

"The Chiefship of Clan Chattan."

A LECTURE

DELIVERED TO THE

INVERNESS FIELD CLUB,

IN NOVEMBER, 1895,

BY

ALEXANDER MacBAIN, M.A.

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THE CHIEFSHIP OF CLAN CHATTAN

I HAVE ventured to bring before the calm tribunal of the Inverness Scientific Society the somewhat volcanic subject of the Chiefship of Clan Chattan, in the hope that it will be discussed with the judicial mind that should characterise men of science, and not with the perfervid zeal of clansmen. The events which have led to this much-debated subject once more occupying attention began with the formation, in the cities of the South, of Clan Societies. A year or two ago the Clan Chattan Association was started with the view, doubtless, of not being behind such clans as those of Macgregor, Mackay, Macdonald, and the rest. Mainly composed of Mackintoshes, this Society elected Mackintosh of Mackintosh as its Chief. The Macphersons were not to be beaten. They have always been an assertive as well as a plucky clan. First, there was, in the early summer of this year, the great pilgrimage of the Macphersons from the cities North and South to Cluny Castle to greet their Chief, whom they denominated in a controversially worded address, "Chief of Clan Chattan." Some time ago the press announced that at a meeting at Perth a new Society was formed—a Clan Chattan Society; but this was contradicted. It was no such small beer as a "Clan Society"—it was the *Clan Chattan* itself. So the Clan Chattan met at Perth; they were practically all Mac-

phersons, and of course Cluny was proclaimed Chief of the meeting and of Clan Chattan. A week or two ago there was a meeting in Glasgow of the Clan Chattan Association, at which Mr. Fraser-Mackintosh delivered an address on the history of the clan, dealing especially with the vexed question of the Chiefship. The language he made use of has roused the ire of the Macphersons; he has actually, like the bad street boy, called names, and shouted out "Brochan" at the Macphersons, an expression which on occasions of gatherings and festivities used in the younger days of the present generation in Badenoch to lead well-nigh to bloodshed. Few Macphersons care to be reminded of the fact that the clan on their way to Culloden stopped a little above Moyhall, and made for their breakfast some *brochan*, or porridge. Their enemies say or said that if they had not made this halt they might have reached the battlefield in time, and turned the day in favour of Prince Charlie. Only they preferred to wait and sup *brochan*, says Mr. Fraser-Mackintosh, as many a wicked reviler has said before. In consequence of all this, "the fat is in the fire," as the saying is, and we are likely once more in for another logomachy over the Chiefship of Clan Chattan.

My intention to-night is to state a few facts—and facts in this controversy are sadly ignored—for the amount of second-hand quotation made use of is simply disgraceful to educated Scotland, and the manner in which the opinions of eminent men on both sides are bandied about reflects little credit on the research or originality of 99 per cent. of the disputants. On the Macpherson side the appeal is to Skene, on the Mackintosh side Gregory's judgement on the case is adduced. And so the battle rages—a battle of second-hand opinions and quotations, while the facts are staring anybody in the face who has the patience to carefully consider them.

The clan system of the Highlands is not old, and it is not "Celtic." It is a compromise between the old Gaelic tribal or *tuath* system and feudalism, where the latter has the best of it in the end. In Scotland the original Gaelic tribal divisions are easily made out. There was first the king, or, in Ireland, high-king; then there were the earls — *normaer* in old Gaelic, *ri* in Irish. These were the heads of the *mor-tuath* or provinces. Under them were the thanes or *toisechs*, who were the heads of the *tuath* or *fine* or tribe, the Gaelic *clan*. The real Gaelic for "chief" of a clan is *toisech*, a word which has been practically lost, giving way later to such terms as *ceann-cinnidh*, Major's *caput progenei*, or "head of the race." The right of succession in a Gaelic tribe lay in the chief's family, but the office was purely elective; and a man's successor was often appointed during his lifetime, and was always known as his *tanist*. The high-kingship of Ireland was in the family of O'Neill, but sons did not by any means always succeed fathers on the throne.

The seven great Celtic earldoms of Scotland soon disappeared before feudalism, curiously in nearly all cases ending with female heirs, who married Teutonic nobles. The Mormaer of Moray was represented first by the Earls of Moray and Buchan, and later by Huntly and Moray. It was under these potentates that the Clan Chattan lived, "under a chief of their own," to use the words of the historian Major, who flourished in 1521. The *toiseach* of the clan was a feudal vassal of the Earls of Huntly and Moray, and from them he held his lands. In this respect Mackintosh was not so fortunate as some other of the great Highland chiefs, who managed to consolidate their clans on the ruins of the older earldoms, such as the Mackenzies of Ross-shire, the various branches of the Macdonalds, Macleods, and others.

