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A HISTORY OF THE CLAN MACLEAN

FROM ITS FIRST SETTLEMENT AT DUARD CASTLE, IN
THE ISLE OF MULL, TO THE PRESENT PERIOD

INCLUDING

A GENEALOGICAL ACCOUNT OF SOME OF THE PRINCIPAL FAMILIES

TOGETHER WITH

THEIR HERALDRY, LEGENDS, SUPERSTITIONS, ETC

BY

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ILLUSTRATED WITH MAPS, PORTRAITS, VIEWS OF BATTLE-FIELDS, CASTLES,
TOMBS, RUINS, AND ARMORIAL BEARINGS



*Mar mhàthair ag òl cannuich a' bheannaigh Chlann 'ill-Eathain
—Eachann, Lachann; Eachann, Lechann.—*

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Among the many disturbances, the following may be mentioned: Some Camerons, who lived in Morvern, having killed MacLean of Kingierloch and wounded his son, made good their escape. Sir Hector, with great promptitude, entered the field with a sufficient force, and succeeded in destroying all their cattle, to the number of three or four hundred, and was resolved on a further prosecution of them, declaring that he would make a greyhound carry a purse of gold through Lochaber, if he lived for any length of time. About the same time, the MacIans of Ardnamurchan resolved to avenge the injury done them, as they conceived it, by Sir Hector's father, who brought so many of them to justice; and being privately instigated by Sir Donald Campbell, a number of them landed by night near Isle of Muck's house, and began to drive away his cattle. Hector MacLean—Isle of Muck—happened to be out with one servant only, but attacked them, his gun missing fire. He was shot dead by one of the thieves, who was called Gillespie MacIan Shaor, a most notorious robber, whose character is still fresh in the neighborhood. The murderers escaped, but two of them were afterward apprehended by the earl of Seaforth's orders and hanged. The laird of the Isle of Muck was a brother of MacLean of Coll, a gentleman who was much respected, and whose death was greatly lamented.

With the news of the murder of the laird of Muck also came the orders of Charles II., who was now in Scotland, and organizing an army for the purpose of opposing Cromwell, who at this time was pursuing his victorious career

into the very heart of the kingdom. Charles had his headquarters at Perth, but on the approach of Cromwell from the east, the royal army marched southward upon Stirling, and took up a position at the Torwood, some miles south of the town. Here the royalists received large reinforcements; among others, Sir Hector MacLean, recently appointed colonel of foot for Argyleshire, who brought to the field fifteen hundred followers, of whom eight hundred were MacLeans. The MacLeans, officered by the principal gentlemen of that name, were under the immediate command of Donald of Brolass, uncle to the young chief, as lieutenant-colonel. This division was composed of the better classes, and their military bearing, as well as their respectable appearance, generally called forth the admiration of the whole army. Little time passed ere the courage of this band was put to the test. Cromwell, on approaching Falkirk, found the royalists so strongly intrenched in their position that he did not deem it safe to attack them; but after a series of manœuvres, in which he succeeded in deceiving the royalists, he managed to send over the Frith of Forth, at Queensferry, the larger portion of his army, under General Lambert, with the intention to throw himself into the rear of Charles's army.

When the news of Cromwell's movement was received in the camp of Charles, Holburn of Menstrie was dispatched with the cavalry, Sir Hector MacLean with a division of the Highlanders, and Sir John Brown with some Lowland regiments, for the purpose of opposing Lambert's advance to the North. Lambert had not advanced beyond Inverkeithing, within three miles of North Queensferry, before he found himself intercepted by the royalists. On the morning of July 20, 1651, he drew up his army in battle order, on the rising ground immediately south of Inverkeithing. As soon as Holburn saw the Highlanders fairly engaged in the struggle, he drew off his cavalry, a thousand strong, without firing a shot, and thus left the remainder of the army to the mercy of treble their number. A song, familiar to the generality of MacLeans, expresses the conduct of Holburn :

“ Dhàg e dèidh Mhachdghilleain cuir a chàthà na òhbreachd.”
(He left the undaunted son of Gillean alone to fight the foe.)

The brave Sir Hector witnessed the flight of the craven dragoons with pity and contempt, though not with dismay. He instantly called to him the laird of Buchanan and Sir John Brown, to whom the young chief addressed a few words expressive of his resolution, even with the small force they had, to continue the battle. “They are double our number,” added he, “but what

of that; let them come to the sword's point, there is not a MacLean in my gathering but will undertake two." Sir John Brown remarked, that they were engaging their enemies, not only under great numerical disadvantages, but the position of the enemy was another important advantage they had over them. Sir Hector quickly replied: "What would you have me do? Would you have me fly, like that cowardly old horseman, Holburn, and be forever the scorn of honest men? Our honor and our loyalty demand that we do our best." And striking his sword into the ground on the spot on which he stood, he observed: "Let the English traitor's deputy march on; here, surrounded by his faithful clan, he will find Duard's chief ready to receive him."

