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The Rehabilitation of the Highlander, 1745-1830:

Changing Visions of Gaeldom

By

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in the University of Glasgow

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Summary

This thesis sets out to explore the rehabilitation of the Scottish Gaels from the time of the Jacobite Rebellion of 1745 to 1830. "Rehabilitation" is a subjective term, and can refer to the restoration of someone or something to a former position of reputation or rank. Here, however, it is meant as a readaption to society, or in the case of the inhabitants of the Highlands and Islands, their transformation from a race of ferocious and rebellious barbarians, as they were commonly regarded during the Forty-Five, into loyal and peaceable and God-fearing British subjects, as they undoubted were by the 1820s. The changes in attitudes of various commentators involved in this process are remarkable and reflect the replacement of myth with myth that characterized the general improvement in the Gaels' image.

Long before the Forty-Five, the people of the Lowlands and England regarded the Highlands and Islands as a wild and inhospitable place inhabited by people in a barbaric state totally untouched by modern civilization, but it was not until 1745 that they were seen as an intolerable threat to the established order. It was not merely the adherence of some clans to the Jacobite cause that made the Gaels so detested, but also their very different way of life. In the aftermath of the battle of Culloden, Whig commentators stressed that the "Highland problem" was primarily one of

law and order, believing that Jacobitism and crime (also thought to be endemic in the Highlands) were inextricably linked. Once it became evident that Jacobitism was extinct as a political force, attention was turned towards "improving" the Highland economy and "civilizing" the people.

Those eager to apply the tenets of Improvement to the Highlands and Islands attacked the clan system as the root of the region's lack of prosperity, and at the heart of their proposals was the replacement of traditional or "feudal" relationships with commercial or "modern" ones. Once educated in the values of loyalty and industry, it was thought, the common people would be freed to pursue their own interests; and the chiefs and clan gentry would be freed of their hereditary responsibilities in order to reorganize their estates along commercial lines and assume the role of landed proprietors. Enterprising clan chiefs such as the Dukes of Argyll had begun this process well before the Forty-Five; and the schemes undertaken by interventionist agencies such as the Annexed Estates Board and later the British Fisheries Society suggested additional measures that had the potential to greatly increase the income of a previously unproductive estate. Although some improvement schemes required a labour force, Highland chief-cum-proprietors came to prefer capital-intensive enterprises such as sheep farming to those which aimed to retain the people on their estates for purposes other than military recruitment. During this period, much was written by factors, estate managers, agriculturalists and others, who

rarely confined themselves to discussions of soil and climate; the prejudiced attitudes they held towards the Gaels, especially those who resisted their plans, were either implied or explicit and often surfaced when attempting to illustrate the difficulties involved in dealing with a "recalcitrant" or "slqthful" populace.

The success of all attempts to "improve" the Highlands and Islands was believed to require the moral and spiritual rehabilitation of the Gaels. In the years after the Forty-Five, non-juring Episcopalian and Roman Catholic clergymen were widely considered to be the active agents of the Stuart cause, and their presence in the region was seen to constitute a political threat as well as being obstructive to any form of progress. The improved provision of schools and churches that would teach the Gaels to become hard-working, loyal to the British constitution and faithful to the tenets of the Church of Scotland was considered vital. The responsibility for bringing about the educational transformation of the Highlands fell largely to the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge, a Lowland-based body which operated schools in the region and which laid a heavy emphasis upon literacy in English and used only religious texts. The monumental task of providing every Gael with an education was beyond the scope of any outside agency, however, for in the end it was an indigenous evangelical movement that moved most people in the Highlands and Islands to embrace Presbyterianism. The Gaels had in effect "civilized" themselves, and this change was reflected in Gaelic poetry, which went from praising the heroic and

martial exploits of legendary characters to expressing sorrow for past sins and which advocated a withdrawal from worldly affairs.

In the period 1745-1830, dozens of accounts of tours of the Highlands and Islands were published. Most of the travellers made their journeys with the intention of writing a book about their experiences upon their return to the Lowlands or England. While these accounts are neither objective nor particularly well-informed, they reveal the changing attitudes towards the Gaels. Most accounts published in the thirty years or so after the Forty-Five were written from a Whig perspective which generally condemn the Gaels for their alleged backwardness while praising the attempts by Highland proprietors to "rationalize" their properties. Dr Samuel Johnson's account of his tour of 1773 marked a departure from the standard line, and he doubted the wisdom of those who would bring civilization to the Gaels. To the Lowlanders, he wrote, "the state of the mountains and the islands is equally unknown with that of *Borneo* or *Sumatra:* Of both they have only heard a little, and guess the rest. They are strangers to the language and the manners, to the advantages and wants of the people, whose life they would model, and whose evils they would remedy." [1] Other travellers were less sagacious, however, and following the publication of James Macpherson's "translations" of ancient Gaelic poetry (known as Ossian) which first appeared in the early 1760s, increasing numbers of visitors from the Lowlands, England, and further afield went to the Highlands in search of the "noble savage"

portrayed by Macpherson.