Clan Chattan, therefore, never arrived at the solidarity which the other great clans attained. The different septs still retain their individual surnames, never merging them in those of Mackintosh, as happened notably in the case of the Macdonalds, Frasers, and Campbells. The clan, at the height of its fame in the 16th century, consisted of about 15 septs, under the chiefship of Mackintosh. The principal septs were, besides Mackintoshes, the Shaws, Cattanachs, Farquharsons, the Macphersons, the Davidsons, Macqueens, Macbeans, Macgillivrays, Gows, and even the Macleans of Dochgarroch. The Clan Chattan lands stretched across mid-Inverness-shire from sea to sea—from Petty right through Strathdearn and Badenoch into Lochaber, with an off-pouring away into Braemar of Aberdeenshire.

The history and the genealogy of most of our Highland clans rarely go beyond the year 1400. About this date contemporary documents begin to fail us, and we cannot test the claims made by the clan historians, whose lists generally stretch away to the time of Ceanmor, or in some cases to Adam himself. The Grants, the Mackintoshes, and the Camerons, have their genealogies broken about the same period—1400. Individual Grants and Mackintoshes are named before that, but their connection with the 15th century chiefs is obscure. The Cameron genealogy of the 14th century is a bad piece of manufacturing, where all the *De Cambruns* mentioned in charters throughout Scotland have been impressed into the genealogy. Donul Du is the first assured chief, circ. 1430. We must disabuse our minds of the idea that the pedigrees of our Highland chiefs are “as long as their swords.” They may be so in the works of the Seanachies, but as no outside test as a rule can be applied to them, they are for historical purposes names and nothing more.”

The first contemporary date in the history of Clan Chattan is 1466, if we omit the Gaelic MS. of 1450 and 1467, when we are introduced to Duncan Mackintosh, "Capitanus de Clan Chattan," and this same Duncan is the year after, in a bond with Lord Forbes, styled "Cheiff and Captane of Clan Chattane." A common form of the title of chief in these documents is "captain, chief, and principal man."

And here we may pause to consider these English renderings of the Gaelic *toiseach*, for much stress is laid by Skene and others on the distinction between "captain" and "chief." The distinction is entirely imaginary. The Irish Latin translation of *toiseach* is *capitanus* or *capitanus sive præcipuus dux*. The idea of "captain" is the first that occurred to writers that were translating the Celtic idea of chiefship. The word "chief" did not at once spring into the meaning we now give it. Originally meaning "head," it was not a bit more significant in the 15th century than "captain" or "principal man," the words which go along with it. Dr. Skene entirely fails to make out his contention; his own examples are dead against him. The contemporary Chief of Clan Cameron is also denoted "captain," and it is at once explained that he, too, was a younger cadet who ousted an older branch, to wit, the Macmartins of Letterfinlay. This is mere pettifogging, Mackintosh was Chief of Clan Chattan in 1466, as much as any man was chief of any other clan. Undoubtedly the clan was not so homogeneous as some others; but this homogeneity of most other clans was really spurious. All so-called Mackenzies, for instance, were not descendants of the far-away Kenneth, who was reckoned ancestor to the chief. Minor septs had adopted the name because they were under Mackenzie's *toiseach*-ship, or jurisdiction. Possibly in the 16th century the idea of

“chief” may have to be separated from that of “captain;” for “captain” is the title consistently given to the illegitimate John Mundeartach of Clanranald, and two other such cases at least occur. But, really, the evidence is all against making any distinction for the 15th century. We are, in fact, reading back 19th century meanings of words into the 15th. A study of the *New English Dictionary*, edited by Dr. Murray, should put us right on these points. As well maintain that because *chef* means cook now, this also was its 15th century force.

Dr. Murray's work will also enable us to discover the fact that the word *clan* appears in English literature first in 1425 in Wynton's Chronicle, where he describes the fight at the North Inch of Perth, where the Clan Chattan and Clan Cameron are supposed to have been the combatants in 1396. Not only was the idea of a Highland chief difficult at once to fix, but the word for a Highland *clan* had to be borrowed from Gaelic! So much for philology.

For a hundred years after we first meet with Duncan Mackintosh and his Clan Chattan, things went as well with their chiefs and them as might be expected in a Highland clan. The chief was in the difficult position of having to please both Huntly and Moray, and in 1550 Huntly's jealousy at Mackintosh's power, and his anger at his support of Moray, blazed out to Mackintosh's destruction. For the rest of the century, Huntly tampered with the unity of Clan Chattan. The portions of the clan in Badenoch, which belonged as a lordship to Huntly, were nearly all tenants of Huntly's. In 1591 he bands to himself the Macphersons of Cluny and others of the name closely akin to them. In 1594 the Macphersons defended Ruthven Castle for Huntly, and fought on his side against

Mackintosh. It is said they had gone over to Huntly's side in 1562 at Corrichie. Macpherson of Cluny was only a tenant in 1591 and in 1603; but by 1622 he had become proprietor under Huntly. And so by degrees, under the egging of Huntly, the Macphersons asserted their independence of the Mackintoshes and the rest of the Clan Chattan. In 1644 they turned out in full numbers to join Montrose; in fact Colonel Ewan Macpherson gallantly led Clan Chattan in that war. Need we wonder if in 1672 Macpherson of Cluny claimed to be not merely Chief of the Macphersons, but also Chief of what he called the "Old Clan Chattan" of Badenoch? Some traditionary genealogies backed him in his claim, genealogies which we shall now proceed to consider.

