

MACEWAN TARTAN.

CLAN EWEN:

Some Records of its History.

BY

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BARRISTER-AT-LAW, LINCOLN'S INN, AND SOMETIME RECORDER
OF RANGOON.

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PREFACE.



The following account of Clan Ewen is expanded from a series of articles contributed some years ago by the late Mr. R. S. T. MACEWEN to the *Celtic Monthly*. The interest taken in the subject led Mr. MACEWEN to make further researches, and at the time of his death in June, 1900, he had almost completed his manuscript for publication in book form. As the volume has been denied the benefit of its author's final revision, errors may have crept in which his more competent editorship and wider knowledge would have detected. Yet it will have served its purpose if it has in any way illustrated an obscure chapter of clan history.

The attempt to weave together the scattered threads of tradition and historical record by which the history of Clan Ewen may still be darkly followed, has not been easy. All the usual materials for a clan history are wanting. A broken and disrupted clan since the middle of the 15th century, it boasts few authentic memorials and even fewer traditions of its early history and subsequent misfortunes. The dispersed clansmen had no bard-senachies to crystallize and hand down the story of their race, nor charter boxes to preserve the record of past possessions and spoils. Even the customary wreath of legend

and superstition has been denied to these 'Children of the Mist.' Some grim Privy Council records, the genealogies and charters of allied or neighbouring clans, some vague local traditions,—these are practically all the 'documents' for a history of Clan Ewen.

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A. M. M.





HISTORY OF CLAN EWEN.

I. THE DALRIADA SCOTS.

THE ancient Clan Ewen or MacEwen of Otter, Eoghan na h-Oitrich, which once possessed a stronghold of its own, was one of the earliest of the western clans sprung from the Dalriada Scots. These Scots were among the assailants of the Roman province in Britain, but they did not finally settle in Argyllshire till the beginning of the sixth century. The year 503 is usually said to mark the commencement of the reign of their first king in Argyllshire; but little of their history is known prior to the foundation of the Scottish Monarchy in the middle of the ninth century. Skene thinks they came more as colonists than invaders. The first leaders were the three sons of Ere—Lorn, Fergus, and Angus. These were the representatives of three or four tribes who frequently fought among themselves, and against the Britons and Saxons. Historians are of opinion that from 736 to 800 they were partly, if not wholly, subject to the Picts.

St. Columba, who was one of them, established the monastery of Iona in 563 A.D. He was sprung from the Royal House of the Northern Hy Neill, while in the female line he was connected with the Kings of Dalriada. According to Skene, the last of the old abbots of Iona of whom there is any notice died in 1099, and thereafter, for upwards of sixty years, there is an unbroken silence regarding the Monastery. The Celtic Church had to give way before the invasion of one of the religious orders of the Roman Church. In the twelfth century, Somerled, who had Iona for one of his possessions, attempted to restore the old abbey and offered it to the Abbot of Derry, but the Abbot of Armagh and the King of Ireland disallowed the proposal. In 1166, on the succession of his son Reginald, the monastery was re-built on a larger scale. Reginald is said to have been "the most distinguished of the Galls and of the Gaels for prosperity, sway of generosity, and feats of arms"; and the Church benefited largely by these qualities. Adopting the policy of the Scottish Kings he introduced to his territories the religious orders of the Roman Church. He founded three monasteries—one of Black Monks in Iona, in honour of God and St. Columba; one of Black Nuns in the same place; and one of Grey Friars (Cistercian or White Monks) at Saddell in Cantire. It is of this later Roman Catholic Benedictine Monastery and Nunnery,* and not of the Columban buildings, that the present ruins are the remains. The Western Celts continued to be Roman Catholics till the Reformation. But the original Celtic Church in Columba's time was not the Romish Church as represented at the present day. Columba stands forth as

* Skene's "Celtic Scotland," Vol. II.

the great founder of the Ionian Church, whence radiated the light which penetrated to England and a great part of the continent of Europe.

Somerled, Regulus of Argyll, was the leader of the Scots in the middle of the twelfth century. He was a son of Gillebride, and grandson of Gille-Adamnan. Gillebride had been driven from the Scottish Dalriada by the Norwegians, and applied for help to his Irish kindred. He returned to Scotland with his son Somerled and a band of followers, who encountered and defeated a large force of Norwegians, and seized their territories. In 1153 the Scots rose against Malcolm IV., but Somerled was detached by an offer of the Isles, while some of his chiefs were imprisoned in Roxburgh Castle. In 1164 he again rose and landed at Renfrew, but he was defeated and slain. He had married a daughter of Olave, the Norwegian King, and left four sons, Dubhgal, Reginald, Angus, and Olave. The eldest succeeded to his father's possessions on the mainland, while the second, Reginald, received the Isles, with the title of King of the Isles. Up to 1222 Argyll maintained semi-independence of the Scottish Crown, and it was not till 1266, in the reign of Alexander III., that the Hebrides and the Western Isles were annexed to the kingdom.

Hill Burton says the Celtic races were Christian when they first settled in Scotland, and had a literary language and a written literature in their own tongue, and were in a higher stage of civilization than the Picts, the Britons, or the Saxons. As to their religion, we know they were under the spiritual sway of Iona. Whatever the cause, there can be no doubt of their success; they came, they saw, they conquered,

they settled and spread, and eventually gave their name to the kingdom—Scotland.

II. THE MAC EWENS OF OTTER.

CLANN EOGHAIN NA H-OITRICH.

Up to the thirteenth century these Scots were divided into a few great tribes, corresponding to the ancient maormorships or earldoms. Skene, in his “Table of the Descent of the Highland Clans,” divides the Gallgael into five great clans, from whom sprung nine smaller clans. The clan system of later times had not appeared before this date. From the Siol Gillevray, the second of the great clans, he gives the Clans Neill, Lachlan, and Ewen: Chiefs MacNeill, MacLachlan, and MacEwen. He shows the Clan Lamond to have sprung from Siol Eachern, although elsewhere it would appear that Ferchard and Ewen, the ancestors of the Lamonds and MacEwens, were brothers. The genealogies given by Skene are taken from the Irish MSS. and Mac Firbis. He considers the later portion of the pedigrees, as far back as the common ancestor from whom the clan takes its name, to be tolerably well vouched for, and it may be held to be authentic.

Referring to the Maclachlans, MacEwens, and Lamonds, he says, “this group brings us nearer historical times. They are sprung from Aodha Alain, termed Buirche, called by Keltie De Dalan. This Aodha Alain, or De Dalan, was the son of Anradan, and grandson of Aodha Allamuin (Hugh Allaman), the then head of the great family of O’Neils, kings of Ireland, descended from Niall Glundubh, and the

fabulous King Conn of the one hundred battles." Niall Glundubh lived between 850 and 900.

Aodha Alain, whose death is recorded in 1047, had three sons: Gillachrist, Neill, and Dunslebhe. Gillachrist had a son, Lachlan, who was the ancestor of the Maclachlans; Neill was the ancestor of the MacNeills. Dunslebhe had two sons, Ferchard, ancestor of the Lamonds, and Ewen, ancestor of the MacEwens. The four were kindred tribes; but if Ferchard and Ewen were brothers, the Lamonds and MacEwens were originally more closely allied to each other than they were to the Maclachlans and MacNeills. "These clans were in possession, in the twelfth century, of the greater part of the district of Cowal, from Toward Point to Strachur. The Lamonds were separated from the MacEwens by the river Kilfinnan, and the MacEwens from the Maclachlans by the stream which divides the parishes of Kilfinnan and Strath Lachlan. The MacNeills took possession of the islands of Barra and Gigha."*

The MacEwens possessed a tract of country about twenty-five miles square, and could probably bring out 200 fighting men. "On the conquest of Argyll by Alexander II., 1222, they suffered severely, and were involved in the ruin which overtook all the adherents of Somerled, except the MacNeills, who consented to hold their lands of the Crown, and the Maclachlans, who gained their former consequence by means of marriage with the heiress of the Lamonds."* But although the MacEwens suffered severely at this time, a remnant survived under their own chief at Otter, on the shores of Loch Fyne, where the last chief died two-and-a-half centuries afterwards.

*Keltie, *History of the Highland Clans*, Vol. ii.

