do leigh a bhi tiom-chridheach.
*It ill becomes a carpenter to be heavy-handed;
A smith to be shaky-handed;
Or a physician to be tender-hearted.*

559 Is fhearr dìchioll an duine laig,
Na neo-shunnt' an duine làidir.
*Better the diligence of the weak man,
Than the indifference of a strong man.*

560 Is fhearr sior obair na sàr obair.
Better steady work than severe spurts of work.

561 Is fhear siol caol coirce fhaotainn a droch
fhearann na bhi falamh.
*Better small corn seeds out of bad land than
no seed at all.*

562 Is obair làtha toiseachadh.
A beginning is a good day's work.

563 Is buidheach Dia de'n fhìrinn.
The truth is pleasing to God.

564 Fanaidh Maoisean rì làtha.
The Devil waits his day.

565 Lionmhorachd làmh, ach 's an mhèis.
A multiplicity of hands except in the dish.

A Tìree saying, implying that many hands are best for getting through work, except when round the dinner table—the more there were taking from the dish the less each portion would be. In those days all fed from a common dish that was not always over-flowing at the start of the meal.

566 Lasaidh ciall teine, cùmaidh rian baile ;
Ach cha mhair sliochd fir foille, no iochd
math chum na cloinne.

*Sense will kindle a fire, method will keep a
farm ;*

*A traitor's offspring will expire, nor clemency
even to the children.*

567 Obair an doill.
The work of the blind.

568 Obair gun bhuanachd,
A cuir sil an talamh gun todhar.
*Profitless work,
Sowing seed in unmanured land.*

569 Obair gun iarraidh,
Is e fhiach a lochd.
*Unasked for work—
Its value is harmful.*

570 Obair is ath-obair.
*Work, and after-work (result of bad workman-
ship at first).*

571 Oidhche Shamhna 's a Gheamhradh,
Theirear gamhna ris na laoigh ;
Oidhch' Fheill-Eoin 's an t-Samhradh,
Theirear aighean ris na gamhna.
*At Hallowe'en, in Winter-time,
Little calves big stirks will be,
At St. John's Eve, in Summer-time,
The stirks will bigger heifers be.*

- 572 Obair duine gun chèill,
Dol gun airgead do'n fhèill.
*A senseless man's procedure,
Going to market without cash.*
- 573 Oidhch' a-muigh is oidhch' a steach,
Math nan caorach, is olc nan each.
*In to-night and out to-morrow,
Good for sheep, bad for horses.*
- 574 Se 'n èigin a chuir an earb thar an loch.
Necessity made the roe swim across the loch.
- 575 Se cleachdadh a nì teòmachd.
Experience makes expertness.
- 576 'Sann aig ceann na bliadhna a dh'innseas
an tiasgair a sgeul.
*It is at the end of the year the fisherman tells
his tale.*
- 577 'Se'n t-ullachadh ni'm buileachadh ;
A treabhadh thig na sguaban,
A sguaban thig na h-adagan,
A adagan na cruachan.
*Industry results will bring ;
Ploughing brings the sheaves of corn ;
From sheaves come stooks, and following
Will come the stacks that fill the barn.*
- 578 'Treabhaidh na daoidhean 's cha dean na
saoidhean ach treabhadh.
*The wicked plough, and the just can but
plough.*

“ He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good,
and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust”
(Matthew v. 45).

- 579 Togaidh an obair an fhianuis.
The work will bear witness.
 A proverbial justification of piece work in the labour market.
- 580 Turasdal a cheaird, pàidheadh roimh-làimh.
The tinker's wages—paid beforehand.
- 581 Turasdal na circe—làn a sgròban.
The hen's wages—her cropful.
- 582 Tuitidh tòn eadar dà chathair, is taigheadas eadar dhà mhuinntir.
The seat falls between two chairs, and house-keeping between two families.

PART V.

THE FINGALIANS.

THE FINGALIANS.

