

A TREATISE
ON THE
LANGUAGE, POETRY, AND MUSIC
OF THE
HIGHLAND CLANS :
WITH
ILLUSTRATIVE TRADITIONS AND ANECDOTES,
AND NUMEROUS
ANCIENT HIGHLAND AIRS.

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conclusions, not the less when they result from ignorance and prejudice; but I also believe that there is in this country enough of justice, candour, learning, and talent, to test this question on the merits. I submit ample materials for the investigation, and am convinced that whoever shall peruse them with the care necessary to enable him to decide intelligently on the subject, will agree with me. But, to enable those who are unacquainted with the language to form a sound opinion on the question, I considered a more simple orthography, a *sine qua non*. Hence the system adopted in this treatise. Although unaccustomed to write Gaelic, I believe I understand the language well, and have kept faith with such subscribers as are enamoured of the present orthography by spelling the specimens which I quote in accordance with that orthography, although, as already stated, want of practice may have occasioned many mistakes, which the verbal critic will be glad to pounce upon; but I have under-written every word so spelt phonetically, for the English reader, convinced that this will enable him to form a more sound opinion of the language and poetry than he could otherwise have formed of them without a vocal teacher, and much trouble and expense.

The writing of Gaelic, and especially phonetically, being new to me, I take it for granted that innumerable mistakes and omissions may have escaped me in correcting the proofs. Any critic but the merely verbal one will, however, I think, find enough to convince him that such mistakes and omissions are more to be ascribed to want of practice than to want of knowledge of the subjects. For the former I might expect to be excused; for the latter I could not. The phonetic spelling is on a carefully considered uniform plan, but being thoroughly new to myself, there is no doubt that many letters will be found undetected that are inconsistent with uniformity, and unnecessary to the pronunciation. This will, I trust, be excused in the first edition of a new system of orthography. I am aware that my phonetic spelling will give the English reader but a very imperfect idea of the beauty of the language when compared to a chaste and elegant pronunciation by the living voice; but every well-educated person knows that letters without a vocal teacher never can teach any foreigner to speak any language like a native. I have endeavoured to make this Preface embrace my whole case, and submit it to the public with perfect confidence in its truth and honesty; and therefore I have some hopes that it may assist in creating among English readers some interest in the Language, Poetry, and Music of the Highland Clans.

Port-Glasgow, 3rd July 1862.

and Lochetive, and that from Lochetive the boundary ran by a line, less distinctly marked, between the sources of the waters that ran in different directions, (thus "sheering wind and water," as Dandie Dinmont would have described it,) to Penvahl; from Penvahl to Galashiels; from Galashiels, by the Catrail or war-path, to Berwick. This differs slightly from the boundary laid down by Mr Skene; but I am convinced, even at this day, there is so clearly perceptible a difference in personal appearance, dialect, or pronunciation, (which in effect is much the same thing, a different pronunciation being the original cause of different dialects,) poetry, and music, between the people on either side of that line, as really to justify my adhering to my own opinion on this subject; for although the people of the plains or lowlands of Caledonia had so much intercourse, by inter-marriages, &c. with the Gothic families both of England and Lochlin, they differ from them decidedly until this day, especially in their appearance. I mention elsewhere that the colony of Ulster Cruithne, who settled in Galloway, were also divided from their neighbours by a catrail or war-path, drawn from the head of Lochryan, by Kempshill, Sanquhar, and Carlisle; and I have been assured, on good authority, that there was a marked difference in appearance, dialect, poetry, and music, between the people on either side of that March when the "Highland host" were quartered in Ayrshire; for, strange, as it may appear, I was intimately acquainted with a clergyman, Mr Inglis of Kirkoswold, who when a boy was tutor to the family of Maclean of Drimmin, and knew a gentleman (the great-grandfather of that family,) who had been captain of a company in the Highland host. From this venerable old man, Mr Inglis received much information in reference to the conduct and character of the Loyalists and Covenanters of that day, which had the effect of giving him more modified views of both parties than was usually expressed by Presbyterian clergymen of the old school. In short, all party-writers allow their feelings to point them, and therefore deal in exaggerations. This intelligent old gentleman told Mr Inglis that in the small clachan in Galloway they spoke the same Gaelic at that time that was spoken in Ardnamurchan.