Clan Chattan is mentioned in a Gaelic genealogical MS. of the 15th century, bearing the date of 1467. The genealogies mostly stop at 1450. Here the Clan is called "Clann an toisigh i. Clann Gillicattan;" the Clan Mackintosh—that is, Clan Gillicattan. Gillicattan is a personal name denoting "servant of St. Cattan." St. Cattan lived about 710; his name means the "little cat," and there are three or four churches named after him in Argyle and the Isles. In the usual name of Clan Chattan, the *gille* of Gillicattan disappears—a very common thing to happen, as in the case of Calum from Gillicalum, and so with other saints' names, which originally were not used as ordinary names without the prefix of *gille* or *maol*.

The genealogies given by the 1450 MS. are the earliest documents we possess in regard to Clan Chattan, and also the most important. The genealogies are as follows, for there are two ("son of" is understood as we read down the column):—

William and Donald	Lochlan
William	Suibne
Ferchar (1382)	Shaw
William	Leod
Gillamichol	Shaw (1338)
Ferchar (1234)	Ferchard
Shaw	Gilchrist
Gilchrist	Malcolm
Aigcol	Donald Camgilla
Ewen	Mureach
—	Suibne
—	Tead (Shaw)
Neill	Nechtain
[Gillicattan ?]	Gallicattan

The first genealogy seems to be the one intended for the leading family, but as it is incomplete at the end, it is impossible to say whether the line ends in Gillicattan or not; we should expect it to do so from the heading which the sennachie gives to the general genealogy—Mackintoshes or Clan Chattan. The second genealogy ends with Gillicattan, who is generally represented as living in the time of Malcolm Ceann-mor, if not earlier. In any case, there are 14 generations, it may be remarked, whether this has any Scriptural reference or not. Skene regarded the first genealogy as that of the Rothiemurchus Mackintoshes, for Ferchard M'Toshy is represented in 1382 as annoying the Bishop of Aberdeen in his lands of Brass—a thanage, too, Brass was, like Rothiemurchus. And he thinks that it is from these thanes that the name Mackintosh arose. We infer from his words also that he regards the later Mackintosh Chiefs as cadets of the same family. The other list he regards as the “old Chan Chattan” genealogy, and incontinently forces it on to the Cluny family, though there are in it only two names that at that time appear in

their lists, those of Muireach and Gillicattan. The other names are very unlike the Clan Vurich names. What should we expect from these two lists as they stand? Well, this: the leading family of Clan Chattan was in the first half of the 15th century represented by two brothers, William and Donald, sons of William. It is a remarkable thing that two names should be given instead of one; yet the same thing happens in the case of this family in 1428, when Angus and Malcolm Mackintosh are recommended by King James as men under whose banner some 25 depredators of the time must range and behave themselves. This Malcolm Mackintosh is doubtless the man who was, at any rate afterwards, Chief of Clan Chattan. The Clans Chattan and Cameron were up till 1428 loyal to the Lord of the Isles, under whom they held land in Lochaber. Major, the historian of 1521, mentions that these clans (at least Clan Chattan) revolted from the Lord of the Isles, and took the side of the King in 1429 in the war against Alexander of the Isles. It is clear that Malcolm Mackintosh was on the King's side, and the family histories allege that the custody of Inverness Castle was committed to his charge, "an office which his predecessors long held." By his action in support of the King, Malcolm Mackintosh became, if he was not so already, Chief of Clan Chattan, for it is his son, Duncan, that we first meet with in public and private documents as undoubted Chief of the Clan. Skene speaks of the secession of the old Clan Chattan in 1429, but what really happened then was an internecine fight between the Clans Chattan and Cameron. Whether some of the Clan Chattan adhered to the Lord of the Isles, and whether this was the leading branch represented by William and Donald, is unknown. That William and Donald were the Chiefs by descent in or about 1429 is certain; the writer of the 1450 MS. knew the clans too well to be mistaken.



Besides, the Clan Chattan, we have every reason to believe, was originally from Lochaber, and looked to the Lord of the Isles as their true suzerain.

The second list of 1450 seems to be that of one of the oldest cadets of Clan Chattan. We meet here with Muireach, whose date might be roughly 1175, the date postulated by the Macphersons for their parson of Kingussie, who succeeded a childless brother as Chief, and who received in 1173 a dispensation from the Pope to marry and carry on the line of Chiefs. Unfortunately, however, the average years allotted to humanity demand, as we shall see, that the Parson Muireach must be placed two-hundred years later. Donald Camgilla, the one-eyed one, reminds us of the Dugald and Donald Dall of the Macpherson and Eva Mackintosh genealogies. As we shall see there is nothing in this list to warrant Skene in calling it the genealogy of the Cluny family.