THE traditional reputation of the Fingalian heroes of the Gaelic race, as evidenced in the proverbial sayings about them, shows that there was a culture and a nobleness of character believed by the Gaelic people to have been associated with them that is in agreeable contrast to the might is right gospel so evident in the vaunted warriorship associated with Attila of the Huns, for instance. With the latter, the term culture, spelt with an aggressive capital "K," is profligated to mean nothing more, and nothing less, than efficiency in every art for getting the better of one's neighbours, unencumbered by moral considerations. Our Gaelic legendary heroes are shown as corresponding in character and domestic misfortunes with the legendary King Arthur—"faithful to their friends, generous to their foes, mighty in war, and gentle and wise in peace." Whatever may be the authenticity of the Poems of Ossian, those who are the heroes of their eulogies, and the subjects around whom their narratives are woven, are not the creation of

James MacPherson, the reputed and the disputed author of the Poems. Their names are on record by Barbour, whose story of The Bruce was written hundreds of years before MacPherson's time, and the information to be obtained regarding them in our Gaelic Proverbs is evidence of their legendary existence before the publication of the Poems.

Those heroes are presented to us in the Proverbs as worthy warriors of a warlike age. The following one enumerates to us what were considered as the respective fighting qualities of the six leading Fingalians:—

- (1) Agh Fhinn. *Fingall's fortune, or luck.*
- (2) Làmh Ghuill. *Gaul's hand.*
- (3) Bras-bhuillean Oscair. *Oscar's impetuous strokes.*
- (4) Iomairt ealamh Osein. *Ossian's deftness.*
- (5) Ruith chruaidh Chaoilte. *Coill's swiftness.*
- (6) Suidheachadh Chonain air a Chath. *Conan's planning of the battle.*

Characteristics worthy of respect are implied in practically all the proverbs associated with those heroes, and that are singularly illustrative of virtues not usually associated with the pagan age to which they belonged.

583 An Fhéinn àir a h-uillinn.
The Fingalians on their elbows.

The traditional origin of the foregoing is as follows :— The Fingalians were being held spell-bound in a cave which no one knew of. At the mouth of the cave hung a horn, which, if any one should come and blow it three times, the spell would be broken, and the Fingalians would rise alive and well. A hunter one day wandered through a mist until he came to the cave, saw the horn, and understood what it meant. Looking into the cave, he saw the Fingalians lying asleep all round. He seized the horn, and gave it one blast, and then took another look at the Fingalians, who had awoke at his blast, but with their eyes looking at him with a vacant stare. Giving the horn another blast, the Fingalians instantly moved, each one of them resting on his elbow. Terrified at their aspect, the hunter fled homewards. He told what he had seen, and, accompanied by friends, returned in search of the cave. But they could not find it, and it has never since been found. As a consequence, the tradition is that the Fingalians are still there, each resting on his elbow, waiting for the final blast that will rouse them into life. Another version of the tradition locates the incident as having happened at Tomnahuirich, Inverness. In this story it is added that on the hunter running away he heard the Fingalians calling after him, and saying : “ Thou wretched foolish man, thou hast left us worse than thou found us.”

584 Bha dorus Fhinn do'n ànrach fial.
Fingal's door was free to the needy.

585 Beatha Chonain a measg na'n deamhan :
 Ma's olc dhà, cha'n fhearr dhaibh.
*Conan's life among the demons,
 If bad for him, for them no better.*

Conan is reputed to have been the only disagreeable one among the principal Fingalian characters. He is called, in Ossianic literature, *Aimslig na Feinne*, The

Fingalian Mischief Maker. He is said to have visited Ifrinn (Hell) in search of some of his departed friends, and gave as good as he got to the friends when there. Sir Walter Scott picked up the story and made use of it in Waverley, where Mrs. Flockhart asks: "And will ye face the tearing chields, the dragoons, Ensign MacCombich?" "A claw for a claw, as Conan said to the deils," answered M'Combich.

In "Leabhar na Fèinne," The Fingalian's Book, in what is termed Urnuigh Osein, or Ossian's prayer, there is a good example of the old Highland hospitality. The incident is recorded as having been in the nature of a dialogue between Ossian and St. Patrick.