MacEwen I. of Otter, the earliest chief of the clan of whom there is any mention, flourished about 1200. He was succeeded by Severan II. of Otter, who was probably the chief of 1222. The names of the third and fourth chiefs are lost. Gillespie V. of Otter assumed the chiefship about 1315. From this date there were four chiefs; Ewen VI., John VII., Walter VIII., and Sufnee or Swene, the IX. and last of the Otter chiefs. So late as 1750 it is recorded in the "Old Statistical Account of the Parish of Kilfinnan":—"On a rocky point on Loch Fyne there stood in 1700 the ruins of Castle MacEwen (Caisteal MhicEoghain), the stronghold of the earlier lords of the Otter." On the same authority, quoted by Skene, this MacEwen is described as the chief of the clan and proprietor of the northern division of the parish of Otter, and in the MS. of 1450, which contains the genealogy of Clann Eoghain ua h-Oitrich, or Clan Ewen, the MacEwens are derived from Anradan, the common ancestor of the MacLachlans and the MacNeills.

In 1431-32 Swene MacEwen, IX. of Otter, granted a charter of certain lands of Otter to Duncan, son of Alexander Campbell. In 1432 he resigned the barony of Otter to James I., but received it anew from the king with remainder to Celestine Campbell, son and heir of Duncan Campbell of Lochow. After Swene's death, King James, in 1493, confirmed the grant to Archibald, Earl of Argyll, as heir to his father, Colin. In 1513 the barony of Otter was confirmed to Earl Colin by James V. In 1526 it was resigned by Earl Colin, and granted by James V. to Archibald, his son and heir apparent. In 1575 another Archibald Campbell appears in a charter as "of the Otter"; and in the Act of 1587 a Campbell is entered as "The Laird of

Otter.” So that after the middle of the fifteenth century the barony and estates of Otter passed and gave title to a branch of the Campbells, and the MacEwens became more than ever “children of the mist.”

In consequence of their desperate condition the remnant sought new alliances, as a necessity of the times. Some remained in their own neighbourhood and joined the Campbells. In 1602 proof is allowed to Colquhoun of Luss to show that a number of MacGregors, MacLachlans, MacEwens, and MacNeills were “men” of the Earl of Argyll, and that the Earl was answerable for certain depredations committed by them and specified in the complaint. Others joined MacDougal Campbell of Craignish in Lorne. Some of the latter are said to have settled in Lochaber. Besides those who joined the Campbells, some, no doubt, allied themselves to other western clans, for the name was common at one time in the Western Highlands and Islands, especially in Skye. Other colonies were formed in the Lennox country, in Dumbartonshire and in Galloway, while the name is common in Lochaber in connection with the Camerons. This sept was known locally as the “Sliochd-Eoghain.” The Muckly family—said to be decended from the Lorne-Macdougal branch—and other families, and many bearing the name still in Argyll and the Isles, are descendants of the old clansmen.*

III.—MACEWENS AS BARD-SEANACHIES.

To the men of Otter, broken up as a clan, and bereft of chieftain and lands, the protection of a power-

*As an instance of the complete dispersion of the clan, Mr. H. W. Ewen writes that his family have been settled in South Lincolnshire since 1500.

ful chief became a desperate necessity. No doubt the majority of them existed in other clans as fighting auxiliaries, but there is evidence that a few of them found more peaceful occupations. The position of bard and seanachie was an honourable one, and the dispossessed clansmen who obtained these posts suffered no diminution of rank.

Mr. Lovat Fraser in his *Highland Chief** says the MacEwens became hereditary bards of the Campbells; and from old chronicles it appears there were other MacEwen poets and bards in different parts of the country. One lived in Inverness-shire.

The Bard-Seanachies were important functionaries and officers in the Celtic system, and the most learned men in the clan. Originally, in the Druidical period, they were of the priestly and second order of Druids, and in later times they held a high place in the Highland clans, down to the beginning of the eighteenth century. They combined, in their own persons, the offices of Poet-Laureate, Genealogist, and Herald of Arms. They were educated in the science of genealogy, and their work was preserved in the form of rhymes. These they recited on important occasions; just as a Herald of the College of Arms, in the present day, recites the titles of distinguished persons at great public functions. The office was hereditary. Logan says of them: "The Celtic bards were members of the priesthood, and no class of society among the ancients have been more celebrated. . . . Whether we consider the influence which they possessed, their learning or poetic genius, they are one of the most interesting orders of antiquity, and worthy of our entire admiration. . . . Their compositions commemorating the worth and

* *The Celtic Monthly.*

exploits of heroes were a sort of national annals, which served the double purpose of preserving the memory of past transactions, and of stimulating the youth to an imitation of their virtuous ancestors." They accompanied the clans to war, animating them by the chanting of heroic poems, while each great chief was constantly attended by a number who entertained him at his meals, and roused his own and his followers' courage by powerful recitations. "They also officiated as a sort of aides-de-camp to the chief, communicating his orders to the chieftains and their followers." "An important part of their duty was the preservation of the genealogies and descent of the chiefs and the clan, which were solemnly repeated at marriages, baptisms, and burials. The last purpose for which they were retained by the Highlanders was to preserve a faithful history of their respective clans. . . . From their antiquarian knowledge the bards were called 'Sean-achaidh,' from 'Sean,' old, a title synonymous with the Welsh 'Arvydd Vardd,' an officer who latterly was of national appointment, and whose heraldic duties were recognised by the English College of Arms. They attended at the birth, marriage, and death of all persons of high descent, and the marwnod, or elegy, which they composed on the latter occasion, 'was required to contain truly, and at length, the genealogy and descent of the deceased from eight immediate ancestors; to notice the several collateral branches of the family, and to commemorate the surviving wife or husband. These he registered in his books, and delivered a true copy of them to the heir, etc., which was produced the day of the funeral, when all the principal branches of the family and their friends were assembled together in the great hall of the

mansion, and then recited with an audible voice. He also made a visitation called the Bard's Circuit, once every three years, to all the gentlemen's houses, where he registered and corrected their armorial bearings. . . . Some of their awards of arms are of as late a date as 1703. The Bard had a stipend paid out of every plough land, and the chief was called 'King of the Bards.' " *

Dr. Johnson's sceptical spirit refused to be satisfied with the popular accounts of the bards and seanachies. He professed to have made searching enquiries into their early history with very unsatisfactory results. "Neither bards nor senachies," he says, "could write or read."—(*Journey to the Western Islands*.) For this daring calumny he has been brought to task by his critics. The Rev. Donald MacNicol in his *Remarks on Dr. Samuel Johnson's Journey to the Highlands* (1779), has some interesting remarks on the matter. He tells us that "the MacEwens had free lands in Lorn in Argyleshire, for acting as bards to the family of Argyll, to that of Breadalbane, and likewise to Sir John Macdougall of Dunolly, in 1572. The two last of the race were Aime and his son Neil. I have now before me an elegy upon the death of Sir Duncan Dow Campbell of Glenurchy, composed by Neil MacEwen. The date, which is 1630, is in the body of the poem. How long he lived after this I cannot take upon me to say, but as there is much of the history and genealogy of the family interwoven with the performance, he must certainly have been both bard and sennachie." And further on in the same book, he says, referring to Irish Gaelic: "We have a striking instance of this in the

* *The Scottish Gael*, Vol. ii.

elegy of Sir Duncan Dow Campbell . . . composed by the bard, Neil MacEwen, in 1630. This poem is in many places altogether unintelligible to most Highlanders, though other productions of a much earlier date, as being composed in the *Albion* dialectic of the Celtic, are perfectly understood. . . . But MacEwen was one of those bards who resided sometimes in Ireland. His poem is in the Gaelic character, and in his own handwriting; and it is still preserved among the papers of the family of Breadalbane at Taymouth."

Mr. J. F. Campbell, in his *Tales of the West Highlands*, furnishes an example of the work of one of the MacEwen bard-seanachies from a MS. which came from Cawdor Castle, and which contains the following preamble: "Genealogy Abridgement of the Very Ancient and Notable Family of Argyll, 1779"; wherein the writer explains that "In the following account we have had regard to the genealogical tree done by Neil MacEwen, as he received the same from Eachern MacEwen, his father, as he had the same from Arthur MacEwen, his grandfather, and their ancestors and predecessors, senachies and pensioners to great families, who for many ages were employed to make up and keep such records in their accustomed way of Irish rhymes."

IV.—THE LENNOX SEPT.

MACEWENS, EWENS, EWINGS, ETC.