Let us now turn to the Mackintosh story. According to the Mackintosh genealogies, dating from the 17th century, the family is descended from Macduff, *thane* of Fife, as they and Fordun call him. Shaw Macduff, the second son of Duncan, fifth Earl of Fife, who died in 1154, in an expedition against the people of Moray in 1160, distinguished himself, and received from the King lands in Petty, and the custody of Inverness Castle. Here he was locally known as Shaw Mac an Toisich, "Shaw, the son of the Thane." He died in 1179, and was succeeded by (2) Shaw, whose son was (3) Ferchard, whose nephew was (4) Shaw, whose son was (5) Ferchard, whose son was (6) Angus, who in 1291 married Eva, heiress of Clan Chattan, and thus got the Clan's lands in Lochaber. So far the genealogy. It is a pretty story, but it sadly lacks one thing—verisimilitude. Macduff was not *toiseach* of Fife. In the Book of Deer he is called *comes*, the

then Gaelic of which was *normaer*, now *moirear*. Shaw Macduff would infallibly, as son of the Earl of Fife, have been called Mac Mhoireir. Besides, we know of a son of the Earl of Fife who settled in the north; this is Adam of Strathbogie, ancestor of a line of Earls of Athol, but never known of as a Macduff. The genealogy of the Mackintoshes till the end of the 15th century is as follows:—

MACKINTOSH HISTORY.

- (12) Ferchar (d. 1514)
 (9) Ferchar (11) Duncan (d. 1496)
 (8) Lachlan & (10) Malcolm (d. 1464-5)
 (7) William (d. 1368)
 (6) Angus (d. 1345)
 (5) Ferchar (d. 1274)
 (4) Shaw (d. 1265)
 William
 (2) Shaw (d. 1210)
 (1) Shaw (d. 1179)
 Duncan Macduff (d. 1154), Earl of Fife.

It will at once be seen that there is here a striking resemblance between the first 1450 MS. genealogy and this one of the Mackintoshes. The leading names are the same. Ferchar, 9th of Mackintosh, is made a grandson of William, while the 1450 MS. makes him a son. Angus in the one is Gillamichel in the other; then Ferchar and Shaw follow in proper course. Now it happens that in 1234 Ferchar the son of Seth is mentioned in the Registrum of Moray in such a way that he must have been "Steward of Badenoch"—*Senescallus de Badenoch*. And *Seneschal* is often a translation of *toiseach*, the next man to the Earl. The Chief of Clan Chattan here appears as Seneschal to Walter Comyn, Earl of Menteith and Lord of Badenoch;

and his successor, Malcolm Mackintosh, is similarly called *Ballivus de Badenoch* in 1440. We may be right in regarding this Ferchard Toiseach as the ancestor who gave the name Mac-an-toisich to the race.

The Mackintosh history says that Ferchard, ninth chief, was deposed from the chiefship owing to his "sullen disposition" and mismanagement of affairs in or about 1417. He was succeeded by Malcolm Mackintosh, his uncle. This is an extraordinary thing to happen; a chief and his family both are extruded from the Chiefship, and practically no reasons are given in the chronicles of the Clan. Such events have happened in other Clans, though rarely; twice for instance, in the family of Clanranald, but good reasons can usually be assigned. The usurpation of Malcolm seems to be really coincident with the advent of King James and the rupture with the Lord of the Isles. Possibly one faction of the Clan sided with the King and the other, or Badenoch faction, with the Lord of the Isles. It might even be suggested that the Cluny family is descended from Ferchar and *Hinc illae lacrimae*.

Anyway the Mackintosh genealogy seems to make a bad break here. Malcolm who dies in 1465, is grandson of the ever famous Eva of 1291, and three generations are made to cover 191 years. Malcolm's father, an old man, dies nearly one hundred years before him! We may well suppose that it is at this break in the Mackintosh genealogy that the real origin of the dispute as to the headship of the Clan arose—a dispute, however, which concerns only practically the Mackintosh branch of it. The Chiefship of Clan Chattan, however acquired, belonged to Malcolm and Duncan Mackintosh in the middle of the 15th century. There is no gainsaying this fact now, nor was there any dispute then over the matter, nor for over 200 years after. [*Note*.—The story of Malcolm Mackin-

tosh's advent to the Chiefship requires to be studied afresh. Mr. Mackintosh Shaw follows the Kinrara MS. in putting his death in 1457. But he is mentioned as tenant of the Crown in Petty and Strahdearn till 1465, along with his son Malcolm, whom the same authority kills twenty years earlier.]

Let us now turn to the Macpherson claim for the Chiefship. Let me here again present the facts first. It might be supposed from the "excursions and alarms" of the contest for this Chiefship, and the tall talk indulged in by the Macphersons, that here we are dealing with one of the oldest clans in the Highlands. The very reverse, however, is the case. Clans with clerical names are not old in any case, and, as far as I remember, there are none such to be found in Ireland. The first mention of Macpherson of Cluny is in 1591, when Andrew Mackfersone, in Cluny, and his immediate friends, gave their "band" to Huntly. This Andrew is said, as a young man, to have defended Ruthven Castle when "Argyll, with 10,000 men," besieged it, Mackintosh helping Argyll; and Sir Robert Gordon mentions this fact also—that the Clan Macpherson defended the Castle so bravely that Argyll, though having 12,000 men, had to raise the siege. Andrew's name appears in the Huntly Badenoch Rental of 1603 as tacksmen of Cluny, a farm of "3 pleuchs," but by 1622 he must have got property rights over the place, for he is then called "of Cluny" in the Privy Council Records. His son Ewen joined Montrose in 1644, at the head of 300 men; and for this he and his aged father were indicted by the Synod of Moray in 1648. Ewen's son, Duncan, claimed to be Chief of the old Clan Chattan, but Mackintosh restrained him by legal process, so that he had to be content to be responsible to the Crown for "those of his name of Macpherson descendit of