St. Patrick—Cia beag a chùil chrònanach,
 Is mònanan na grèine,
 Gun fhios do 'n Rìgh Mhòralach
 Cha teid o' bhil a sgeithe.
*Though small the humming insect be,
 Or shadow seen athwart the sun,
 Unknown to the All-highest king
 Naught can their courses run.*

Ossian.—'N saoil thu b' ionnan e 's mac Cumhail?
 An rìgh bha againn' air na Fiannaibh?
 Dh'fhaodadh gach neach a bha air thalamh
 Teachd na thall-san gun iarraidh.
*Thinkest thou that he was equal to
 Our king, the son of Cumhail?
 All on earth might enter free,
 And unbidden to his halls.*

586 Cha d'thug Fionn riamh blàr gun chumhan.
Fingal never fought a fight without offering terms.

587 Coram na Fèinne.
The fairplay of the Fingalians.

This last is one of the most frequently quoted proverbs in our own times. It demands honourable dealings between man and man.

588 Cho laidir ri Cuchuillin.

As strong as Cuchuillin.

The story of Cuchuillin, and the description of him in his chariot, in the First Book of MacPherson's "Fingal," is observed by Nicolson as leaving no doubt that he, at least, was not the creation of MacPherson, but that the original was Gaelic, and old.

589 Cho laidir ri Garbh, Mac Stairn.

As strong as Garbh, the son of Starn.

"Garbh" is Gaelic for strong, and is a Gaelic name said to have been given to a Scandinavian champion who figures in MacPherson's Ossian.

590 Cho cuimseach làmh ri Connlaoch.

As unerring of hand as Connlaoch.

Connlaoch, according to tradition, was the son of Cuchuillin, an Ossianic hero who was brought up at Dunsgethach, in Skye. The ruins of this dun, or fort, are still shown. This hero's story is said to form one of the finest pieces in MacPherson's Ossian.

591 Cha do threig Fionn riamh caraid a làimh deise.

Fingal never forsook his right hand friend.

592 Cia faisg clach do'n làr,

Is faisge na sìn cobhair Choibhidh.

Though near is a stone to the ground,

Nearer than that is Coivi's aid.

593 Fear nach do chuir cùl ri caraid no ri nàmhaid.

One who never turned his back on friend or foe.

594 Fuil mo nàmh cha d' dh'iarr mì riamh,
Na'm bu mhiann leis falbh an sìth.

The blood of my enemy I ne'er did seek,

Were he but willing to depart in peace.

- 595 Ine air son ine, a Chonain.
A claw for a claw, Conan.
E.P.—A Roland for an Oliver.
 See also No. 585.
- 596 Is buaine dùthchas na oilean.
Hereditary gifts are better than acquired ones.
- 597 Is fad an éigh 'o Lochòdha,
 Is cobhair 'o Chloinn Duibhne.
*'Tis a far cry from Lochawe,
 And aid from Clan Duine.*
 By Clan Duine the Clan Campbell are meant, the former having been their original designation. The saying is the war-cry of the Campbells. Tradition says that it was first "cried" by them at a time when they were hard pressed in a conflict with the Gordons, in Aberdeenshire.
- 598 Na sir, 's na seachan an an cath.
Neither seek nor shun the fight.
- 599 Na tarruing mi gun aobhar,
 'S na pill mi gun chliù.
*Do not draw me without cause,
 Nor sheath me without honour.*
- > 600 "Theab, 's cha d'rinn," cu bu mhíosa a
 bha riamh aig an Fhéinn.
*"Almost, but didn't,"—the worst dog the
 Fingalians had.*
- 601 Rughadh shuas an am laidhe,
 Dh'èireadh Fionn moch 'sa mhaduinn;
 Rughadh shuas 'sa mhoch-mhaduinn,
 Dh'eanadh Fionn an ath-chadar.