Ossian suggested to writers and artists throughout Europe that the Highlands and Islands could not be equalled as a setting for brave deeds and sublime scenes. With the arrival of Romanticism in the early 19th century, Gaeldom was increasingly seen to represent a heroic but dead culture and therefore perfectly suited to Romantic ideals. The most famous writer on Highland themes was Sir Walter Scott. Scott's poems and historical novels with Highland subjects (such as "The Lady of the Lake" and *Waverley)* had a huge readership throughout the English-speaking world, but closer to home, his recasting of the Gaels' past, especially regarding their involvement in Jacobitism, provided an alternative to the view that Scottish history ended at the Union. Scott's artistic direction of George IV's visit to Edinburgh in 1822 stamped a Highland theme on the occasion, and the establishment of Highland dress as the national costume of all Scotsmen was only one myth created in that year.

The most important factor in the rehabilitation of the Gaels, however, was the service of tens of thousands of men in the Highland regiments of the British army. In 1745-6, the Jacobite clans had come distressingly near to upsetting the established order, but by the end of the Napoleonic Wars, the Highland soldier had come to be considered Britain's finest and most resolute defender, utterly fearless and loyal to the end. Although regimental histories give a full and glowing account of the Highlanders

in battle, other sources give an indication of the coercion exercised by chiefs in gaining recruits for the regiments. When raising men to fight in the Seven Years' War and the American War of Independence, chiefs could make use of the residual ties of clanship to gain the required recruits, but by the 1790s, any means (such as the threat of eviction) were used to reach the set quotas. The chiefs who raised men in an attempt to gain respectability regarded those of their erstwhile clansmen who joined willingly to be doing their duty, while those who did not were deemed to be undesireable tenants. However, with the plaudits heaped upon the Highland regiments, especially following the battle of Waterloo, the rehabilitation of the Gael in the eyes of the British public was made complete.

Note

1. Samuel Johnson, *Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland* (London, 1775, reprinted Oxford, 1924), p. 79.

Introduction

Following the Revolution in 1689, the Highland supporters of the Stuart cause found themselves in conflict with a distant Government which knew or cared little about the region but was prepared to use any means to gain obedience. The Glencoe massacre of February 1692 may have hardened attitudes against William, but it demonstrated that the long arm of the Hanoverian establishment could reach into the Highlands to smash those suspected of Jacobitism. After the massacre a new fort was built at Inverlochy and subsidies were paid to Jacobite chiefs to keep the peace, [1] but these measures failed miserably; all attempts to "pacify" the Jacobite element in the Highlands were to be unsuccessful until after the battle of Culloden.

The inheritors of William's policy towards the Highlands were the Whigs, a political and intellectual grouping that stood for reform in the 18th and early 19th centuries. Whigs were staunch supporters of the Hanoverian establishment and were therefore utterly opposed to Jacobite aims; in Scotland, Whigs were for the most part Lowland and Presbyterian, and naturally suspicious of the Gaels. Much of the hostility shown by Whigs towards the traditional order in the Highlands and Islands can be attributed to resentment dating from the use of Highland troops (as well as some Lowland militia) to subdue Covenanters in the south-west of Scotland for two months in 1678, and from the time of the Revolution, when some clans rallied to the cause

of James VII and thereby threatened the Presbyterian ascendency. The Gaels were not popular in the Lowlands anyway; those who lived in areas bordering on the mountains were often the victims of the criminal element in the Highlands, and people of Covenanting stock hated them "as the children of Israel hated the Philistines". [2]

The Whig agenda to "reform" the Highlands and Islands, aside from the political necessity of pacifying the region (and perhaps a desire to settle old scores), originated from an underlying aspect of Whig ideology, the replacement of traditional social roles with commercial ones. Whigs viewed the clan system not only as conducive to Jacobitism but also as an insurmountable obstacle to law and order and economic advancement. As A. I. Macinnes put it, ". . . the improving spirit of the age - the prevailing Whig concept that material and cultural progress through the acquisition and exploitation of property entailed the replacement of customary by commercial relationships - identified the eradication of clanship in the aftermath of the Forty-Five with the 'civilising' of Scottish Gaeldom." [3]

While the reputation of certain clans for Jacobitism was well known in Whig circles, the Government did remarkably little to contain the threat in the years following the Glencoe massacre. The rebellion of 1708 had drawn attention to the considerable support for the Stuarts in the Episcopalian north-east of Scotland but the situation in the Highlands remained unresolved. The Government's intelligence gathering network in the region was almost

non-existent; in the buildup to the rebellion of 1715 it had only two agents beyond the Highland line, and they were self appointed. [4] That rebellion was inconclusive in the military-and-political-sense, but the Government felt its position was secure enough to disband the pro-Hanoverian Highland companies in 1717. It soon became apparent that only the "loyal", Whig clans were complying with the Disarming Act of 1716, leaving the rest equipped for another attempt.