In personal appearance, dialect, poetry, and music, there is a striking affinity between the people of the north of Ireland and the Caledonians; and I believe that a similar resemblance, especially in personal appearance, is perfectly visible between the Scottish Lowlanders and the people of the south and west of Ireland. There is in topographical names and ancient poetry sufficient evidence that the ancient Caledonians and Britons spoke the same dialect; and as William M. Moxon, Esq., chief Accountant of Inland Revenue, has kindly sent me some Welsh poetry and melodies, with phonetic spelling, I will now submit these to the reader, and which, on a careful comparison, prove without doubt that the poetry and music of Caledonia and Wales have at this day a clear affinity the one to the other.

A chanu wnei o hyd o hyd
a chan-e oonei o heed o heed
Tra haul a byd a bardd.
tra hayl a beed a barth

And sing thou wilt through all time,

While sun, and world, and bard (ex-
ist.)

BUGEILIO'R GWENITH GWYN.—SHEPHERDING (OR WATCHING) THE WHEAT.

- | | |
|---|---|
| ✓ Mi sydd fachgen ieuangc ffol,
me sith vachgen yeyanc fall | I am a young foolish boy, |
| ✓ Yn caru'n ol fy ffansi;
un cari'n ole vu fancy | Making love according to my fancy; |
| ✓ Mi yn bugeilio'r gwenith gwyn,
me un begylor gwenith gwyn | I watching the white wheat, |
| ✓ Ac eraill ynei fedi:
ac eraillth unei vedee | And others reaping it: |
| ✓ Pam na ddeui ar fy ol
pam na thy-e ar vu ole | Why do you not come after me |
| ✓ Ryw ddydd ar ol ei gilydd?
reew theeth ar ol ei gylith | Some day or another? |
| ✓ Gwaith r'wy'n dy wel'd y feinir fach,
gwaith r'ooi'n du wel'd u vynir vach | Because I see thee, beautiful darling, |
| ✓ O! glanach, lanach beunydd!
o! glanach lanach bynith | Oh! lovelier and lovelier daily! |
| ✓ Tra fo dwr yn y mor hallt,
tra vo dwr un u more hallt | While there is water in the briny sea, |
| ✓ A thra fo ngwallt yn tyfu,
a thra vo ngooalht un tivy | And while my hair does grow, |
| ✓ A thra fo calon yn fy mron,
a thra vo calon un vu mron | And while there is a heart in my breast, |
| ✓ Mi fydda'n ffyddlon itti:
me vutha'n futhlon itte | I will be faithful to thee: |
| ✓ Dywed imi'r gwir dan gël,
duwed imme'r gweer dan gale | Tell me the truth in secret, |
| ✓ A rho dan sêl atebion;
a rho dan sale atebyon | And give under seal (in confidence)
answers; |
| ✓ P'un ai myfi neu arall, Gwen,
p'un ay muvee ny aralht gwen | Whether myself or another, Gwen, |
| ✓ Sydd orau gandy galon!
seeth orai gandu galon | Is best within thine heart! |

NOS GALAN.—NEW YEAR'S EVE.

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|--|--|
| Goreu pleser ar nos galan,—Fa, la, &c.
gorei plesser ar nos galan | The best pleasure on new year's eve,
—Fa, la, &c. |
| Ty a thân a theulu diddan,—Fa, &c.
tu a thaan a thiley dithan | Is house and fire and a pleasant family,
—Fa, la, &c. |

Calon lân a chwrrw melyn,—Fa, &c. calon laan a chooroo melin	A pure heart and brown* ale,—Fa, la, &c.
Pennill mwyn a llais y delyn,—Fa, &c. penlith mooin a thlais u delin	A gentle song and the voice of the harp.—Fa, la, &c.
Hyfryd gweled ar yr aelwyd,—Fa, &c. huvrid gweled ar ur aylooid	It is pleasant to see round the hearth, —Fa, la, &c.
Hên ac ieuangc mewn dedwyddydd,— hain ac yeyangc meoon dedwithid Fa, &c.	Old and young in happiness ;—Fa, la, &c.
Pawb ddymunant o lawenydd,—Fa, &c. pawb thuminant o la-wenith	All wish from joy,—Fa, la, &c.
Groesaw llawn i'r flwyddyn newydd.— groisao thlaoon ir vloothin newith Fa, &c.	A full welcome to the new year.—Fa, la, &c.

MERCH MEGAN.—MEGAN'S DAUGHTER.