The battle commenced from Lambert's left, where, from a battery planted on the brow of the hill, the firing was fearfully destructive to the MacLeans and Buchanans, whose exposed position on the lower ground it completely swept. Sir Hector noticing that the MacLeans and their brave allies were becoming furious from the destructive effect of the enemy's artillery, and were every moment more and more eager to be within the claymore's length of their foes, threw himself into the midst of them and led them up the hill. Here the overwhelming numbers of Lambert enabled him literally to encircle the devoted Highlanders. Sir John Brown, with about two hundred cavalry and two battalions of foot, had to withstand the whole weight of the enemy's right, and was therefore unable to afford any relief to Sir Hector. Borne down by numbers, after repeated conflicts in which they behaved with honor and suffered severely, Sir John's division took to flight, leaving their gallant leader prisoner in the hands of the enemy and mortally wounded. The desperate purpose of the chief of MacLean, "neither to yield nor fly," was still his fixed resolve. He formed his undaunted band into a solid body, exhibiting a front in every direction, so as to be better prepared to repulse the attacks which, surrounded at every point as he was, could be directed against him on every side. Even thus encircled, and having with him not more than eight hundred MacLeans and about seven hundred Buchanans and others, the daring young chief bid defiance to the whole of Lambert's veteran army, led by the most experienced general under Cromwell. The successive charges made upon Sir Hector's determined band by this mass of overwhelming veteran troops was fearfully destructive. No idea of asking for quarter was dreamed of by this band in so great peril. Under these disadvantages, even terrible to contemplate, did the chief of MacLean maintain the unequal contest for four hours, repulsing not only the attacks of the foe, but repeatedly charging him in return. In these charges both the MacLeans and Buchanans were

slaughtered in great numbers; their foes, also, for some hours, suffering equally as severely. At length the diminished numbers of the Highlanders rendered them an easy prey; still to yield was deemed a dishonorable alternative by the chivalrous chief of MacLean. His body literally hacked with wounds, he still continued to oppose the foe and to encourage his faithful followers to persevere, telling them that the cause of their king was worthy a greater sacrifice. The last and decisive charge made by Lambert's cavalry could only be met by the exhausted Highlanders with the last efforts of despair. The enemy in this charge directed his attacks more particularly against the spot occupied by Sir Hector. His noble and heroic clansmen now seeing that the principal object was to cut off their beloved chief, the few that still survived flocked around his person, and numerous were the attempts upon the life of Sir Hector which a MacLean rendered abortive by the sacrifice of his own. In their devotion for their young chief, those fearless spirits offered their own breasts to the weapons aimed at him, and as each in succession rushed forward for this purpose, his resolution was evinced, as he threw himself upon the enemy to shield the person of his chief, by the exclamation of *Fedr eil airson Eachainn!* (Another for Hector!)^{*} Under the influence of this extraordinary feeling of devotion, no less than eight gentlemen of the name of MacLean lost their lives at Inverkeithing. With life only ended the resistance of the fearless Sir Hector Roy, † His body, already covered with numerous deadly wounds, received the immediately fatal one from a musket shot; the ball penetrated his breast, and he fell dead on the spot. The few who survived the carnage of the sanguinary day being all severely wounded, fell into the hands of the victors, but after a short detention, and when able to travel, they were restored to their homes.

In this battle one house alone, the MacLeans of Ross, or the "Race of the Iron Sword," lost no less than *one hundred and forty men*, chiefly of the better class. This highly respectable and brave race were, by this disaster, almost totally annihilated. Of the eight hundred MacLeans who engaged at Inverkeithing, not more than forty escaped alive, and even those to the day of their death exhibited in the mutilated state of their persons palpable proofs

^{*} "This phrase has continued ever since as a proverb or watch-word when a man encounters any sudden danger that requires instant succor." *Stewart's Sketches of the Highlanders*, p. 63.

† For notices of Sir Hector's noble conduct at Inverkeithing, see *Stewart's Sketches of the Highlanders*, p. 63; *Blackie's Atlas*, p. 182; *Keltie's Highland Clans*, Vol. I., p. 324; Vol. II., p. 226.

of their sufferings upon this dreadful day. The killed and wounded among the officers of the clan were :

KILLED.

Sir Hector MacLean of Duard and Morvern, Colonel of Foot for the County of Argyle, and chief of the Clan MacLean.

Lachlan, son of MacLean of Torloisk.

John and } sons of MacLean of Ardgour.
Donald, }

Hugh,* son of MacLean of Coll.

Murdoch,

Allan,

Lachlan,

Ewen, and

John,

} Sons of Lachlan Odhar of Ardehraoishnish, of the Mac-
Leans of Ross.

Hugh, son of MacLean of the Isle of Muck.

Allan, son of MacLean of Drimnin.

Archibald, son of MacLean of Borreray.

Charles, son of MacLean of Inverscadell.

Several other gentlemen of the Lochbuy and Ross families met their deaths at Inverkeithing, but their names are not mentioned.

SEVERELY WOUNDED.

Donald MacLean of Brolass, uncle of the chief, and Lieutenant-Colonel commandant of the clan MacLean.

John MacLean of Kinlochaline.

Ewen MacLean of Treshnish; the gallant Captain of Cairnburg, frequently mentioned in the preceding pages.

John of Totteronald, son of MacLean of Coll.

John Diurach MacLean of the Ardtornish family.

Neil MacLean of Drimnacross.

The death of the brave Sir Hector Roy, in his twenty-seventh year, threw

* This gentleman, with a heroic devotion and desperate daring of which the history of military prowess has perhaps never afforded a more extraordinary instance, seeing a number of bayonets directed against the breast of his chief, before whom but an instant before Hugh fell with both legs shattered by a cannon shot, with one desperate effort threw himself forward upon the points of the bayonets, averting, for a short period at least, the fate of his chief.

a sad gloom over the affairs of his house and clan. From his resolute and honorable character every hope was entertained that his affairs would soon be rescued from the fangs of Argyle; but the tender years of his brother Allan afforded an opportunity to Argyle to accumulate additional embarrassments upon the house of MacLean.

As Sir Hector never married, he was succeeded by his brother Allan, at that time six years of age. This made the second failure in the direct line of succession, and that within a period of twenty-five years.