A small number of papers began to circulate in London and Edinburgh after the rebellion which advocated the education of the Gaels in the habits of industry and proper (Presbyterian) religion, and the abolition of the trappings of Highland feudalism; one argued for "the completion of the Union" by abolishing superiorities, which the writer believed would make the Gaels "free" and end clanship.[5] The rebellion of 1719, which was quickly neutralized by Government forces, did not cause much worry in London because it was localized and clearly a Spanish initiative; nevertheless, the rebellion resulted in the flooding of the north-west Highlands with Spanish arms.[6] In the 1720s, rumours (as well as more polemics) circulated on the Jacobite threat. Many proposals for taming the Highlands were too radical for consideration and involved the reform of land law, criminal courts, local government, and the redistribution of parliamentary seats which the political system at the time could not accommodate.[7]

Evidence that the Government had after three rebellions

finally embarked upon a plan of action can be found in General George Wade's appointment as Commander-in-Chief in Scotland in 1724. He was given the huge task of pacifying the Highlands and had at his disposal, in addition to British army regulars, six Highland companies raised in 1725 to police the region. Between 1725 and 1738 General Wade presided over the construction of a road system in the central Highlands; this was done not to improve the economic infrastructure of the region but to make it more accessible to Government forces in case of rebellion. Despite this effort, which involved the construction of about 250 miles of road and 42 bridges in rugged terrain, the addition of four Highland companies to the original six to form the Black Watch in 1739, and despite the supremacy of the Whigs in Britain in 1745 and the other efforts made to contain the Jacobite threat prior to that, the Forty-Five rebellion caused great embarassment (and fear) until it was defeated in April 1746.

While the conflict still ensued, Whigs offered their interpretation of its causes and implications. After the battle of Culloden, when Whigs realized that the Highlands and Islands demanded immediate attention, the trickle of suggested remedies to the "Highland problem" became a flood. Some Whig polemicists concentrated upon the reputation of Gaels for criminality and drew the connection between lawlessness and support for the Stuart family. Others were concerned with clanship and argued for the abolition of its trappings, such as the speaking of Gaelic, the use of Highland dress, the wearing of arms, and the

system of heritable jurisdictions.

Heritable jurisdictions were abolished by Parliament in 1747 in an attempt to separate the chiefs from the common people; the authority of a chief was personal rather than legal, and as a result the act had little effect. The 3rd Duke of Argyll, who dominated Scottish politics after the death of his brother the 2nd duke in 1743, also held the country's largest heritable jurisdiction, and was understandably unenthusiastic about their abolition, perhaps because of the considerable electoral influence that went with them,[5] but eventually conceded for party political purposes. However, the chiefs and clan gentry in Gaeldom as a whole had long before the battle of Culloden viewed their management of human and land resources increasingly in the light of commercial interest rather than their traditional obligations to their people. Whigs wanted to obliterate any vestige of the feudal system and a number of them focused upon the issue of heritable jurisdictions to bring about change; in time, the Highland chiefs were happy to be unencumbered with such an unprofitable responsibility.

The Rise of the Present Unnatural Rebellion Discover'd, written anonymously in 1745 when the outcome was still in doubt, placed the blame for the upheaval upon the system of heritable jurisdictions, which the writer claimed made the Gaels "slaves" to the every whim of their despotic chiefs. He argued that the Highlanders should not be condemned as rebels and enemies; instead, "we must Pity their Misfortune, and regret that so many brave Men are Slaves to Arbitrary

Power." [9] The common people were "in such Subjection to their Chiefs, that they dare not if they had the Inclination, disobey their orders." But they had been subservient for such a long period of time, they "have lost almost all Sense of Liberty, and given up their Understanding and Will, to follow blindly the Dictates of Tyrant-Chiefs." [10] The Gaels themselves, despite their condition, were . . .

> . . . Men brave to Temerity; open hearted and hospitable in their Disposition; with as large a Share of Honesty, and Sagacity as any common People on Earth, but miserably that they are strangers to Liberty. [11]

The writer believed it was the heritable jurisdictions that gave the chiefs their power, and until these were at least regulated, "these People will always prove troublesome to any Government: Its no matter of what Complexion, if ambitious Heads go to work with the Chiefs, they are easily wrought upon, the Commons must obey." But once forced into battle, "they will surely fight, whatever the Cause is they are engaged in," adding that the Highlanders valued their reputation for courage, "and to support that I believe is all they fight for." He went on to suggest a scheme for regulating the heritable jurisdictions (he did not think their abolition possible), and advocated a pardon for "the common Highlanders" implicated in the rebellion. [12] The writer did not accuse the Gaels of barbarity as did other Whig commentators, but in claiming that the persistence of

Jacobitism could be attributed to a single factor such as heritable jurisdictions, he overlooked important social, religious, and political considerations.

In the aftermath of the battle of Culloden, a number of writers offered "histories" of the rebellion, complete with analyses of its causes. They were typically Whiggish, and attributed the blame to the "backwardness" of the Highlands and Islands, the religion and customs of the Gaels, and quite often, the region's reputation for lawlessness and violence. Jacobitism and banditry were believed to be inextricably linked. Andrew Henderson's *The History of the Rebellion, 1745 and 1746* was typical of these. He named a number of Jacobite clans whose alleged savagery and lust for plunder had led them to fight for the Stuart cause. Donald Cameron of Locheil was "a very humane Gentleman" who had given "great Proof of his Inclination to civilize those of his Name, who had been odious some time past for a thievish Disposition, which frequently shewed itself in open robberies." [13] Likewise, Donald MacDonald of Clanranald "is reckoned a very good Gentleman",

> . . . but the Misfortune is, that his Clan, who live with himself, and are *Roman Catholicks*, have little or no Communication with the Continent (except once a Year, that some Drovers transport their black Cattle) which makes them utter Strangers to civil Policy. Their Religion recommends an Abhorrence of the ecclesiastical Constitution; no Arts or Sciences prevailing among

> them, their Exercise is the Sword, and Education the Accounts of their Sea-Fights with the *Mac Leans*, and their Rebellions since the Revolution.[14]