his family," without prejudice to the Laird of Mackintosh. And he got from the Lyon King-at-Arms a coat as cadet of Mackintosh. But he was a mighty man this Duncan, and the very next year we find him "banding" with Lord Macdonell as "Duncan M'Pherson of Cluny for himself, and taking burden upon him for the heall name of M'Phersons, and some others called old Clan Chattan, as cheeffe and principall man thereof." By the time of the '45 Rebellion, Macpherson of Cluny was a recognised Highland Chief, and the part which the Clan and their Chief took in this national event raised their reputation to the front rank of Highland clans. Yet in the 16th century they were unknown as a clan, and in the Parliamentary Act of 1594 anent the broken clans, the "M'Inphersonis" are reckoned only as "broken men." They are, of course, not mentioned in the Parliamentary Roll of 1587 of clans that "hes capitanes, cheiffs, and chiftanes, whome on thay depend." The two M'Vurich lists have them not, nor the Dean of Lismore in 1512 in his list, though he does mention "Cattanich agis toissich."

The claim of the Macphersons to the Chiefship of Clan Chattan is in this wise. They say that they are descended from Gillicattan Mor, progenitor of the Clan Chattan, by direct male descent, and every link is given back to the 11th century, thus (omitting "father of")—Gillicattan, Diarmid, Gillicattan, Muirich, parson of Kingussie, whence they are called Clann Mhuirich, father of Gillicattan and Ewan Ban, the former of whom had a son, Dougal Dall, whose daughter Eva, "the heiress of Clan Chattan," married Angus Mackintosh in 1291, and thus made him "captain" of Clan Chattan; Ewen Ban was the direct male representative, then Kenneth, Duncan, Donald Mor, Donald Dall, Donald Og, Ewen; then Andrew of Cluny in 1600, a real historic personage without a doubt. In this

list, not a single name previous to that of Andrew can be proved to have existed from any documents outside the Macpherson genealogies, excepting only Andrew's father, Ewen, who is mentioned in the Clanranald Red Book as grandfather of the heroic Ewen, who joined Montrose with three hundred of Clan Mhuirich.

Thus we have to take eight or nine generations on trust, inclusive also of the heiress Eva, who is mentioned in the Mackintosh histories as well. Now, there are two things that I have to say before I shall trust such a list—(1) It will be observed that the 1450 MS. gives 14 generations from 1450 to (say) 1100, Gillicattan's date. The Macphersons place him about that time. Now, the Macpherson genealogy gives only ten names from 1600 to 1100, or an average of two generations a century! But that is really a small matter compared with the actual dishonesty involved in my second point. (2) It shows us the Highland seannachie at work in the noble art of inventing a genealogy, as he well knew how to do. In Douglas' Baronage first, and repeated in Burke's latest edition of his Landed Gentry, we have five spurious chiefs foisted into the genealogy of Cluny between 1550 and 1650! The genealogy as given by Sir Æneas Macpherson in the 17th century is given in the first column below; it is quite correct, for it can be tested to Ewen, father of Andrew of the 1591 "Band." The second is the Douglas and Burke list. We have, beginning with Duncan of Cluny, who died in 1722, to Donald Og, about 1560, for Donald may have existed (*f.* = son of).

17TH CENT. MS.	DOUGLAS.
Duncan (d. 1722)	Duncan (d. 1722)
<i>f.</i> Ewen (1644)	<i>f.</i> Eugene
<i>f.</i> Andrew (1591)	<i>f.</i> Andrew

<i>f.</i> Ewen	<i>f.</i> Ewan
<i>f.</i> Donald Og (1562?)	<i>f.</i> John
	<i>f.</i> John (1594)
	<i>f.</i> Ewan
	<i>f.</i> Dormund (1509)
	<i>f.</i> Ewen
	<i>f.</i> Donald Og

We know that the first list is correct ; Ewen, son of Dorald Og, is in the Clanranald MS. ; Andrew, in Cluny, his son, is in the Huntly Band of 1591, 1603 Rental, often in the Privy Council Records, and in the Synod Records of Moray for 1648, when, as a very old man, he is excused from attending at Forres to answer for his countenancing of Montrose ; Ewen, his son, was the Colonel of the Clan under Montrose, an honour which the spurious Douglas genealogy gives to a mythic Donald of Cluny, son of Ewen, who died childless, being succeeded by his brother Andrew. As a matter of fact, Andrew, son of Ewen, succeeded his grandfather, and seems to have been the first Cluny known to Lachlan Shaw, who may have confused him with his grandfather, for he says—

“I cannot pretend to give the names of the representatives before the last century. I know that in 1660 Andrew was laird of Clunie, whose son Ewan was father of Duncan, who died in 1722 without male issue.”