*With a rose in sky at eventime,
Fingal, he would rise quite early ;
But with a rose in sky at dawning,
He would sleep until late morning.*

“ When it is evening ye say, ‘ It will be fair weather, for the sky is red ;’ and in the morning, ‘ It will be foul weather to-day, for the sky is red and lowering.’ ” (Matthew Chapter xvi., verses 2 and 3).

PART VI.

ST. COLUMBA AND OTHER SAINTS.

ST. COLUMBA AND OTHER SAINTS.

Achlasan Chaluim Chille.

Gun siorradh gun iarraidh.

“Achlasan” is a word difficult to translate in the sense made use of here. Literally it means anything being conveyed under one’s arm. St. Columba’s Achlasan is a Gaelic for St. John’s wort, although sometimes the term used is :

Lus Chaluim Chille.

St. Columba’s herb.

The traditional story associated with the herb is that if it be found unexpectedly and unsought for, the ensuing year will be a lucky one to the finder.

602 Sgoiltidh farmad na’n creag.

Envy (or covetousness) will split the rocks.

The traditional origin of the saying is to the effect that on St. Columba being observed carrying a cheese-shaped stone, an onlooker, believing the Saint’s burden to be the real eatable article, which it so much resembled, he devoured it with his eyes, so to express it. The saint, divining the extent of the fellow’s covetousness, caused the stone to split in two, and fall to the ground, where the curious one was allowed to examine it to his chagrin. This is on a par with many of the other miracles attributed to St. Columba, but the saying is based on the tradition which was at one time, it may be supposed, believed in by many very good folk.

603 Là Fheill Eoin ’s an t-Samhradh

Theid a chuthag gu’ taigh Geamhraidh.

On St. John’s Day, in Summer,

The Cuckoo goes to her winter home.

604 Là Fheill MacCheasaig bidh gach easgann torrach.

On St. Kessock's Day every eel is pregnant.

St. Kessock's Day is the 31st of March. St. Kessock was one of the early saints, and from his name is derived the name M'Isaac, erroneously taken as of Jewish extraction by the uninitiated. The letter "K" is an interloper in Gaelic words, being foreign to the Gaelic Alphabet. In this case it represents the hard Gaelic "C," in MacIosaig, eclipsing the initial "I" of the substantive Iosaig, thus taking the Anglicised forms of M'Isaac, M'Kissack, etc.

605 Là Fheill-Brìghde thig an rìbhinn as a toll.

On St. Bride's Day the nymph will come out of its hole.

The original Bridget, or Bride, the Dàna of Celtic Mythology, was, in pagan times, the goddess of fire, and was supposed to be represented by the sudden glow and strength so noticeable in the sun in early Spring. She had many additional and lovable attributes, and all were transferred in the popular belief to her Christian successor, the Bridget, or Saint Bride of Ireland and Iona. She is depicted as being of transcendent beauty, glorious folds of long, yellow hair being a special feature. The handsome black and white bird, known in English as the Oyster Catcher, is called in Gaelic "Gillie Brìghdè," "Servant of St. Bride," and its re-appearance every due season was regarded as a sure sign of the approach of Spring.

It would seem as if there was some Saint's name associated with every stage in the advance of the seasons, and with the first seasonal movements of bird and beast. By "rìbhinn," or "nymph," referred to in the last quoted saying there is meant the adder, the term being a deprecatory one, according to Nicolson. It is probably a corruption of niomhair, a term for the serpent implying "the venomous one." All adders were believed to come out of their winter holes on St. Bride's Day.

606 Là Chaluim Chille chaomh,
 Là bu chòir a bhi deilbh ;
 Là chuir chaorach air seilbh.
*On dear St. Columba's Day,
 The warp should be put to use,
 And sheep sent to pasture.*

St. Columba's Day is the 9th of June.