A considerable sept of the clan settled early in Dumbartonshire, on the shores of Loch Lomond, and in the Lennox country, owning allegiance to the Stewart Earls of Lennox, who were descended from Bancho, Thane of Lochaber, the ancestor of the Royal line. As early as the tenth century the Scots occupied

Strath-Clyde, and Gaelic was the language from Renfrew to Galloway for several centuries. It has left its impress still strong in personal and place names in that region.* It is not astonishing therefore that Argyleshire Scots should at a later date migrate to the shores of the Clyde and to Galloway. Gaelic in time disappeared before the inroads of the Teutonic language in the districts bordering on the Highland line as it had done in the southern districts at an earlier period. The people in a few generations lost touch with the Highlands ; they no longer spoke Gaelic, they were incorporated with the southern inhabitants, and in character and sentiment they became a Lowland people, although originally of pure Celtic descent.

The Lennox sept received grants of land in the district to which they gave their name. Between 1625 and 1680 there are at least four charters in which successive Dukes of Lennox and Richmond are served heirs in the lands of "MacKewin" and "McEwin," as the name was then written.† But there is reason to believe their advent there was much earlier. According to tradition, this sept, under a chieftain of their own, sought the protection of Levenach, the Celtic Earl, in the fifteenth century. They are said to have joined the standard of Mary, under Lennox, and to have fought at Langside in 1568, where they received a banner which seems to have gone the way of many other ancient clan banners. They were a powerful race of men and a story used to be told in connection with an old stone coffin which at one time lay in the MacEwen burying-ground, that a man of

* Dr. Macbain in *The Transactions of the Inverness Gaelic Society*, Vol. xxi.

† Report on the Public Records of Scotland.

the clan carried the coffin under one arm, and the lid under the other, from the loch to the churchyard of Luss. A descendant of one of these families, who died in 1898 at the age of seventy-eight, writing in 1885, after referring to these traditions, said: "These MacEwens certainly belonged to Dumbartonshire, on Loch Lomond, and had been there for many generations. The name in olden times was spelt with the *a*—M^cEwan—and there was a paper in the family tracing them back to the Battle of Langside, where they won their colours (the standard referred to) fighting for Queen Mary. All the old tombstones not claimed by families living in the parish were destroyed years ago, so there is no memorial left of this branch of the old MacEwen race."

Mr. Guthrie Smith, in his *History of Strathendrick*, has the following account of the Glenboig family: "In 1614 there was a charter granted by the Duke of Lennox to William Neaubog, *alias* Macewin, eldest son and heir of William Mackewin, *alias* Neaubog de Glenbog Wester. In 1691 the proprietor was James M^cAine, called in 1698 James Macewan. In the Valuation Roll of 1723 the following appears: 'John Williamson and Janet Ure, his spouse, their equal share of the five-merk lands of Wester Glenboig, £46 14s. 4d.; John Buchanan, maltman, and Jane Ure, his spouse, their equal half of the five-merk lands of Wester Glenboig, £46 14s. 4d.' These Williamsons (if the first Williamson was not himself a William MacEwan who changed his name after the fashion of the time) appear to have succeeded the Macewans of Glenboig. The greater part of the lands of Wester Glenboig was afterwards acquired by Napier of

Ballikinrain. But in 1796 there was a William MacEwan of Glenboig, writer in Edinburgh, who received a grant of arms at that date from the Lyon office. Netherton, the other division of the estate, is (1890) farmed by Mr. James Ewing (another form of the name), who belongs to a family who have long been tenants there."

There are numerous families and persons bearing the clan name at the present day in Dumbarton, Stirling,* Clackmannan, Renfrew, Lanark, Ayr, on the banks of the Clyde, and in the surrounding districts. Mr. William M^cEwan, late M.P. for Central Edinburgh, the magnificent donor of the "M^cEwan Hall," belongs to a Clackmannan family. There have been in the past, and there are now, several Ewen and Ewing families of position and affluence in the Lennox country and the surrounding districts—the Ewens or Ewings of Craigtown and Keppock, of Glasgow, Levenfield, Ballikinrain, &c.

V.—MAC^EWENS IN GALLOWAY.

According to tradition, this branch of the clan made its appearance in Galloway at an early period—in the middle of the fifteenth century,—about the time of the dispersion from Otter. A descendant † of the family of High Mark, Wigtonshire, furnishes the following interesting account of the sept:—

"The late Sir Andrew Agnew, in his history of *The Agnews in Galloway*, states that about the middle of the fifteenth century the Laird of Lochnaw was

* The Stirlingshire branch is of considerable antiquity. Mr. R. MacEwen, Clifton, informs us that in his family burying-ground in St. Ninian's Churchyard, Stirling, a stone bears the date of 1614.

† Mr. John M^cEwen, Girvan, Ayrshire.

besieged in his castle, which was then situated on the island in the middle of the loch, by the retainers of the Black Douglas, with whom the Agnews had a feud regarding the Sherifffdom of Galloway. When the besieged were on the point of capitulation they were surprised to see, one day, that their enemies had been attacked in the rear by another armed force, and they sallied out, and with the aid of their new allies routed the forces of the Douglas. To recompense these allies—who were the remnant of a broken Highland clan called M^cEwen—the Laird of Lochnaw gave them the tenantry of four of his farms—Knock, Maize, Achnoterach, and High Mark—and their descendants are in occupation of the two latter to the present day.

“In a private letter to Mr. Robert M^cEwen, R.N., in 1840, Sir Andrew Agnew, while recommending him to the Lords of the Admiralty for a commission, states that he could recommend him not only because he knew him personally, but also from the fact that ‘his family had been tenants on his estates from time immemorial.’

“One of the family (a Covenanter) was shot by command of Claverhouse at the village of Baor, in Ayrshire, and was buried, and a headstone was erected to his memory in the churchyard there. Another of the family at this time was ruling elder of the Parish Church of Leswaet, and through him the old church Bible which Richard Cameron (the Cameronian leader) had used and preached from, came into the possession of the family, and is now in that of the writer.

“Early in the eighteenth century another of the family, Andrew M^cKewan, was killed by command of the Earl of Cassils, for although

Frae Wigtown tae the town o' Ayr,
Portpatrick tae the Cruines o' Cree,
Nae man can get a binding there
Unless he court St. Kennedie.

M^cKewan was too independent to give up his farm to a follower of Kennedy at the latter's request, and met his death as the result. When tried for the crime, Kennedy was ordered to pay the widow of M^cKewan a large quantity of cattle to recompense her for the death of her husband. So much for the law and justice, and the value set on men's lives in those days.

“At the time of the rebellion of the '45 Sir Andrew Agnew took the field for King George, accompanied by two dhuin vassals, John and Thomas M^cEwen from High Mark; while two other brothers, Robert and Gideon, took the Jacobite side and followed the fortunes of Prince Charles. The story goes that when Sir Andrew Agnew was besieged in Blair Castle, going the rounds one day he passed John M^cEwen, and in looking out at the rebel forces he also saw the brother Robert, the Jacobite. Turning to John he said, ‘Jock, do you see Rab?’ and on being answered in the affirmative, he ordered him to ‘Shoot the beggar,’ a command which, it is needless to say, was not carried out, for after all ‘blood is thicker than water.’ This John M^cEwen afterwards went to the Continent with Sir Andrew Agnew, and was present at the Battle of Dettingen, where Sir Andrew commanded the North British Fusiliers.

“The grandson of John M^cEwen, born in 1766, and also John by name, ran away to sea when in his teens, and during his first voyage was pressed into the Royal Navy, and for seven years was in active service. When he received his discharge he sailed as

first officer of the privateer 'Mary,' of Liverpool, under Captain Thompson, who was mortally wounded in the first engagement. Before his death he handed the command of the vessel over to M^cEwen, writing on the back of the Letter of Marque, 'From James Thompson, commander, to John M^cEwen.' This document, signed by the Lords of the Admiralty in 1793, is now in possession of the writer. After making some prize money in command of the privateer, M^cEwen bought the hull of a Government transport, and after fitting her out sailed with a cargo to the West Indies; but on his return with a cargo of sugar he was wrecked on the north-west coast of Africa, losing all he had on board except his quadrant, now in the possession of his great-grandson.

"Captain M^cEwen left a son, Robert, who became a marine engineer and was the first to erect a steam engine in Russia, and was presented by the Czar Nicholas with a cup for his services. He was awarded the Isis Gold Medal of the Royal Society of Arts on two occasions: 1st, for his safe mercurial steam guage; and, 2nd, for his machine for hot pressing lace goods. The cup and medals are also in the possession of the writer. He received a commission in the Royal Navy, and died at Monte Video in 1860 on board H.M.S. 'Curacoa.'

"In the old family Bibles, and in the burying-place in Leswaet Churchyard, near Stranraer, the name is spelt in various ways, as M^cKewan, M^cKeown, M^cEwine, M^cEwing, M^cEwan, and in later times M^cEwen, the form now generally adopted.