MacDonald of Clanranald's men were, according to Henderson, "generally of very low Stature, speak the *Irish* Tongue, and despise our Laws." The Macdonells of Glengarry were "of a good Size, but very poor, and addicted to Theft and Robbery: If any Religion be among them, it is Popery", and for their part, the MacDonalds of Glencoe were ". . . drowned in Ignorance, and like many other of the Rebels, were ready to engage in the most desperate Cause, when a Prospect of Plunder was before them."[15] Not only was the Jacobite cause scorned, but its adherents were depicted as morally bankrupt. Henderson wrote:

> Such were the Abettors of this Insurrection! These were the Men the young *Pretender* brought with him for reinstating the *British* Isles in their Religion, Laws, and Liberties, to remove the Incroachments made upon a free People, and secure them in the enjoyment of their valuable Rights![16]

In support of its position both during and immediately after the Forty-Five, the Government published a number of broadsheets which combined caricature with polemical verse; these were ostensibly anti-Jacobite but carried an explicit anti-Gaelic message together with a more vague anti-Scottish sentiment for consumption south of the border. One such

broadsheet published according to an act of Parliament in London in 1745, titled "The Chevaliers Market or Highland Fair", warned what a Jacobite victory would mean, i.e. the domination of Gaels and Catholics. [17] Another broadsheet included an illustration of a number of tartaned figures surrendering to Government troops, with polemical verses published in the *London Courant* newspaper during and after the rebellion. [18] A poem dated 10 Sept. 1745, before the eventual Hanoverian victory had been secured, asserted that "Rebellion" had emerged from "Northern Caves" to "Behold her Banners wave in *Scotia's* Air". Britons were roused to purge the country of "these infectious Pests" who had been "Nutur'd in Climes where Pow'r Depotic reigns / and shackles the *free mind* in *slavish Chains*". [19]

A caricature circulated in Edinburgh in 1745 depicted Charles Edward Stuart as a Highlander, a portrayal that would not have warmed its Lowland readers to the man or his cause. He wears a distinctly effeminate form of Highland dress which resembles a 20th century miniskirt. He discards his manifesto, which says litle for his political steadfastness. A caption at the bottom of the caricature reads, "A likeness notwithstanding the Disguise that any Person who Secures the Son of the Pretender is Entitled to a Reward of 3000 £." [20] The Jacobites were not to be outdone, though understandably avoiding the anti-Gaelic approach. A poster held by the National Library of Scotland features alleged comments made by Charles Edward Stuart and General Sir John Cope before the battle of Prestonpans. The poster asserted:

CHARLES PRINCE REGENT,

His SPEECH to His ARMY,

When He began His March to meet

General John Cope at the Field near

Dudiston, September 20th, 1745;

The prince being clothed in a plain *Highland*

Habit, Cocked His Blue Bonnet, Drew His Sword,

Threw away the Scabord, and Said,

GENTLEMEN, Follow Me, By the Assistance

of GOD, I will, this Day, make you a Free and Happy People[21]

The alleged speech of "Sir John Cope General of The Usurper's Army" shortly before the battle carried a different message.

> GENTLEMEN, You are just now to Engage with a parcel of *Rable*; a parcel of *Brutes*, Being a small Number of *Scots Highlanders*. You can expect no Booty from such a poor despicable Pack. I have Authority to Declare, That you shall have Eight full Hours Liberty to Plunder and Pillage the City of *Edinburgh*, *Leith*, and *Suburbs*, (the places which harbour'd and succour'd Them) at your Discretion, with Impunity. [22]

After the failure of the Forty-Five, Whigs set the agenda in Scotland. Whig ideology found powerful proponents in two

chiefs of Clan Campbell, the 2nd Duke of Argyll and his brother and successor the Earl of Islay. These men were in their turn the political managers of Scotland whose control of patronage gave them almost dictatorial powers as the preferred tools of the Government in London. Their position in the southern Highlands was very strong -- the Duke of Argyll was hereditary sheriff and Lieutenant of Argyll, and also controlled the Commissioners of Supply, the main element of county administration, as well as the appointment of Justices of the Peace, who would have been clansmen, as well as having the greatest and most productive agricultural unit in the Highlands. [23]

The two dukes also formed strong working relationships with Scottish law officers. Duncan Forbes of Culloden served the 2nd Duke as estate manager, advising him on the abolition of the traditional tacksmen system on his estates, and as a political agent who helped him manage the Scottish political scene; the 3rd Duke had a similar relationship with the Lord Justice Clerk, Lord Milton. As Rosalind Mitchison wrote, "no decisions made by them on estate policy can be divorced from questions of government." [24] The two Dukes of Argyll believed that careful handling of the political scene would ensure the dominance of Whiggism and the liquidation of Jacobitism, just as astute estate management would accelerate the decline of clanship and bring about a more profitable, market-orientated system. Following 1737, the policy on the Argyll estates involved the raising of rents and the selling of tacks to the highest bidder. The House of Argyll clearly practiSed the Whig tenets it advocated.