607 Lus Phara liath, cuiridh e ghniomh as a
 cnaimh.
*Grey St. Patrick's wort (grundsel) 'twill drive
 pain from the bone.*

608 Tuilleadh ùir air Odhrain.
More earth on Oran.

Tradition says that when St. Columba was founding his religious establishment in Iona, he received divine intimation that one of his companions would have to be buried alive as a sacrifice necessary to the success of the undertaking, and that St. Oran offered himself, and was duly interred. On the third day St. Columba had the grave opened in order to see how St. Oran fared. As soon as he was uncovered, and he was able to open his eyes, the resurrected saint expressed himself as follows:—

609 “ Cha'n eil am bàs na iongantas,
 No Ifrinn mar a dh'aithrisear.”
*“ Death is nothing wonderful,
 Nor is hell as it is said to be.”*

St. Columba, shocked at such sentiments, exclaimed:—

610 Uir, ùir, tuilleadh ùir air Odhrain,
 Mas labhair e tuille còmhraidh.
*Earth, earth, more earth on Oran, lest he say
 more.*

A Tìree version of the above is as follows:—

611 Cha'n eil an t-eug na annas,
 'S cha'n eil Ifrinn mar a thuirtear,
 Cha teid math am mùgh,
 'S cha bhi olc gun dioladh.
*Death is nothing strange,
 Nor is hell as has been said ;
 Good will never change,
 Nor will evil be unpunished.*

Part of the tradition is that Oran used to dispute with St. Columba about the torments of the future, and that he held much laxer views. There is, however, no record of a St. Oran being a companion of St. Columba. The only one of the name on record is mentioned in the "Annals of the Four Masters," an ancient Irish MS., where he is stated to have died in the year 548 A.D., fifteen years before St. Columba came to Scotland. His burial place, known as *Reilig Odhrain*, is in Iona, which would indicate a religious community there before St. Columba's time. It is quite well-known that there were several such in Scotland before the coming of St. Columba, and that they were founded by St. Ninian and his disciples. The saying, "Tuilleadh ùir air Odhrain!" is to-day a polite way of saying "Shut up!"

PART VII.

CLANS AND CLANSHIP.

CLANS AND CLANSHIP.

SOME of these sayings were evidently first said about themselves by members of the Clans concerned, which leaves what truth there may be in them at a heavy discount ; there are other sayings as evidently coined by one Clan in dispraise of another, and the amount of truth in these may be discounted in equal measure. Readers must judge for themselves as to which Clan was best at blowing its own horn. The time when such sayings were in use is now so far off that we can quote many of them with a smile.

There is one satisfaction about them, and it is this—that where dispraise is most intended, abuse or coarseness of expression are conspicuous by their absence. Let the sayings then speak for themselves.

612 An t-uasal an Leathaineach,
'San ceathairneach an Raonalach.
The gentleman of the Clan MacLean,
The warrior of the Clan Ranald.

613 An cinneadh mòr, 's am pòr mì-shealbhach.
The great race, and the unfortunate progeny.

Said of the MacLeans by themselves.

614 A dh'aindeoin co theireadh e.

Despite who would gainsay it.

This is the Clan Ranald motto.

615 A h-uile fear a theid a dholaidh,

Gheibh e dolar bho mhac Aoidh. M/

Every man who's down in luck

Will get a dollar from MacKay.

Said when the Chief of the Mackays was raising men to fight in the wars of Gustavus Adolphus, where he and they made themselves famous. The saying shows that the derogatory attitude of the community towards army rankers is of older growth than is generally supposed. Within our own times soldiering has become quite respectable from the social point of view, but not so long ago it was considered the harbour for all ne'er-do-weels.

616 Amhlaireachd Chloinn-Mhic-Phillip.

The absurd play of the MacKillops.

617 Bho'n se is nì do Chloinn

Neill na doirneagan,

Gabhadh iad do'n ionnsaidh.

As the property of the MacNeills consists of pebbles,

Let them take to them.

618 Cha bhi gean air Granndaich gus am faigh iad lite.

Grants are never gracious till they get their porridge.

Something similar is said in the proverbs about the Campbells, the Gunns, and the MacKenzies.