"On the farm of High Mark, Leswaet, the names of the fields are evidently of Gaelic origin; and there is also a cove on the shore called 'Otter Cove,' pro-

bably so named after the original home of the race. In the days of the 'Free Traders' it was no doubt a convenient shelter and landing place. A member of the family who got into trouble over his 'trading' is said to have escaped to the Isle of Man, where he was joined by his wife and family, and became the ancestor of a family of the name in that island."

There is an old seal in the family showing an oak tree springing into leaf again, with the motto "Reviresco" over it. It was used by Robert M^cEwen in his lifetime, but is of much older date.*

There are, besides the writer, other descendants of these Galloway families."

VI.—MAC^EWENS IN LOCHABER.

SLIOCHD EOGHAIN.

Keltie, in his *History of the Highland Clans*, says the original seat of the Mac^Ewens was in Lochaber. This must have been before the thirteenth century, for we find them at Otter, in Cowal, in 1222; when, with other western clans, they suffered severely in the conquest of Argyll by Alexander II. According to the manuscript of 1450, the Siol Gillevrays—from whom the Mac^Ewens, MacNeills, and MacLachlans are derived—are descended from a certain Gillebride, King of the Isles, ancestor of the MacDonalds. Skene doubts the Gillebride genealogy, and favours the descent from Anradan and Aodha Alain (De Dalan), as given in chapter ii., "but, nevertheless, the traditional affinity which is thus shown to have existed between these clans and the race of Somerled at so early a period, he thinks seems to countenance the

* See post on the subject of these family seals.

notion that they had all originally sprung from the same stock." * The MacNeills were certainly vassals of the Lords of the Isles; and according to Keltie, the Camerons were connected with the House of Islay in the reign of Robert Bruce, and their modern possessions, Lochiel and Locharkaig, belonged to the Lords of the Isles. They are said to have deserted Alexander, Lord of the Isles, for James I. MacKenzie, in his *History of the Camerons*, also says that the MacLachlans of Strath-Lachlan are said to be descended from the Camerons and related to the MacLachlans of Coruanan, "and this may have been the link which led Donald Dubh, the celebrated 'Taillear' Cameron warrior, to Cowal when he tired of a fighting life in Lochaber."†

It is curious that tradition should have associated the *three* Siol Gillevray clans—which are western clans—with the Camerons in Lochaber—which is a Moravian clan—if there was no connection existing between them; and that Donald Dubh should have fled to and settled in Cowal, where the MacEwen and the MacLachlan territories lay, if he was not sure of a kinsman's welcome. Again, the name of Ewen is very common in the Cameron family. It appears as early as 1219, when Sir Ewen de Cambron, third son of the fourth chief, is mentioned in the Chartulary of Arbroath. Up to the close of the fourteenth century the history of the Camerons is meagre and imperfect, and the name does not appear again till we come to Ewen, eldest son of Allan, the ninth chief. This Ewen became tenth chief (1390-96), and was the chief in 1396 in the fight on the North Inch of Perth.

* Keltie, Vol. ii., p. 162.

† *History of the Camerons*, MacKenzie.

Sir Walter Scott, in the preface to the 1831 edition of *The Fair Maid of Perth*, quotes an opinion that Clan Quhele of Wyntown were the Camerons “who appear to have, about that period, been often designated as MacEwens, and to have gained much more recently the name of Cameron, *i.e.*, crooked nose, from a blemish in the physiognomy of some heroic chief of the line of Lochiel.” They were apparently known as MacEwens before they were known as Camerons, but “Camshron” (crooked nose) must have been adopted as their name much earlier, for in 1219 we find the title Ewen de Cambro. From the end of the fourteenth century for a long period the name Ewen is common among the Camerons, both as a first or personal name, and as a surname with the prefix Mac. Since then, there have been four chiefs of the name, of whom one, Sir Ewen Cameron, seventeenth chief, has a distinguished record. Among younger sons, and sons of cadets of the family, there are numerous Ewens. Ewen, the thirteenth chief, by his second wife, Marjory Mackintosh, had a son, also Ewen, the progenitor of the Erracht family, known as “Sliochd Eoghain.” Ewen “Beag,” fourteenth chief, met an early death. He had a natural son by a daughter of MacDougall of Lorne, Domhnall Mac-Eoghain-Bhig, Donald MacEwen Beg, better known as “Taillear Dubh,” and Mac-Dhomh’uill Duibh (Black Donald), a celebrated warrior. So successful was he that he was suspected of a fairy origin, which gave him a special charm, and he has been the subject of much romantic history. He it was, who, getting tired of fighting, retired for a time to a monastery in Cowal, but subsequently returned to the world, married and settled in that district, and left issue.* The Rev.

* Mrs. Mary Mackellar’s Traditions.

Malcolm Campbell Taylor, D.D., Professor of Church History, Edinburgh University, is said to be a descendant of his—the name Taylor being derived from “Taillear.”

Keltie also has it that after the breaking-up of the Otter clan some followed MacDougall Campbell of Craignish into Lochaber. Could this have been the MacDougall of Lorne—Donald MacEwen Beg—whose daughter was the mother of the “Taillear Dubh?”

In 1576-77 we find one—“Allaster M'Ewin of Camroun,”—applying to the Lords of Council for release from the Earl of Athole, who held him and others in confinement at Blair Athole. Again in 1598 there was a raid by the Lochaber clans on the Dunbars of Moyness, which formed the subject of complaint to the Privy Council, and among those charged are a number of MacEwens.

But these are not the only traditionary and historical instances of connection between the Camerons and the Western Celts. According to the best received Cameron tradition, the first Cameron, already referred to, was a western Celt from Dumbartonshire. An early tradition is that he was a younger son of the Royal Family of Denmark, who came over in 404 to assist Fergus II.; that he married the daughter and heiress of MacMartin of Letterfinlay, and thus acquired the property and chiefship of the clan; and that he was called “Camshron,” in Gaelic, from his crooked nose.* The author of the *Memoirs of Sir Ewen Cameron* and modern clan authorities, however, favour

* As to the way clan pedigrees were constructed in ancient times, see Skene's *Celtic Scotland*, and *Clans Past and Present* in *The Celtic Monthly* for May, 1899, p. 148.

the later tradition, that the first Cameron was a Celt and not a Dane; and the chief has been handed down in history as of Celtic origin. The “crooked nose,” as we shall see, had no connection with a Prince of Denmark. The later tradition will be found set out at length in Mackenzie’s *History of the Camerons*. Shortly stated, it is this:—“The first Cameron was much renowned for feats in arms and prodigious strength, marvellous instances of which are given. He entered the lists with the most famous champions of his day. In one of these encounters he received a violent blow on the nose, which set it awry, and from this circumstance he was called ‘Camshron,’ or Cameron, ‘Knight of the crooked nose.’ The name was, therefore, not Danish, or a first or personal name, but a Gaelic sobriquet arising out of the injury to his nose.” The tradition proceeds:—“Our hero was now arrived at the thirty-fifth year of his age, and had given many signal proofs of his valour, so that his name became terrible all over the country. But having little or no paternal estate, he began to think it highly necessary for him to join himself to some great and powerful family, the better to enable him to distinguish himself more eminently than it was possible for him to do as a single man, without friends or relations, or at least such as were of little or no account. He had spent his life in the shire of Dumbarton; but as he had no family or inheritance to encumber him, he resolved to try his fortune in the world and go in search of a wife. He set out accordingly, and happened to light on that part of the country where Lochiel’s estate now lies. Here he informed himself of the character and circumstances of the chief who resided there, and understood that he was a man of a large estate, and

had a great number of friends and dependents, and withal had a fair and excellent young lady to his daughter. This was a foundation sufficient for our Crooked-Nose Knight to build his hopes and future expectations upon. He made himself known to the chief, and as his fame as a warrior and man of great strength had preceded him, he was well received and hospitably entertained. This chief was MacMartin, Baron of Letterfinlay, and chief of a clan in Lochaber at that time. In short, a bargain was soon struck for the daughter, who was as well pleased as the father with the offer of a husband so much to her liking; for strength of body, vigorous and sinewy limbs, and undaunted courage, were in those days the best qualifications to recommend a man to the affections of a lady. Having married the daughter and led the clan in all their battles against neighbouring tribes and enemies with conspicuous success, he eventually attained to the chiefship." This is the story which the Highland bards have recorded of this great progenitor of the Camerons.