It was probably this remark of Shaw's, coupled with the remarkable (and hence suspicious) longevity of Andrew of Cluny—a longevity that can be proved—which made the 18th century writer foist the extra names upon the genealogy. Now, how is this list made up? Exactly in the same way as the Cameron genealogy of the 14th century is invented. The names are those of Macphersons who received charters of their lands, as preserved in the

Register of the Great Seal, but lands never owned by the Cluny family save in one case. Dormund Macpherson, 12th chief, gets a charter under the Great Seal from James IV. ; but the charter turns out to be one granted to a Dormund M'Pherson in the Lordship of Menteith, not of Badenoch ! John, 14th of Cluny, who " was with the Earl of Huntly at the battle of Glenlivet," as the veracious chronicler says, to add a touch of realism to his bald genealogical account, gets a charter of the lands of Tullich, &c., lands which lie in Strathnairn, and he turns out to be a scion of the well-known family of Macphersons of Brin ! Similarly John, 15th of Cluny, is son of the foregoing John of Brin ; and Ewen, 16th of Cluny, who gets a charter in 1623 of the lands of Tullich, &c., is a cousin of Brin. Donald, 17th of Cluny, who gets a charter in 1643, turns out to be Donald Macpherson of Nuid. During all the period of 14th to 16th chief here given, there was only one man in Cluny, and his name was Andrew Macpherson, son of Ewen.

After such an exhibition of dishonesty as is disclosed in this bit of genealogy so near to us as the 17th century, it seems a work of supererogation to consider or criticise the genealogy for the period that extends from Donald Og to Gillicattan More. Indeed, Skene tacitly disregards the whole genealogy, save that he asserts that Duncan, son of Kenneth, is the Duncan Persoun concerned in the Lord of the Isles' rebellion against the King, and mentioned in the Exchequer Rolls for the year 1438. This date suits the genealogy fairly well, but it is extremely doubtful if a Badenoch parson is the person referred to as of so mighty importance as to rank with the chiefs of Maclean and Macdonald, and two others, who suffered imprisonment in Tantallon. It may be so ; it may be connected with the desertion of the Clan Chattan from the side of the Lord of

the Isles to that of the King. But I am afraid conjecture is useless on the point. Duncan is great-grandson of Muireach, who is usually regarded as the "parson" of Kingussie, from whom the Clan takes its name; even Gillicattan himself claims the honour in his title of Gillicattan Cleireach, or the Cleric. These dates place Muireach in the 14th century, say in Bruce's reign, or a little latter (Kenneth, his grandson, is represented by a Macpherson document as having fought at the clan fight of Invernahavon, usually dated at 1386, but which may be, and likely is, that mentioned by Major as occurring in 1429). This would place Gillicattan more at the beginning of the 13th century. In all these calculations, I have given about 35 years for every generation, from Andrew of Cluny, in 1600, to Muireach—a number in excess by at least five years of what should be given

Eva, who married Mackintosh, is great-grand-daughter of Muireach, the parson, which would make her contemporary with Duncan Persoun of 1438. Her date, according to the Mackintosh genealogies, is 1291, which, as Mark Twain would say, is an "awful discrepancy." Here we may examine the Eva story.

When the Scottish Highlands began to lose touch with Ireland at the Reformation and thereafter, the Irish learning also began to disappear, until, with the end of the 17th century, and the last of the M'Vurich seanachies, it disappears altogether; and there is a gap of half-a-century before Gaelic learning again revives. But, meanwhile, it had lost contact with its Irish past; otherwise, James M'Pherson, masquerading as "Ossian," would never have played his fantastic tricks before astonished Europe. It is much the same with our genealogies—and with the M'Pherson genealogy. We have seen the seanachie genealogy of 1450; but the 16th and 17th century introduced

a change. Then it was the fashion to trace families and clan origins to foreigners—Normans, Saxons, Danes, and Norsemen, and to famed heroes of these nations; or, failing this, to famed heroes of Scotland or Ireland. The M'Gregors, according to these genealogists, are from Gregory the Great, King of Scotland; Cambro, a Dane, marries the heiress of the M'Martins, and hence the Camerons; Colin Fitzgerald, son of the Earl of Kildare, marries the daughter of Kenneth Matheson, and from his son, Kenneth, arose the great Clan Mackenzie; the first of the Campbells marries the heiress of the last of the old line of O'Duinn, by Lochaw—"the inevitable Eva," as Skene calls her, for she, too, was Eva—and hence the Campbells are both Norman Campo-bello and Celtic O'Duinn. In Pictland, what greater hero could be found than Macduff, *thane* of Fife, honoured above all in the pages of Fordun? The problem, a small one for a Highland genealogist, was to trace Mackintosh to this origin, and at the same time keep him Chief of Clan Chattan. It was no problem at all, for fate had solved it. Did not Mackintosh mean son of the *Thane*? Who was *the* Thane? Why, Macduff. As Hamlet says, "it is as easy as lying," for it is lying. The Eva story is a myth after the heart of Max Muller himself, founded on a "disease of language"—and, let us add, on an unscrupulous imagination.