The 2nd Duke of Argyll's adviser and agent was Duncan Forbes of Culloden (1685-1747), a staunch supporter of the Government during the Forty-Five and Lord President of the Court of Session. He dissuaded a number of clan chiefs from joining the Jacobites and spent a great deal of his own money in aid of the Hanoverian cause; as a polemicist he wrote several essays on "civilizing" the Highlands and Islands. [25] In one such essay, written shortly after the failure of the rebellion, Forbes described the Highlands as "that large tract of mountainous Ground to the Northward of the Forth and the Tay, where the natives speak the Irish language." [26] The people living in the mountains, according to Forbes, tended to be savage.

> The inhabitants of the mountains, unacquainted with industry and the fruits of it, and united in some degree by the singularity of dress and language, stick close to their antient way of life; retain their barbarous customs and maxims; depend generally on their Chiefs, as their sovereign Lords and masters; and being accustomed to the use of Arms, and inured to hard living, are dangerous to the public peace; and must continue to do so, untill, being deprived of Arms for some years, they forget the use of them. [27]

Forbes wrote, not quite truthfully, that there was no court of justice beyond the Highland Line, nor were there any inns or other accommodation for travellers except for the few

erected by General Wade. He wrote that in the Highlands there was little land under cultivation and the people had to depend upon their cattle for their nourishment, and described the shielings where the Gaels tended their livestock in the summer as "the most miserable huts that ever were seen." [28]

According to Forbes, the existence of the clan system made enforcement of the law difficult, if not impossible; he held the Whig belief that the Gaels were by nature lawless. "As those Clans or Kindreds live by themselves, and possess different Straths, Glens, or districts, without any considerable mixture of Strangers, it had been for a great many years impractical (and hardly thought safe to try it) to give the Law its proper course amongst the mountains," because, he explained, "it required no small degree of Courage, and a greater degree of power than men are generally possessed of, to arrest an offender or a debtor in the midst of his Clan." This difficulty led to the persistence of the heritable jurisdictions, which, in Forbes' mind had caused untold trouble. For all these reasons, he wrote, at a time when the rest of the country was generally improving, the Gaels continued to be "the prey of their accustomed sloth and barbarity." [29]

> The Want of Roads, excepting the King's Roads already mentioned, the Want of Accommodation, the supposed ferocity of the inhabitants, and the difference of language, have proved hitherto a bar to all free intercourse between the high and low

lands, and have left the Highlanders in possession of their own idle customs and extravagant maxims, absolute strangers to the advantages that must accrue from Industry, and to the blessing of having those advantages protected by Laws. [30]

Before the Highlands and Islands could be improved, however, the people living there had to be deprived of the weapons of war. The Disarming Act passed in the wake of the rebellion of 1715 imposed fines for possessing arms and encouraged their surrender to the authorities; and the Disarming Act of 1725 made possible the search and seizure of weapons. The Hanoverian clans naturally complied, but those with Jacobite inclinations kept their weapons and some even arranged to procure old and broken arms to be turned in for reward. According to P. Hume Brown, the main result of the acts was that by 1745, "the loyal clans were without weapons while the disloyal were comparatively well armed." [31] After the Forty-Five, the disarming of the Gaels became a vital part of the Whig agenda in the Highlands. "Arms in the hands of men accustomed to the use of them," Forbes wrote, "are dangerous to the public peace, and must therefore be taken from them." But even if there were not a single sword or firearm in all of Gaeldom "the Government would not be absolutely secure, so long as the present race, acquainted with the use of Weapons, exists," because, his reasoning went, France or Spain could simply supply them with more. On the other hand, if the Gaels could be disarmed until they forgot how to use the weapons, "their successors . . . must be as harmless as the commonality" in the Lowlands; when the

Gaels "could no longer live by Rapine," Forbes wrote, they would be forced to "think of living by Industry." [32] Enforcement of the disarming acts would not be difficult amongst the "loyal" clans, but Forbes anticipated trouble amongst the surviving Jacobites.

Past experience had shown that the Jacobites would not willingly comply with any order to give up their arms. To overcome this difficulty, Forbes proposed the founding of five or six garrisons in the Highlands, to be manned by 10 to 12 companies of soldiers each. [33] In addition to enforcing the new Disarming Act, these troops could prevent contact between the people and "attainted persons", in other words, Jacobites still at large. Forbes further proposed that craftsmen working for the garrisons be given property on which to set up shops. In addition, spinning schools should be established "to draw the idle females of those Countries into that Manufacture." [34] At the King's discretion, these military settlements could be designated as burghs of barony to be held directly from the Crown. Here Forbes suggested the long-term occupation of the Highlands by Government troops.

Nothing on the scale of Forbes' scheme was ever adopted, but the Government did accelerate its road building programme in the Highlands, as well as erecting the large and expensive Fort George near Inverness, begun in 1748 and completed in 1769. Forbes believed that the clan system had to be broken whatever the cost, chiefly in the interest of British national security, but also for the good of the Gaels

themselves. He wrote,

> . . . if feeling thé benefit [from industry] thence flowing can induce the Highlanders to put some value on property more than they at present do, it is to be hoped the enthusiastic regard for their Chiefs will subside, and some regard for the Security of their property, the Laws, may take place of it." [35]

It was remarkable, Forbes noted, that in the areas bordering the Highlands where the people had once spoken Gaelic, worn Highland dress and carried arms, upon the "accidental" introduction of industry, "the Irish Language and Highland dress gave way to a sort of English, and lowland Cloathing; the Inhabitants took to the Plough in place of Weapons," and although not disarmed by an Act of Parliament they were "as their Low Country neighbours." [36] He described the people of the areas adjoining the mountains, in the shires of Perth, Forfar, Kincardine, Aberdeen, Banff, and Moray, "where some sort of Industry has prevailed, and where the soil is tolerable" as having for many years abandoned the use of Gaelic, Highland dress and the wearing of arms and as a result could no longer regarded as threats to public order; [37] this was despite the considerable Episcopalian and Jacobite sympathies that existed in these areas.