Here we find not a Danish Prince of 404, arriving under kingly protection, and with an introduction from Fergus II., but a Celtic adventurer, many centuries later, from Dumbartonshire. Of his family history nothing is stated, but he was without estate or powerful relatives or friends. He was a soldier of fortune, and he was successful. From the time he assumed the chiefship, the Clan MacMartin and its dependent septs became known as Clan 'Camshron' or Cameron.

This chief was not only skilful in war, but was a man of powerful physique and giant strength. Dumbartonshire in early times appears to have been the

home of Celtic giants. We have this Cambro able to lift a 500lb. stone with the greatest ease. In the New Statistical Account of Scotland (Parish of Luss), we are told it was a place of refuge for the Highlanders from the earliest times. A powerful tribe of Celts lived at Dumfin, where there are traces of an ancient fortification. The chief, Fian M'Cuel, or Fingal, and his associates are represented as giants, of whom the most extravagant feats are related. An enormous stone or mass of rock is pointed out, which, it is said, Fingal, standing on the top of Benbui, took upon his little finger to throw to the top of Shantran Hill, a distance of several miles, but that not being rightly balanced, it fell into a small brook midway between the two! Then there is the tradition of the MacEwen giant who carried a stone coffin from the loch to the churchyard at Luss—having the coffin under one arm and the lid under the other. There is a curious similarity in these various feats of strength. Allowing for the necessary amount of fiction attaching to legends of the kind, we may fairly assume that these early western Celts were a powerful race, so distinguished for athletic performances as to render these worthy of transmission in Celtic folklore. It seems not improbable, too, having regard to the Cameron tradition, that Cambro was of this race of Celtic giants.

It is not stated when Cambro appeared in Lochaber, but it is evident that it could not have been so early as the time of Fergus II. (404), nor even many centuries later, nor yet so late as the close of the 14th century. It is more likely to have been in the twelfth century. Originally the septs of Clan Chattan and Clan Cameron followed the Maormor of Moray; and, according to Gregory, separated about the middle

of the fourteenth century. Mackenzie points out that Gregory, who agrees with the other authorities, states that the Camerons, as far back as he could trace, had their seat in Lochaber, and appeared to have been first connected with the Macdonalds of Islay in the reign of Robert the Bruce—that is to say, in the beginning of the fourteenth century.

In 1396, according to MacKenzie, there were four septs or branches of the clan, viz.: Gillanfhaigh or Gillonie (Camerons of Invermalie and Strone), the Clan Soirlie (Camerons of Glen Nevis), MhicMhartain (MacMartins of Letterfinlay), of which Cambro had been chief, and the Camerons of Lochiel. There were also dependent septs, the principal being Mhic Gilveil, or MacMillans. It is said to have been the head or captain of the first of these, Gillanfhaigh (MacGillonies) or Maclanfhaigh—‘Fhaigh’ in its aspirated form being represented by ‘Hay’ or ‘Kay’ of the Chroniclers—who led the Camerons at the Inch of Perth.

Bancho (Shakspeare’s Banquo), who was Thane of Lochaber in the time of King Duncan, and was slain by Macbeth because he was foretold that Bancho’s posterity would be kings of Scotland—a prophecy which was fulfilled—had a sister Marion who married Angus, the first of the Cameron chiefs of whom there is any mention. From Bancho’s grandson Walter, Great Steward of Scotland—an office which became hereditary and was turned into a surname—the Royal Stewart family and the Stewart Earls of Lennox were descended. Then, at a much later period, viz., in 1546, we find ‘Ewen Eoghain MacAilein,’ the 13th Cameron chief, supporting the then Stewart Earl of Lennox in his rebellion, for which he was tried and executed. Here we have another instance of close

connection between the Lochaber and Dumbartonshire chiefs and clans.

All these traditions and historic incidents point to a very early connection between the western clans and those known at a later period as Camerons. If Keltie and the historian quoted by Sir Walter Scott be correct, the MacEwens in their early wanderings had first settled in Lochaber, and were the progenitors of the later Camerons. This would account for the name among the Camerons as early as the 13th century. Cambro was of the same race, and may have been of the same tribe. The name Ewen, while it has been common in the Cameron families and in Lochaber, is rare among the neighbouring clans of the district who were connected with the Camerons under Moravian rule. It is not a common name among the Mackintoshes, or the other septs of Clan Chattan or the Moravian clans. It is of western origin, and common among the western clans. In later times, the families of that name in Lochaber appear to have derived it, in some cases, from the Cameron Ewens, according to Celtic custom, for the "Sliochd Eoghain" were the children and descendants of the first Ewen, chief of Erracht. In others, it doubtless had its origin in the later connection with the Macdougall Campbells of Lorne; and the "Sliochd Eoghain" was probably composed of the descendants of both.

The Privy Council Records afford further evidence of this close intermixture of MacEwens and Camerons. In 1576 we find Allister Dow Mc Allane Vc Ewin Camroun and John Camroun, his brother, denounced for the slaughter of Donald Dow McKewin. In 1598, there was a complaint before the Council at the instance of George Dunbar in Clunes and others

against Ewne McConeill Vc Ewne Coneill of Blarmaseylach, John Badach Mc Vc Ewne of Errach, his brother Ewne, Duncane Mc Martin of Letterfinlay, and many other MacEwens, who are described as “200 brokin hieland men and sorneris, all bodin in feir of weir.” The charge against them gives a picturesque view of the occupations of our ancestors. Armed “with bows, darlochs, and twa-handit swords, steil bonnetis, haberschondes, hacquebutis and pistoletis,” they are accused of having “come under cloud and silence of night be way of briggandice” to the house of the said George Dunbar, where they committed sundry offences of which the discreet historian need make no mention. Some years later we find these MacEwens allied with the outlawed MacGregors. In 1612 there is an order to denounce John Camroun Mc Vc Ewne in Errach and others for refusing to concur with Lochiel against “the rebellious thieves and lymmaris of the Clan Gregour.” Again, in the same year, several MacEwens are fined for resetting and defending Clan Gregor. In the following year there is a solemn proclamation against Allan Cameron of Locheil for not taking measures against the MacGregors, the preamble declaring that “he has made shipwraik of his faith and promisit obedience, shaking off all feir of God and his prince and reverence of the law; and preferring the mischevious and unhappy course of his bypast wicked lyff to godliness, civilite, good reule and quietness.” As associates in this “mischevious and unhappy course of bypast wickedness” are enumerated several MacEwens, whose affection for the ‘lymmaris’ of Clan Gregor would seem to have been incorrigible.

In consequence of an old feud between the

Camerons and the Robertsons of Struan, Sir Ewen Cameron, in 1666, marched with 80 men to Struan's lands in Kinloch, and raided the Robertsons. Among them were two MacEwen Camerons, John and Duncan, dhuine vassals. This formed the subject of a trial before the Privy Council.

VII.—MACEWENS IN PERTHSHIRE, INVERNESS, AND SKYE.

From an early date, a branch of the MacEwens appears to have been settled in Perthshire, probably in the Kenmore district, and a curious legend is connected with their early history. The original head of the clan in Perthshire died, leaving two sons. He left also a beautiful white horse, the possession of which occasioned a dispute between the two sons. The matter was decided by a singular test, namely, who could roll a millstone down a certain mountain by means of a straw rope passed through the hole in the centre. The one son accomplished the feat and obtained the horse. The other, being unsuccessful, betook himself to Ayrshire, where he founded another branch of the family.* However unsound the story may be as a genealogical explanation, it points to a traditional relationship existing between remote branches of the family at a time when their early origin was lost in tradition.

From Perthshire or Lochaber the MacEwens spread northwards. At an early date the name appears among the Mackintosh genealogies. "About this time (circa 1370) also lived Kenneth Macewn,

*This legend has been kindly furnished by Dr. David MacEwan, who obtained it in 1847 from an octogenarian soldier of the name of MacEwan.

father of Parson. This Kenneth came from Lochaber in Badenoch, and dwelt first at Tullocher. He was a tenant and retainer of Lauchlan, laird of Mackintosh. But his brothers, John, Murrach, and Gillies, came thither long before that time. This Lauchlan, 8th laird of Mackintosh, passed away from among the living in the year of Christ 1407.”* A daughter of Ferquhard, 9th laird of Mackintosh, married Duncan Mackynich vic Ewen (commonly called Parson). To Malcolm, 10th laird of Mackintosh (died 1470), Charles MacEwen vic Volan subscribed for himself and his posterity as hereditary servant. In 1569 the laird of Mackintosh leased to Donald MacEwen *alias* Cameron and John, his brother, the lands of Glenlui and Locharkaig. In 1618 there was a complaint to the Privy Council by Lord Gordon against Sir Lauchlan Mackintosh in the matter of “a riot and tumult at the ford of Culloden” to prevent Lord Gordon exercising his right to collect the teinds of the parish of Inverness. MacEwens were conspicuous among the followers of Mackintosh, who, to quote the report, “in a grite rage, tumult, and furie, attacked Lord Gordon’s poore hairmless men.”