Mackintosh, we may take it, belongs to the oldest stock of Clan Chattan, whose original habitat may have been, as the tradition has it, Lochaber. Anyway, here the chiefs held their first chartered lands, and when we first meet them seem to find them pushing northward to Petty, where in the 15th century the clan is firmly established. The traditions of the branches of the clan also point to Lochaber. The Macbeans are distinctly stated in the histories to have come from Inverlochry to place themselves under Mac-

kintosh, for no good, I fear, that they had done. And the tradition among the Macbeans is to the same effect.

Something, too, may be proved from the Mackintosh names. They are distinctly Dalriadic; Ferchar is especially so. Shaw, so enigmatical as to be always badly spelt, is probably the old *Seaghdha* or *Segda*, powerful one, now the Irish *Sheehy*, *Shea*; though a good claim can be made for the name Sitheach as being the one meant (from *Sith*, onset). Lachlan, Suibne, Gillicattan and Muireach belong also to the old Scottic stock. As we come to the year 1400, and as the clan reaches Inverness and Norman civilisation, we meet with William—a common Mackintosh name. Now, if the Macduff origin were true, the first name to go would be Shaw, and the Macduff names would become prominent. We do not meet with them till the 15th century in those of Malcolm and Duncan, the leading Macduff names. And this reminds us of the wicked account given of the origin of the Mackintoshes in Hugh Macdonald's MS. History of the Macdonalds (in 1680), which is briefly this:—A son of Macduff, Thane of Fife took refuge with Angus of the Isles, whose daughter and the young Macduff fell in love with one another, irregularly; and, young Macduff being killed before espousing the mother, the son, who became Mackintosh as son of the Thane, was of “natural descent,” as the MS. puts it. This son was Callum Beg Mackintosh—the Malcolm already mentioned. The story is, of course, a parody—a well-deserved parody—of the Eva myth, showing that there were some grim humorists in those days.

And here, too, let us consider the name of the rival faction in this dispute, and see if all is right there. The name M'Pherson appears first in the middle of the 15th century. The first I know of belong to Banffshire, but Hugh M'Persan supplied the King in 1459 at Ruthven

with cattle and other provisions, and he is the first of Clan Chattan we meet with. Bean Makfarson is a witness to a bond between M'Intosh and Kilravock in 1481, and he appears in 1490 as Bean Makim-person. He may have been the ancestor of the Brin Macphersons who flourished a century later, and whose ancestor Bean is made in the genealogies a younger brother of Donald More of Cluny. In 1543, the M'Phersons of Strathnairn and Petty, who seem fairly numerous, give their band to Huntly not to side against him with William of Mackintosh. The exact relationship of these Strathnairn and Petty Macphersons to the Badenoch family is obscure; in 1609 Andrew Macpherson of Cluny claims the M'Phersons of Brin as of his house in the "band" he gives to Mackintosh of Borlum. Dormund M'Phersone we found in Menteith as proprietor in 1509, and he is often mentioned in public documents. The Dean of Lismore has some poetry done by a Duncha Mc-a-pharson; but the name here may not be a true surname at all. In Argyllshire (Glassary) and in Bute, landed proprietors of the surname appear throughout the 16th century. In the same century the name appears in Skye, where it still flourishes. There, however, there are at least two different tribes of the name. The members of one of them are called in Gaelic Cananaich, "belonging to the Canon." John Macpherson, "the Martyr," is known by his neighbours as Ian Cananach. The other stock is the old M'Vurich race, descendants of the famous bardic family. They have mistakenly made Macphersons of themselves; because the Badenoch Macphersons are Clan Mhuirich. The ease with which the surname arises in the 15th and 16th century is seen from a reference in the M'Vurich MSS. Here a very excellent hymn is attributed to "Giolla-colluim McIllebhride Mhic Phersoin

Chille-comain"—Malcolm, son of Gilbert, son of the Parson of Fort-Augustus. Parallel, and not a whit different from the name Macpherson, are the other ecclesiastical clan names:—M'Taggart, M'Vicar, M'Chlery or Clerk, M'Anaspy and M'Nab, who, however, claim descent of the Lay Abbots of Glendochart. These are all names, really, of the 15th and 16th century; it is, in fact, rare for surnames to go beyond 1400. What is the inference from this? Simply this, these are really sons of parsons, priests, and others in holy orders irregularly "espoused" to wives and having families; nay, further, transmitting the Church lands to their descendants in too many cases. This was notably the case in the Reformation epoch. Of course the Macphersons say their ancestors received a dispensation from the Pope; but that idea is too ridiculous to be maintained. Did the ancestors of the M'Phersons outside their clan—the Bute M'Phersons of 1500—also obtain dispensations? Did the other clerical families also obtain such dispensations? Not a bit of it. Macphersons' claim to the Chiefship of Clan Chattan fails even on this ground alone. Ever since Bishop Gregory came to rule Moray in the early 12th century, no parson of his diocese could legitimately marry, much less could Muireach, if he lived so near the time of St. David the King, as he is represented to have done. There could have been no lay "parson" of Kingussie, for parsons commenced only with Bishop Gregory and the new Episcopal departure then introduced. The whole thing is a fabrication, and a poor one at best.