An anonymous writer who in common with Duncan Forbes of Culloden viewed the "Highland problem" primarily as a law and order issue wrote the essay "Some Remarks on the

Highland Clans, and Methods proposed for Civilizing them" shortly after the Forty-Five. [39] The writer, manifestly of the Whig persuasion, argued that "great advantages" would come to King's loyal subjects, "who now groan under the Oppression of the Clans" and to the State in general, by "Civilizing that barbarous people", was "unquestionable." [39] To realize this, one needed only "to Examine into the Thefts and Depredations daily Committed by that lawless people"; and were this unsufficient,

> . . . a Serious Consideration upon, and retrospection, into the Monstrous progress of the late Unnatural Rebellion, the Devastations then Committed; The tremendous Convulsions into which our happy Constitution was thrown; and the several Manifestations of the like restfulness of Spirit, that Eminently appeared in the Clans on Antecedent Occasions to the great Disquiet and Detriment of the State. [40]

Before the writer would propose any methods for bringing the clans to heel, he wished to determine "why Theft and Depredations, which above all things Cherrish the Spirit of Jacobitism and Rebellion are more luxuriant of Growth amongst the Highland Clans" than amongst other Scots. Based on his own observations and "the best Information I could expiscate from the honester Sort of Natives", he attributed "the latent springs of theft & Depredations" in the Highlands to "the Exorbitant lawless power Exercised by the Gentry over the Commoners"; the encouragement they gave to

their clansmen "to Commit all manners of vice" by giving them support and protection "when guilty of the most flagitious Enormities"; and to the dangers faced by informers or givers of evidence if discovered by their clans. [41] The writer here repeated the prevailing contemporary myth that chiefs were criminal bosses who directed and profited from the crimes perpetrated by their clansmen. This misconception may have arisen from the fact that Highland caterans acted in groups rather than as individuals; at any rate, they operated outwith the clan system. Because the rule of law hardly existed beyond the Highland line, the writer asserted,

> . . . the poor people are quite left a prey to the Merciless Tyranny and Government of their Lawless Leaders, and Oppressive Taskmasters, who thereby have gained such an absolute dominion over them, as at pleasure to mould them into any fashion, Even so far as with a single word to Cause them Committ, the most Excessive Cruelties, and swear to the most abominable falsehoods without hesitation. [42]

"The Commoners are as Cunning lazy and Vindictive as the Gentry are," the writer stated. He believed the reason for this was the alleged fact that they never had leases but had to depend upon the good will of their chief and his tacksmen, "who thereby have it in their power to fleece them as they do their Sheep, and keep them in the most abject State of Slavery and Dependance," and as a result, "every

kind of Industry was Industriously discouraged; and that Laziness, that Delusive mother of Vice and source of Dependency, were the Chief things aim'd at." [43]

The writer was eager to point out that the entirety of Gaeldom was not a den of thieves, and desired to name "the Quarters that are justly Chargeable"; he named Morvern, Sunart, Ardnamurchan, Moidart, Arisaig, Kengarloch, Glenmorriston, Ardgower, Glenfinnan, Morar, Lochaber, Knoydart, Glengarry, Badenoch, Rannoch, and the Highland regions of Perth, Stirling, and Dumbarton shires. [44] It was no accident that these were the districts renowned for their Jacobitism. The writer proposed a large number of measures to bring law and order to Gaeldom. He began by arguing that the Government should take over the land of "disaffected" clans, and at the same time establish colonies in the "thieving countries" composed of those "well affected to His Majesty's person and Government." The success of these measures would require the complete disarming of the local people and the arming of the colonists, he wrote, in order to protect the lives and property of the incomers "from the fury and resentment of the Natives, who no doubt will look upon them as Invaders of their Rights, spies on all their actions, and Informers Established to lay open all their Evil practices." [45]

> It is Easy to perceive by the General Savage Character of the people that the thoughts of such Evils, must Kindle in their Breasts the blackest flames of Malice and Despair, and hurry them on to

> the perpetration of all the Evil Suggestions of their Barbarous inclinations, which According to Ancient Custom will be the murdering of people of all Sexes and Ages, the Burning of Houses, and Cutting of Cattle to pieces, with Swords and durks or Knives . . . [46]

On the legal front, the writer proposed that protection be given to informers of crimes and givers of evidence, and that oaths administered in court be given as "solemnly" as possible, in order to provide a contrast to oaths made between Gaels. Further, he argued that the executions of condemned persons from Highland areas be carried out in the neighbourhoods from which they came, in the presence of the local people (presumably to put the fear of authority into them). He also believed that the Government should more adequately fund criminal prosecutions in the Highlands, and made the rather impractical suggestion that accurate registers of cattle be compiled to deter "lifting". To provide more vigorous law enforcement, troops stationed in the Highlands needed to be made available to civil officers if force was required; sheriffs had to be qualified, of the "right" class and well paid (probably to put them beyond the temptation of accepting bribery); each Highland parish needed two or three justices of the peace, and each JP needed to have three or four constables at his disposal. [47]

On the social front, the writer recommended the rather draconian policy of "all vagabonds, Sturdy Beggars Gipseys and other Idle and suspected people, old or young, that are

likely to be able to Earn their Bread, ought to be taken up and put into Workhouses or Banished." He argued for the better provision of religion in general, and the erection of new churches and schools and more and better ministers in particular, on the grounds that ". . . the influence of the Clergy in Scotland over the vulgar Laity is pretty well known." [48] The writer was careful not to offend any English readers by explaining the essentially anti-Episcopalian policies of the Kirk. On safer ground, he argued that it was essential that "all Lawful means" be used for eliminating the Roman Catholic church from the Highlands.