A considerable body of MacEwens appear to have been settled in Skye at one time. It is not stated when their first settlement there took place; but from General Wade’s Statement of the Highland Clans in 1715, there were 150 MacEwens then in the Island, who fought for King James in that year. The colony may have been derived either from the Otter or Lochaber families, or both. There is a tradition, unsupported however by documentary evidence, that 120 of the Skye MacEwens fought for Prince Charlie

* *Macfarlane’s Genealogical Collections* (Scot. Hist Soc.)

at Culloden. If this be true it is curious that there is no record of an event so comparatively recent. In the *List of Persons Concerned in the Rebellion of 1745* (Scot. Hist. Soc.), the strength of the clan in rebellion is given at 5, and of the four MacEwens mentioned by name, two hail from Stirling, one from Perth, and one from Dundee. The *List* is obviously incomplete, as the total number of the clans is only given as 780.*

VIII.—THE CLAN NAME.

The name Ewen is a distinctive, ancient, and not very common name, derived from the Gaelic *Eoghan*, meaning 'kind natured' (latin *Eugenius*). Clan names were derived from the personal or first name of the ancestral chief, with the prefix 'Mac.' In later times, for special or fanciful reasons, the 'Mac' was often dropped, and the personal name became the surname. This was more particularly the case when persons of Highland descent, bearing clan names, settled in the Lowlands. The name MacGregor is a good instance of this change. When the clan name became proscribed, the clansmen called themselves Gregors, Gregs, Doos, and other forms of the name. Mr. Adam says: "two reasons have contributed towards rendering obscure the origin of Highland names of clan origin; the villainous and erratic spelling of our ancestors, and the clothing of a Highland name in a Lowland garb, either by dropping the prefix Mac or by otherwise transmogrifying the original name.† A distinguished Gaelic scholar and

* In a note to *Redgauntlet*, Scott says that he believes that the adventure ascribed to Pate-in-Peril, in 1745, was actually undertaken by a gentleman of the name of MacEwen or Macmillan.

† *What is my Tartan?* Frank Adam, F.S.A., Scot.

writer on the subject points out that surnames 'largely depend on individual and local history, being subject to local caprices and 'pet' changes.' In a work on the subject he gives the derivation of this name as above stated.* It would, however, be ridiculous to hold, at the present day, that all persons bearing a clan name are necessarily descendants of the old clansmen. In the majority of cases they probably are: in others the name may have been derived from a different source or taken by an ancestor for a 'special' or 'fanciful' reason. In later times surnames have often been derived from the Christian name of the parent, as MacWilliam and Williamson. Some MacEwen surnames may have had this origin, or in some instances may have been derived from Ian, Ivan, or Ewan in the same way. But in the absence of family histories showing the origin and course of a name, in each case, it is possible to treat the subject only generally, having regard to the localities where the name is common, and to any traditions or information which connect it with these localities. Where the name is of clan origin and still common in the clan territory, and where septs and families can be traced by tradition or otherwise from the original home to other localities where the name is found, while the other names common to those localities are different,—in both these cases there is a *prima facie* presumption that the name has been handed down from the original source, and that those who bear it are the descendants and representatives,—remotely, no doubt,—of the immigrant clansmen. Clan Ewen was a small clan which was dispersed at a remote period, and therefore the only means of identifying present day holders of

* *Personal Names and Surnames in Inverness* : A. Macbain.

the name is by tracing the old clansmen to the districts and localities where the name survives.

Lord President Forbes described a 'Highland clan' as a 'set of men all bearing the same surname, and believing themselves to be related the one to the other, and to be descended from the same stock.' Originally Clan Ewen answered this definition—one which is still true, subject to the above considerations. According to Lower, surnames and the practice of transmitting them to descendants came gradually into common use in England as early as the 11th and three following centuries. Other, equally good, authorities hold that not till the time of the Reformation did surnames become established on something like their present footing in England and the lowland counties of Scotland, and at a later period in the Highlands, and there have always been the difficulties connected with spelling, to the confusion of antiquaries and genealogists. This name alone furnishes several variations, viz.: Ewan, Ewen, Ewing, MacEwan, MacEwen, McEwan, McEwen, Macewin, MacKewan, McKewan, McKeown, McEwing, McAine, etc. The original clan name, of course, is Ewen, and Skene and the other authorities so spell it, and the later forms of the name, and those most common at the present day, are Ewen and Ewing, MacEwan and MacEwen, and the abridged form of the two latter: K is the common Irish form. The same variations in spelling have occurred in places widely apart, as Argyll, the Lennox, Galloway, and Lochaber, all of which are associated with the clan. Sometimes *i* is used in place of *a* or *e*, in the last syllable; and where *k* has been used in early, it has been dropped in later, times. Uniformity was the last thing thought of: in the case of father and son,

or in the same family, it was not considered necessary. As a rule, spelling was phonetic, and to this fact may be ascribed the frequent introduction of the K; rather than to any recent Irish connection. Excellent examples are furnished in the Galloway and Glenboig families. In the former the name appears in the family Bibles and on the tombstones in the various forms stated: in the latter we have first Macewin, then in 1691 McAine, and the same man in 1698 as Macewan, while the family history shows continuous descent and succession.*

X.—EVIDENCE OF HERALDRY.



Heraldry is usually a safe and reliable guide in cases of pedigree and enquiries into family histories.

* Uniformity in spelling was not practised by even the best English writers, *e.g.*, Dryden and Driden, Jonson and Johnson. An ingenious American has discovered 4,000 variations of the name Shakespeare.

There are nine grants of Arms by the Lyon Office in Scotland to persons bearing the clan name. Six of these are Ewings and three McEwans.

One of the earliest is Ewen or Ewing of Craigtoun, whose achievement appears on a tombstone of 1600 in Bonhill Churchyard. These arms belonged originally to Bryson of Craigtoun. In Nisbet's *System of Heraldry* (1722), one of the best authorities on ancient Scottish Heraldry, it is said that these arms are carried by John *Ewen*, Writer to the Signet; and further on, with reference to Bryson of Craigtoun, that "this family ended in two daughters: the eldest married Walter Ewing, Writer to the Signet: they were the father and mother of John Ewing, Writer to the Signet, who possesses the lands of Craigtoun which belonged to his grandfather by the mother's side, and by the father's side he is the male Representer of Ewing of Keppoch, his grandfather, in the Shire of Dumbarton; which lands of Keppoch were purchased by a younger son of the Family, who had only one daughter, married to John Whitehill, whose son Thomas possesses the lands of Keppoch, and is obliged to take upon him the name of Ewing."

These arms then came into the Ewen or Ewing family with the lands of Craigtoun by the marriage of Walter Ewen or Ewing, Writer to the Signet, with the eldest daughter of Bryson. The arms, themselves, throw no light on the family history of the Ewens or Ewings: but the father of Walter Ewen or Ewing was of the Keppoch family in Dumbartonshire. We therefore find this much: (1) that the name was then spelt both ways, and that Ewing or Ewen were interchangeable: and (2) that the family belonged to Dumbartonshire where the clan name was common.

Again, all the arms of the later Ewings of Keppoch, Glasgow, Levenfield, Loudon, and Ballikinrain, which are recorded, are founded on and connected with those of the first Ewen or Ewing of Craigtoun.

The three M'Ewen families return similar results. The Muckly family, in addition to its name and place of settlement in Argyll, claims descent from the MacDougalls of Lorne, who were joined by a sept of Clan MacEwen of Otter. Macewan of Glenboig belonged to the Lennox sept. M'Ewan, Glasgow, belonged to a Renfrewshire family of the same sept, descended, on the female side again, from a daughter of Campbell of Craidish in Lorne. So that so far as name, localities, and other circumstances go they all point,—in the absence of other evidence,—to one and the same conclusion, viz., that these families are descended from different septs of the ancient Clan Ewen.