Ysblenydd yw'r haul wrth euro y usblenith ioor hayl oorth eiro u wawrddydd, waorthith	Beautiful is the sun in gilding the day dawn,
A glandeg yw gwllith ar feillion a rhôs ; a glaandeg ioo gooleeth ar veilthion a rhose	And comely fair the dew on clover and rose ;
Tryloew yw rhith y lloer mewn afonydd, treeloioo ioo rheeth u lthoer mewn avonyth	Transparent is the shadow of the moon in rivers,
A disglair yw'r ser yn nyfnder y nos. a disglair ioor sair un nuvnder u nos	And bright are the stars in the depth of the night.
Disgleirfwyn yw'r hafddydd ei geinion disglairvoin ioor havethith i geinion yn burlan, un birlan	Clear and mild is the summer day its rays pure and clean,
A disglair yw llewyrch yr awyr a'r lli ; a disglair ioo ltheoourch ur awir a'r lthe	And bright is the light of the air and the flood ;
Disgleiriach i'm serch yw Morvydd disglairiach i'm serch ioo morvith merch Megan. merch megan	Brighter to my affection is Morvydd, Megan's daughter,
Anwylach ei phryd na mywyd i mi. anwilach i freed na mowid e me	Dearer is her countenance than life unto me.
Mae Morvydd yn lân a'i gwên fel yr mai morvith un laan a'i gooen vel ur heulwen, heylwen	Morvydd is handsome, and her smile like the sunshine,
Ei chalon yn bur, a dedwydd ei bron ; i chalon un buir a dedwith i bron	Her heart is pure and happy in her breast ;

* Literally, "yellow ale," but the idea is as above.

BUGEILIOR GWENITH GWYN.

Musical score for 'BUGEILIOR GWENITH GWYN.' in 3/4 time, key of B-flat major. The score consists of three systems of piano accompaniment. The first system has two staves. The second system has two staves. The third system has two staves and includes a dynamic marking of *p* (piano) above the first staff.

NOS GALAN.

Musical score for 'NOS GALAN.' in common time, key of D major. The score consists of six systems of piano accompaniment. The first system has two staves and includes dynamic markings of *p* (piano) and *f* (forte). The second system has two staves and includes a dynamic marking of *p*. The third system has two staves. The fourth system has two staves. The fifth system has two staves. The sixth system has two staves and includes an accent marking (*>*) above the first staff.

Nos Galan

“A Treatise on the Language, Poetry, and Music of the Highland Clans” 1862

By Donald Campbell, Esq.
Transcribed by Fiona Potts

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Nos Galan.

Goreu pleser ar nos galan, -- Fa, la, &c.
Ty a tân a theulu diddan, -- Fa, &c.
Calon lân a chwrw melyn, -- Fa, &c.
Pennill mwyn a llais y delyn, -- Fa &c.

Hyfryd gweled ar yr aelwyd, -- Fa, &c.
Hên ac ieuangc mewn dedwydyd, -- Fa, la, &c.
Pawb ddymunant o lawenydd, -- Fa, &c.
Groesaw llawn i'r flwyddyn newydd. -- Fa, &c.

New Year's Eve

The best pleasure on new year's eve, --Fa, la, &c.
Is house and fire and a pleasant family, --Fa, la, &c.
A pure heart and brown* ale, -- Fa, la, &c.
A gentle song and the voice of the harp. -- Fa, la, &c.

It is pleasant to see round the hearth, -- Fa, la, &c.
Old and young in happiness; -- Fa, la, &c.

All wish from joy, -- Fa, la, &c.
A full welcome to the new year. -- Fa, la, &c.

* Literally, “yellow ale,” but the idea is as above.

The Welsh poem Nos Galan is published in “A Treatise on the Language, Poetry, and Music of the Highland Clans: with Illustrative Traditions and Anecdotes and Numerous Ancient Highland Airs.” by Donald Campbell, Esq.

Campbell states that “William M. Moxon, Esq. chief Accountant of Inland Revenue, has kindly sent me some Welsh poetry and melodies, with phonetic spelling.”

This is an accurate and direct translation from the Welsh, and we see that unlike the lyrics from 1784/94, these lyrics do relate to the song title.

Nos Galan

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D A D Em D D D

D A D Em D D D

A D A D G D

D Em D D A D

Nos Galan.

Goreu pleser ar nos galan, -- Fa, la, &c.

Ty a tân a theulu diddan, -- Fa, &c.

Calon lân a chwrw melyn, -- Fa, &c.

Pennill mwyn a llais y delyn, -- Fa &c.

Hyfryd gweled ar yr aelwyd, -- Fa, &c.

Hên ac ieuangc mewn dedwyddydd, -- Fa, &c.

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