As a matter of fact, no "parson" existed in Kingussie before 1400 or thereabouts. Kingussie was in charge of a vicar the very first time it is mentioned in the *Regis trum* of Moray, and in 1226 it is made a "prebend" of the Elgin Cathedral, held by one of the canons.

The early titles thereafter are "canon" and "prebendary" of Kingussie. In the middle of the 14th century, which is near Muireach Parson's real date, we find Kingussie still a prebend, and the canon has his vicar there as well. Next century we meet with rector and prebendary of Kingussie (1473-1487), and in the 16th century we have the three titles of rector, prebendary, and parson. I merely bring this forward to show "parson of Kingussie" must be a comparatively late title. The Macphersons, however, are welcome to the "parson of Abernethy," who appears as early as the "vicar of Kingussie," being in fact in the same document (1208-15).

The conclusion of the whole matter is this. The present Mackintosh is undoubtedly the Chief of the historic Clan Chattan—the confederacy of about sixteen septs which combined under his banner in the 15th and 16th centuries. This, after all, is the real Chiefship of Clan Chattan. Macpherson cannot possibly claim this. Can he claim Chiefship, for instance, over the Macgillivrays and Macbeans? He cannot. They joined the Clan when Mackintosh was head of it; and so with most of the septs. The claim to the Chiefship of old Clan Chattan—and what is old Clan Chattan?—is refuted by lack of trustworthy genealogy, and by the fact that no parson's children could legitimately, under feudal rules, succeed to the Chiefship of a Highland Clan. Besides, the old Clan Chattan seems to have been the Shaws, Cattanachs, and Mackintoshes, a view strongly supported by the earliest available documents—suggested by the Registrum of Moray references, and asserted by the 1450 MS.

Some have objected that the break in the Mackintosh genealogy about 1410-30 is fatal—that the real Chief was set aside and another elected into his place—that the descendants of the other Chief lived, nay, are still living—

that Mackintosh, in that case, cannot be Chief of his own family, let alone of Clan Chattan. This is pure trifling with the subject: a mere pedantic objection, even supposing its grounds were well assured. In a Celtic Clan the Chief was elective; but, as I candidly concede, we are in the case of the Highland Clans since feudal times not dealing with a Celtic system at all, but with a feudal and Teutonic one, the Chief should be in the direct male line, nor should, unless for reasons of physical or mental incapacity, the direct line be extruded to make way for a junior branch. But if this is done and past mending, what really is the use of harking back on it? The Government of the country, by allowing the estates to go to the present family, recognised its rights feudally, and this, from a feudal standpoint, is quite enough. From a "Celtic" standpoint there is no room for argument in the matter; so long as the Chiefship remains in the same family, male side, all Celtic claims are satisfied. The Chief of the Macleans, for instance, has a bar sinister legitimatised in his family; yet he is lord of Douart and Chief of the Macleans. As I have said, the objection to Mackintosh's claim is simple pedantry compared to this. I think I have shown sufficient cause for maintaining that Mackintosh is Chief of Clan Chattan, as he is also Chief of the Mackintoshes.

The points which I wish to insist on are these:—(1) The Eva story belongs to the limbo of myth, where also dwell the heiresses that married the ancestors of the Campbells, Camerons, and Mackenzies. She must be discarded. (2) So also must the Fife or Macduff descent. The Mackintoshes of Clan Chattan probably derive their name from the *toiseachs* of Badenoch. (3) There is a difficulty in tracing the genealogy of the present family past Malcolm, 1428–1465, when a junior branch slipped into the Chiefship. This may have given rise to the Macpherson claim;

but there may be nothing real, apart from the Eva story, in the Macpherson claim.

In regard to the Macphersons, the points which I wish to make prominent are:—(1) The “parson” from whom they descend lived about 1400; he was not parson of Kingussie, belonging rather to the vicinity of Inverness. (2) The “parson” descent excludes all idea of legitimate marriage, and, by feudal law, no chiefship can be transmitted without marriage. Papal dispensation for such a marriage is an impossibility; “once a priest, always a priest.” (3) The Macphersons were no clan till 1644; they do not appear in history till then. (4) Their chiefs are unknown before 1591; the genealogy offered before that is traditional. (5) The official genealogy from 1500–1650 is forged. (6) Granted that they are chiefs of Macpherson, they cannot claim chiefship over the confederacy of Clan Chattan, including M’Gillivrays, M’Beans, etc. (7) The claim to the Chiefship of “Old Clan Chattan” is baseless; this old clan was the Shaws, Cattanachs, and Macintoshes; their habitat was Badenoch and Brae-Lachaber. The Macphersons were in all probability from Strathnairn originally, and have no Chattan blood at all in them, unless they are descended from the discarded Mackintosh chief of 1417, who may have turned cleric.