619 Cha robh balach riamh de Chloinn Griogair,
No caile de Chloinn-an-Aba.

*There never was a clown of the MacGregors,
Or a hussy of the MacNabs.*

620 Camaranaich bhog an ime is sliomaran a chàise.

The Camerons—soft as butter and fawning for cheese.

621 Cha'n ann a h-uile là bhios mòd àig Mac-an-Toisich.

It is not every day that MacIntosh holds a Court.

The MacIntosh here referred to was not the MacKintosh of MacKintosh, Chief of the Clan Chattan, but one of the hereditary tòiseachs (Chamberlains) to the Earls of Perth, who held the lands of Monyvaird as a perquisite of their office. Tradition says that one of their number, in order to make himself famous, and to strike terror into the hearts of thieves, used to arrange for one being adjudicated upon and hanged each day, whenever a batch of them could be held in custody. Hence the saying, implying that culprits were not always on hand.

622 Clann Diarmaid nam busa dubha,
Cuiribh riùtha is beiribh oirre.

*The black-mouthed MacDiarmids,
Go at them, and catch them.*

623 Clann Fhionghain nam faochag.

The MacKinnons of the wilks.

624 Cinnidh Clann Fhearchair gus an teicheamh linn.

The Farquharsons will flourish till the tenth generation.

625 Clann Mhic Codruim nan ròn.

The Clan MacCodrum of the seals.

- > 626 Cnuic is uillt, is Ailpeinich,
 Ach cuin' a thainig na h-Artairich ?
*Hills, and streams, and MacAlpines,
 But when came the MacArthurs.*

This implies that the MacArthurs were considered to have been of pre-historic origin.

- > 627 Mac Cuaraig na'n lòin,
 Chuir e cuaich air à bhròig.
*Kennedy of the meadows,
 He's put his shoe out of shape.*

an Lòin?

The Highland dress requires a man being shapely in all parts to show it off. An ungainly figure never will become it. Gaelic song, descriptive of personal attractions, is very insistent on shapely limbs, and trimly-shod feet were particularly noticed, both helping to add distinction to the dress.

- 628 Cho fad 'sa bhios craobh 'sa choill'
 Bidh foill 's a Chuimeineach.
*As long as trees are in the wood
 There will be treachery in the Cummings.*

*Hand
 the King*
 The Campbells and the MacPhails are characterised in the same way. The treachery of the Red Comyn at the time of King Robert the Bruce would probably have originated the saying in regard to the Cummings.

- 629 Comhdhaltas gu ceud, is càirdeas gu fichead.
*Fostership to a hundred, and blood relation-
 ship to twenty (degrees).*

Sheriff Nicolson says :—" This emphasises the closeness of ties that existed under fosterage in the Old Highlands." It is admitted to have been without parallel anywhere else.

- 630 Co ris a ni mi mo ghearain
 'S gun Mac-Ic-Ailein am Mùdairt.
*To whom can I make my complaint,
 And no Clan Ranald in Moidart?*

The origin of this saying was the situation caused by the death of Clan Ranald at the Battle of Sheriffmuir. Before leaving home at that time, the 1715 campaign, Clan Ranald set fire to the old Clan stronghold of Castle Tirram, in Loch Moidart, in order to prevent the possibility of its falling into the hands of the Campbells in his absence, or in the event of his death. From that time forward the Clan Ranald Chiefs made their abode in other parts of their wide domains, principally at Castle Ormaclate, in Uist. The severance of the Clan Ranald Chiefs from their Moidart clansmen in this manner was the cause of the saying, with its ring of pathos.