There is another circumstance of some importance in this connection, which, although not having modern heraldic sanction, is of the same character. In early times, when writing was not an ordinary or common accomplishment, documents of moment were attested by seals. This practice was common up to 1540 and, as Nisbet says, 'contributed much to the regularity of arms.' It continued down to a much later date, and for some purposes is still in force. These seals bore a device, an animal, tree, shrub, flower, leaf, or other symbol, and sometimes a motto. The devices, again, in later times, became common to connected families and persons of the same name who recognised a clan relationship, until at last they have come to be spoken of and used as 'clan crests.' But their original purpose was altogether different. Seals were handed down from

father to son or heir. In some instances the devices were chosen as crests when a person of the name took out arms. The case of M^cEwan, Glasgow, is an instance in point. His arms were granted in 1847. The escutcheon displays emblems of his profession and pursuits, while the crest and motto,—an old stunted oak, putting forth new branches and fresh foliage, with the motto ‘Reviresco,’—have been in use on seals by MacEwens everywhere from a very much earlier period. This seal has been used by individuals and families of the name in different parts of the country, in Argyll, Galloway, the Lennox, Renfrew, Glasgow, and other places, by persons who could only have recognised a clan relationship and must, personally, have been unknown to each other. It was evidently the emblem of the clan; a symbol of family kinship and clan origin which testified to common misfortunes and common aspirations. It was in use at a period long before the modern fashion of ‘clan arms’ and ‘crests’—a custom without heraldic sanction—came into being, and was employed for purposes not of show and display but of business. The Lyon Office is unable to fix the origin or date of these seals, but states they are ‘common to the name.’* So that this *quasi* heraldic device is another link between the past and the present of an ancient, shattered, but reviving race. For this is what the device and motto signify. It has been well chosen as an epitome of the history of the clan. It is not uncommon to find different families and members of different clans bearing the same crest, but there is no other instance of this device being carried except by MacEwens.

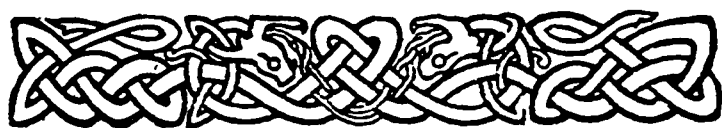
* See Note to Appendix.

XI.—MAC EWEN TARTAN.

Tartan has been the dress of the Celtic Highlander and of the Lowland Clansman from time immemorial, and particular 'setts' or patterns are of great antiquity, but it has been found impossible to assign dates to any of them. Distinctive clan tartans as now worn are of comparatively recent date. In a work on Clan Campbell,* it is stated that "the adoption of peculiar tartans by entire clans is referable to the civil wars of the Earl of Mar and Prince Charles Edward, as the sources of the custom of wearing distinctive clan tartans." Long before that time we know from Logan and others that "every strath and every island differed from each other in the fancy of making plaids, as to the stripes in breadth and the colours, while family tartans were in a great measure dependent on individual taste." Since the abolition of the Act against the wearing of tartan, many old tartans have been revived, and in the present reign many new ones have been designed. The MacEwen tartan is a handsome blue and green check, with red and yellow lines alternately on the green bars of the check. It somewhat resembles the Farquharson and MacLeod tartans; or if in place of the white lines in the 'Campbell of Loudon' red lines be substituted, we get the MacEwen tartan exactly. The ground-work of the MacEwen tartan is the same as that of the 'Black Watch,' which was the original Campbell tartan. The MacEwen has the double black lines running through the blue ground as in the 'Black Watch,' the distinguishing feature between the two being that for the black cross lines (over-checks) of the 'Black Watch' there is a

* *The Clan Campbell*: J. Menzies & Co., Edinburgh.

red and yellow line alternately in the green ground of the MacEwen. The colours are brighter in the latter than in the former. In the work on Clan Campbell above referred to we are told that "the original name of the 'Black Watch' arose from the tints of their tartans, in which black and green predominated, as they yet do in those of the Campbells. The majority of the Western tribes, traceable all to one source, adopted nearly the same colours, and indeed there can be little doubt but that the distinctions now perceivable are of comparatively recent adoption. The 'Black Watch' tartan contains all the really fundamental parts of every variety of that species of garb. The difference of hues and the intermingling lines and divisions appear to be a later addition to the tartans of the separate tribes, and should be ascribed to the era of the later rebellions." The Campbells have had and still have several different "setts": Argyll, Breadalbane, Cawdor, Loudon, Strachur, and there may be others: but the late Duke of Argyll has gone back to the 'Black Watch' as the original clan tartan. The similarity of the MacEwen tartan to the 'Black Watch' and the 'Campbell of Loudon' (red in lieu of white lines) points to the early connection of the clan with the Campbells, just as in heraldry ensigns and cadences point to connection and distinction in families. In early times the tartan took the place of the heraldic shield.



* SCALE OF COLOURS IN MAC EWEN TARTAN.

$\frac{1}{8}$ TH OF AN INCH.	COLOURS.	$\frac{1}{8}$ TH OF AN INCH.	COLOURS.	$\frac{1}{8}$ TH OF AN INCH.	COLOURS.
3	Blue	6	Green	1	Red
1	Black	6	Black	$\frac{1}{2}$	Black
1	Blue	6	Blue	6	Green
1	Black	1	Black	6	Black
1	Blue	1	Blue	1	Blue
6	Black	1	Black	1	Black
6	Green	6	Blue	1	Blue
$\frac{1}{2}$	Black	6	Black	1	Black
1	Yellow	6	Green	3	Blue
$\frac{1}{2}$	Black	$\frac{1}{2}$	Black

For illustration purposes, suitable to the size of this volume, the scale of the tartan frontispiece has been reduced to about half usual size, such as would be worn for a scarf.

XII.—SUMMARY.

The foregoing investigations and enquiries point to the following conclusions :—

I.—That Clan Ewen or MacEwen was originally a western clan, descended from the Siol Gillevray, one of the Celtic tribes of the Dalriada Scots.

II.—That they possessed territory, and were settled under a chief of their own in Argyll, on the shores of Loch Fyne, from the 13th to the middle of the 15th century, when the clan was finally broken up.

III.—That previous to the latter date they had suffered severely in the wars of the times, and both before and after the death of the last chief remnants

* This, and other information, has been kindly supplied by Mr. John C. M'Ewen, Inverness.

sought new alliances and homes in Argyll, the Lennox Country, Dumbartonshire, Galloway, and elsewhere.

IV.—That at an early period of their history they became connected with Lochaber, if it was not (as Keltie asserts) their original settlement: that a second incursion took place from Lorne at a later period: that the settlers became incorporated with the Camerons, the principal clan in the district, and that the name of Ewen has been common among the Camerons and in the district from the earliest times of which there is any record.

V.—That the name is distinctly of Gaelic and clan origin, and that except where particular family histories and other evidence point to a different conclusion, persons bearing the name and traceable to the localities known to have been occupied by the early clan, its septs and descendants, are of the same race and probably sprung from the MacEwens of Otter. In the Lowland districts the blood has mixed largely with that of the Lowland inhabitants.

VI.—That, subject to the same exception, those bearing clan names in Argyll and the Western Highlands and Islands are presumably the descendants of the men who joined the Campbells and other Western clans, before and after the dispersion, in the 15th century.

VII.—That those traceable to the Lennox country, Dumbartonshire, the neighbouring Eastern and Southern Counties and Galloway are descendants of the Lennox and Galloway septs.

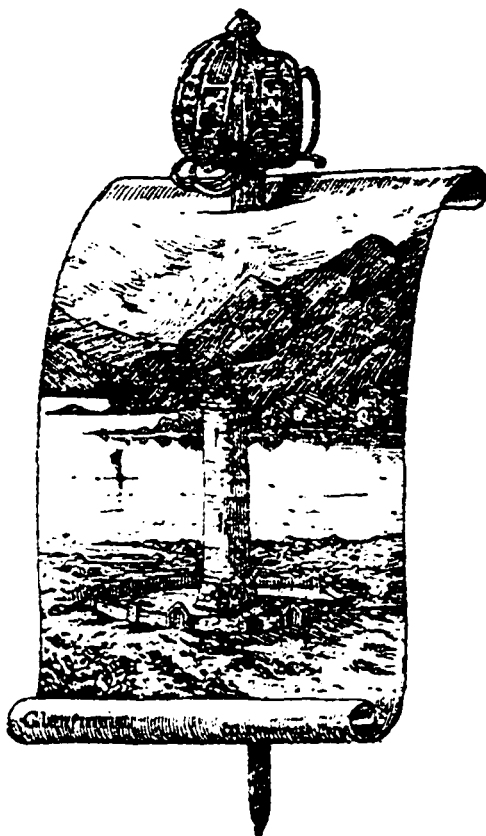
VIII.—That those traceable to Lochaber are more immediately descended from the '*Sliochd Eoghain*,' while those who settled in Skye may have had the

same origin or have been descended from the men of Argyll.