> The Opportunitys like Priests have to tamper with the people, and Instil into their minds such Hellish Tenets as may Invigorate the Spirit of Jacobitism that already too much prevails, Enervate the good Endeavours of the King and Government for Establishing Order, and good harmony amongst the People, and Inflame the Breasts of their votaries with Detestable Notions and abhorrence of both. [49]

The writer argued further that "stewards" be placed amongst the Gaels to teach civility, reason, loyalty (to the King), industry, and good manners. Not wishing to appear neglectful of economic concerns, he stressed the importance of encouraging manufactures and fisheries,[50] and believed that a legal requirement that leases be "clogged" with clauses obligating the people to make agricultural improvements ought to be instituted.[51] Before it was

apparent that Jacobitism was a spent force, however, the concern of Whigs was always the "civilizing" the Highlands and Islands rather than the economic development of the region.

This trend is evident in *The Highlands of Scotland in 1750*, a dossier believed to have been written by Edmund Bruce, a Lowlander and Government agent who travelled through the Highlands and Islands incognito to gather information on the political situation there. [52] Bruce praised the fourth Lord Reay, chief of the MacKays, whose loyalty to "our Happy Constitution" was well known. According to Bruce, the MacKays were "the most Religious of all the Tribes that dwell among the Mountains, South or North", were "short of none in their Żeal and Affection to His Majesty," and "abhor Thieving." At one time they were "reckon'd the most Barbarous and Wicked of all the Clans" but were reformed by Lord Reay, who had "the Civilizing [of] his Clan so much at Heart, that he made application to the General Assembly, for a Collection through all Scotland", by which he was able to erect two new parishes on his lands and supply them with schools and ministers (of the Established church); the chief thereby "encouraged Religion, Loyalty, and Industry among his People, both by his Authority and Example . . ." [53]

In September 1746 Lord Reay wrote to an unknown member of the Government and suggested that the estates seized from Jacobites should remain the property of the Crown not only in the interests of the Government but also to "establish these wild people in peace." The granting of long leases,

the promotion of industry, and plantations of old soldiers would, Lord Reay believed, make the Jacobite clans "taste the sweet of being free of tyrannical masters"; and the erection of new parishes would "prove in time a means to civilize barbarous people." However, Lord Reay expressed the hope that the Duke of Cumberland would take steps to make "these ignorant people useful subjects", an achievement which would make the victor at Culloden "famous to posterity, as it is easier to conquer than to civilize barbarous people." [54] Bruce thought it especially praiseworthy that the chief of the Mackays had not only civilized his people but "improv'd his own Estate to above the Double of what he found it, tho' it is not yet near £1000 p. Annum." [55]

Bruce also praised the Rosses of Balnagown, "a Loyal and Religious Family for some preceeding Generations," adding that "how zealously the Master of Ross and his Tenants joined the Loyal Party in the Defence of their King and Country in time of the Late Rebellion is well known." The common people of the clan were "a Well affected Honest Industrious and Religious People," which Bruce stated in explaining why the Jacobites could only raise 30 men from the clan in 1745; although the fact that *any* clansmen joined the rebellion may be evidence of internal dissent. Bruce wrote that the chief and gentry of Clan Munro "are all Firm and Steady to a man, and the Commons are wellaffected Honest Industrious and Religious People," and "those who call them Enthusiastical, Revengefull and Lazy do not know them, or are highly prejudiced against them." Bruce wrote that

the MacKenzies and the other Jacobite clans bore the clan "an Inveterate Hatred and Illwill for their Loyalty." [56] According to Bruce, Clan Munro shared little in common with the MacRaes of Kintail, who were "by far the most Fierce, Warlike, and Strongest Men" under MacKenzie of Seaforth, and up to the last thirty years were "little better than Heathens in their Principles, and almost as unclean as Hottentots, in their way of Living . . ." But after the Kintail estate was confiscated by the Government in the wake of the 1719 rebellion, "Ministers and Schools were planted . . . which has made a Suprizing Alteration in the People even in point of Common Civility Decency and Cleanliness." [57] Whether the MacRaes had been "civilized" or not, the clan participated little in the Forty-Five.