- 631 Cho fad 's a bhios monadh an Cinn-t-sàile
 Cha bhi Mac Coinnich gun àl 's a chrò.
*So long as there are moors in Kintail,
 MacKenzies will not want for cattle in the
 pens.*
- 632 Casan tiorram Chlann-an-tòisich.
The MacIntoshs' dry feet.
- 633 Cho fad 's a bhios Frisealaich a stigh
 Cha bhi MacRath a muigh.
*So long as there's a Fraser inside,
 A MacRae will not be left outside.*

The above saying is said to have been inscribed on the lintel over the entrance to the original Castle of the Chiefs of the Frasers. The tradition associated with it is to the effect that although the MacRaes have been for generations holding their hands in Kintail off the Chiefs of the MacKenzies, and serving under the Seaforth Chiefs whenever they went to battle, doubtless on all such occasions as a self-contained entity, and immediately under a Ceann-taighe of their own, as their separate tartan would indicate, their original territory was in the Fraser country, on the Airds of Lovat, their allegiance at that time being to the Fraser Chiefs. On account of some signal services rendered

to the Frasers by the MacRaes, the Chief of the Frasers caused the above saying to be inscribed over the front entrance to his Castle.

634 Co dhà bhios MacMhathain gu math,
Mar bi e dha fhéin.
*To whom will Matheson be good,
If not to himself?*

635 Dalt Mhic Phillip, a dol am feathas 'sam
feathas.
*MacKillop's foster child, getting better and
better.*

636 Fear eil' air son Eachan.
Another for Hector.

When Hector Roy MacLean, of Duart, fell at the Battle of Inverkeithing, in 1652, several members of the Clan fell while guarding their wounded Chief. As each one replaced another, he did so with the cry "Fear eil' air son Eachan," "*Another for Hector.*"

637 Fadal Chloinn an Tòisich.
The delay of the MacIntoshes.

638 Ged a tha mi bochd, tha mi uasal
Buidheachas do Dhia is ann do Chloinn
Illeathain mi.
*Though I am poor, I am high-born;
Thank God! I am a MacLean.*

639 Is caomh le fear a charaid—
Ach se smior a chridhe a cho-dhalt.
*Affectionate is a man to his friend,
But a foster-brother is as the life-blood of his
heart.*

640 Leathaineach gun bhòsd,
 Dòmhnallach gun tapadh,
 Is Caimbeulach gun mhòr-chuis,
 Tri nithean tha aineamh.
*A MacLean without boast,
 A MacDonald without cleverness,
 A Campbell without pride—
 Three rarities.*

641 Stiùbhairtich, cinne nan rìgh 's nan ceàird.
Stewarts, the race of kings and tinkers.

The name was commonly adopted by tinkers for the same reasons that induce Jewish moneylenders to adopt some of our most aristocratic names—mercenary motives and the desire for respectability.

642 Slìochd nan sionnach Cloinn Mhàrtainn.
Race of the foxes, the Clan Martin.

643 Spagadagliog Chloinn Dòmhnuille,
 Agus leòm nan Leathainich.
*The MacDonald swagger,
 And the MacLean airs.*

644 Tha fortan an cuideachd nan treum. *m*
Fortune favours the brave.

This is the motto of the Clan MacKinnon. It is illustrated in "Campbell's West Highland Tales" by the following story:—Once upon a time, a great man was getting a sword made. The smith's advice for the perfect tempering of the blade was that it should be thrust red hot through the body of a living man. A messenger was to be sent for the sword upon whom it was agreed that the experiment should be made. The man sent was overtaken by a thunderstorm, and took refuge until it passed. Meantime the Chief sent another messenger for the sword, and he,

+ *And the fortune favours*

unheedful of the storm, duly arrived and asked for it, whereupon the arranged for plan for tempering the blade was performed upon him. Subsequently, the first messenger, who had prudently taken shelter on the way, arrived at the smithy, got the sword, and took it to his master. The great man was astonished to see him, and asked where he had been. The messenger told what had happened to him, and hence the reply of the Chief, and the traditional origin of the saying.

645 Theid dùthchas an aghaidh na'n creag.
Kinship will withstand the rocks.

646 Tha uaisle fo thuinn an Cloinn Lachain.
There is hidden nobleness in the Clan Lachlan.

647 Tha e mar a bha càt Mhic-Aoidh,
Fhathast 's an fheòil.
He is like MacKay's cat—still in the flesh.

648 Teoidhidh feòil ri finne, ged nach deòin le duine.
Flesh will warm to kin, even against a man's will.

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