The clan has had a hard and checkered existence from its earliest days ; it was wiped out as a territorial clan in the middle of the 15th century. From that date it has been scattered in groups in different parts of the country, the largest number having migrated to the fertile regions of the South, where the clan names are now more numerous than they are in the Highlands. In this respect the history of the clan is not exceptional. It is more remarkable that, considering its early dispersion and subsequent vicissitudes, it is still possible to speak of ‘Clan Ewen.’ Few clans can offer such scanty material to their would-be historian. Clan Ewen was broken up as a clan during one of the darkest ages of our history, when chroniclers were few, and such an event was too common to excite their interest. In later times the evidence of family papers and contemporary records is singularly scanty ; even family and local traditions—those unfailing resources of the clan historian—are all but wanting. In other clans allegiance to a recognised chief has been and still remains a powerful bond of union ; but it would baffle the patience of the most unwearied genealogist to discover on whose shoulders the mantle of the lords of the Otter has now descended. More tantalising still is the absence of personal records. Now and again some ancient document gives us a list of names ; but what manner of men these were, of what physical or mental complexion, we can but dimly imagine. The scenes which the lurid light of Privy Council records reveal to us tell of the licence of an age rather than of individual character, and if there were some who “preferred the mischievous and un-

happy course of bypast wickedness," there were others—bards and senachies and honest gentlemen—who sought "godliness, civilite, good reule, and quietness." But despite lack of chief and lands and ancient records, Clan Ewen still preserves—if not its unity—at least a sense of union and clanship.

At the present time there are many bearing the Clan name in Scotland and in England and the Colonies. Some are men of affluence and property; many hold prominent and influential positions in the learned professions, the army, commerce, and agriculture. If the descendants of the ancient Clan Ewen could be mustered to-day they would make a goodly show as compared with the "200 fighting men" of old.

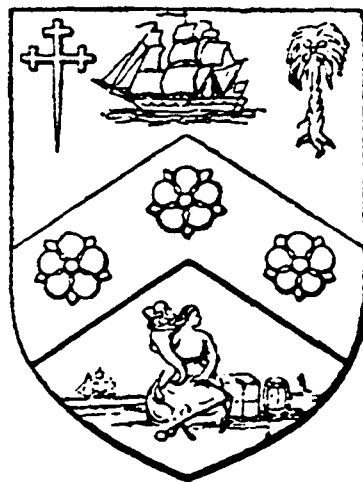


APPENDIX.

Arms pertaining to Persons and Families bearing Clan Ewen or MacEwen names, as recorded in the Lyon Court of Scotland.

NAMES.	ARMS.
EWING (on a tombstone in Bonhill Churchyard, 1600. Supposed to be Ewing of Craigtoun).	A chev. between three stars, with the sun in base.
EWING (Keppoch, County of Dumbarton, descended of Craigtoun).	Ar. a chev. embattled az. ensigned with a banner gu. Charged with a Canton of the second, thereon a Saltire of the first, all between two mullets in chief, and the sun in his splendour in a base of the third. <i>Crest</i> : a demi lion ramp, in his dexter paw a mullet gu. <i>Motto</i> : Audaciter. (see illustration on page 33.)
EWING (Glasgow, descended of Keppoch).	Quarterly, first and fourth, as the last, within a bordure az.; second and third, ar. a bend gu. between three banting birds ppr. for Bontine. <i>Crest</i> and <i>motto</i> same as last.
EWING (Levenfield, County of Dumbarton).	Ar. a chev. gu. ensigned with a banner of the second, charged with a Canton az. thereon a Saltire of the first, all between two mullets in chief, and the Sun in his splendour in base of the second, a bordure indented, also of the second, charged with three crescents of the first for diff. <i>Crest</i> : a demi lion ramp. holding in his dexter paw a mullet gu. <i>Motto</i> : Audaciter.
EWING (Loudon).	As the last, the bordure charged with three mullets az.

NAMES.	ARMS.
EWING (Ballikinrain, County of Stirling).	As Levenfield, the bordure charged with three mullets ar.
M ^c EWAN (Mackewan, Muckly, County of Argyll, descended of the Macdougals of Lorne).	Per fess az. and or. in chief a lion ramp. ar. gorged with an antique crown vert. in base a garb of the first.
M ^c EWAN (Macewan, Glenboig, County of Stirling).	Ar. a Sheaf of arrows ppr. banded az. between four roses in a Saltire gu. <i>Crest</i> : a dexter arm coupled at the shoulder, the elbow resting on the wreath and grasping a scymitar all ppr. <i>Motto</i> : Pervicax recti.
M ^c EWAN (Glasgow, of a Renfrewshire family, descended on the female side from a daughter of Campbell of Craignish).	Az. on a fess ar. between a lion ramp. in chief of the second, and a garb in base or., a ship in full sail on the sea between a thistle and a stalk of sugar cane, both slipped ppr., a bordure gyronny of eight of the third and sa. <i>Crest</i> : the trunk of an oak tree with a branch sprouting forth on either side ppr. <i>Motto</i> : Reviresco.



NOTE.

All the Ewing arms are founded on those of the first Ewen or Ewing of Craigtoun. He belonged to the family of Keppoch in Dumbartonshire, and by marriage with the eldest daughter of Bryson of Craigtoun obtained that estate and took the arms of Bryson. The other Ewings obtained grants at different and later dates, founding them on those of Craigtoun, with the proper heraldic differences.

The Muckly (Argyll) and M'Ewen (Glasgow) families both claim relationship to Lorne families which were joined by MacEwens of Otter.

The Glenboig (Stirling) family belonged to the Lennox sept, as also did M'Ewan, Glasgow.

M'Ewan, Glasgow, took for his crest and motto a device and motto which had been common to MacEwans everywhere for a long time previous, and had been used as a badge on seals, of which there are specimens extant in MacEwan families. The Lyon Office states they are 'common to the name.'

A coat of arms is the exclusive property of the grantee, and descends to his eldest lineal representative. Younger children are not entitled to their father's arms, but are required to 'matriculate' them in the Lyon Court with their proper differences.

A modern practice has arisen of assuming 'clan arms' and 'crests': it has no heraldic sanction and is absurd on the face of it; because arms were originally the devices by which one person was known from another when in armour, which would lose its purpose if everybody had the same arms on his shield: it follows that members of a clan are not entitled to use the arms of the chief.

On the subject of crests, Woodward in his work on Heraldry has the following: "In Great Britain the crest has become the part of the armorial insignia most generally employed. We find it divorced not only from the coat of arms but from its helm, doing the duty of a badge on furniture, plate, buttons, panels of carriages, the harness of horses (and he might have added note paper). It need hardly be said that all this is an entire departure from the original idea of the crest as the ornament of a knightly helm; and that to speak (as people who ought to be better informed often do) of a whole achievement,—arms, helm, crest, and motto,—as "our crest," is as absurd as it would be to call a suit of clothes a tiara." These crests are really the work of the modern 'heraldic' stationer.

On the other hand individuals, families, members of clans, may use a badge if they desire to use a distinctive mark. This was a common practice in ancient times, the device and motto being displayed in seals. Woodward says : " Badges were the earliest form of hereditary insignia, preceding shield or coat armour, and commonly used as seals. It was distinct from a crest, although family badges were sometimes used as crests. It is described as a subsidiary family ensign, occasionally accompanied by a motto, borne by adherents (clansmen), dependants, or retainers. It is entirely different from the species of badge, unrecognised by heraldic authority, which has gradually sprung up among the Highland clans, namely a leaf or sprig of some tree or shrub, usually carried along with two eagle's feathers in the bonnet which the Chief wears."

The MacEwen badge was probably one of these old statutory seal badges described by Nisbet, who says it was enacted by sundry statutes that every Freeholder should have his proper seal. It had to be produced when required at the head Court of the Shire, and duplicates in lead were often kept by the Clerk of the Court for reference in case of need.

A badge differs from an armorial crest inasmuch as the latter nearly always rests on a cushion, whereas a badge has no cushion, and the seals almost invariably bore the initials of the owner for the time being.

A badge may always be used as a mark of distinction if people desire it, but it should be distinguished from an armorial crest. This badge is not a crest except in the single instance of M'Ewen, Glasgow, who chose it for his own, and as such it belongs only to his representative ; but as a badge it is common to all clansmen. As such it is more interesting and valuable than any modern crest ; for it is not a borrowed ensign or assumed plume, but an original, ancient, and unique device, containing an historical epitome, which crests do not.



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