Bruce vented his Whiggish wrath on the MacDonalds, whom he ridiculed for believing themselves to be descended from a king of Athens who after many heroic acts came to Scotland and under the Lordship of the Isles "owned" half of Scotland.[58] While the chief and gentry of the MacDonalds of Sleat had "in great Measure recovered the Common People on their Estates from their Folly and Idleness," and the MacDonalds living in Kintyre had learned industry from the Campbells,

> . . . great numbers of the Keppoch, Glengarry, and Clanronald Families, tho' not worth a Shilling, would be ashamed to be seen at any Kind of Labour tho' they think it no Shame to Steal or go through the Country asking assistance of their

> Neighbours (which they call thigging) or living upon free Quarters wherever they happen to be, and they Reckon it an Honour done to other people that they should be entertained by them. [79]

"In all the Countries I have yet travel'd through," Bruce wrote, continuing the equation of Jacobitism with banditry, "the People Live by their own Labour and Industry and are no more given to Theft than the Lowland Countries, but as I proceeded on the Coast Southward I came to Knoidart which is a perfect Den of Thieves and Robbers." Knoydart was held by the MacDonells of Glengarry, who were "all Papists" and had always been "Wild Rapacious and a plague and Disturbance to their Neighbours . . ." and were allegedly involved in crime on a large scale.[80]

Bruce had no trouble in justifying the Glencoe massacre of 1692, believing the act to have freed the law-abiding people of the Highlands from "that Nest of Rebels Thieves and Cutthroats." He wrote that "the whole Neighbourhood looked upon this as a Judgement from Heaven on so wicked a Crew"; however, the Jacobites never failed to regard the massacre "in the most Odious Light, in order to throw Dirt upon the Memory of King William. That Glorious Restorer of Our Liberty and Religion must never be forgiven because a few Rebels and Thieves who had shut themselves out from the Protection of the Law were destroyed in his Reign," while Charles I was forgiven for the "upwards of 150,000 Valuable Protestant Subjects [who] were barbarously Massacred in his Reign." [81] Law and order was a

precondition for the success of the Whig strategy for the Highlands and Islands, and any means were justifiable to reach that end. In Bruce's mind, criminal activity had not ended with the massacre but remained endemic in the Highlands. He regarded the people of Glengarry as the lowest of the low. Perhaps he was ill-treated when he was among them.

> It is observed of Thieves in other parts of the Country, especially the Camerons, that they are very Hospitable and Civil to Strangers, but the People of Glengarry are quite a Different Disposition, Churlish and Inhospitable to the last Degree, and never admit a Stranger within their Doors. In short they are the very Dregs and Refuse of Mankind and it is no small Reproach to Great Britain to have allowed such a Sett of Villains to trample upon the Laws for so many Ages. [82]

If thievery could be eliminated in the Highlands, Bruce wrote, industry could become established in the region. Fisheries, wool and kelp manufacture could give the Highlanders a sound (and legal) economic base, and "planting potatoes would both supply their Scarcity of bread and be an Excellent Method to Cultivate Wild and Barren Soil." [83] Before improvement of that kind could occur, however, the Gaels had to be "bridled".

That the Disaffected and Savage Highlanders need

to be Bridled and kept in awe by Garrisons and Standing Forces, 'till the present Generation wears out is Evident to all Men of common understanding, and that those whose unhappy and infatuated People will still Continue Savages if nothing else is done to recover them from their Ignorance and Barbarity seems as Evident; but as the rest of the People of Britain who are now Civilized were once as Wild and Barbarous as the Highlanders, I think it is not to be doubted but that proper Measures would Civilize them also. [64]

Bruce did believe the Gaels could be tamed, but he admitted that it would require a great deal of money, "perhaps £5,000 a year." Had the Highlands and Islands been "civilized" after the rebellion of 1715, "the Pretender would not have had the least reason to Boast of his faithfull Highlanders." He attributed the so-called absolute power of the clan chiefs to the "Poverty, Idleness, Ignorance, Barbarity, Theft, and Popery that prevail among the Common People . . ." [65]

Has not Britain laid out much Greater Sums on Colonies abroad of not half the Importance of civilizing and Improving this part of Britain itself that has been so long a Nuisance and Reproach to the Nation? Besides when the Country is improved and Trade and Manufactures are thoroughly Established, it will repay with Large Interest any Expence laid out at present. [66]

The Forty-Five supplied Whig polemicists with subject matter for years after the event. John Home's *History of the Rebellion in the Year 1745* [67] was published in 1802, and with more than a half century of hindsight Home came to understand what modern historians accept but commentators at the time of the rebellion could not -- that Jacobitism had bona fide causes and was not simply the political extention of barbarity and banditry. By the beginning of the 19th century, the Highlands and Islands had become a Romantic ideal in the arts and the popular imagination in general, and the virulent anti-Highland tone of earlier polemics was absent; but the belief that Jacobitism had posed a great danger to British society remained. Home referred to the supporters of Charles Edward Stuart simply as the Highlanders, rarely drawing a distinction between the "loyal" and "disloyal" clans.

Home believed that following the Union of Crowns in 1603, the Scottish Lowlanders and the English had "at once" ceased keeping arms. However, "the Highlanders continued to be the same sort of people they had been in former times: Clanship flourished, depredation and petty war never ceased." During the Civil War in Scotland; Montrose's success "raised the reputation of the Highlanders, and fixed them in the interest of the family of Stuart, to which they were naturally inclined," because, Home explained, they were "ignorant and careless of the disputes, civil and religious, which occasioned the war, Charles the First appeared to them in the light of an injured chief." At the time of the

Revolution, "the Highlanders took up arms against the government of King William," and after the death of James VII, the Highlanders "continued their correspondence with his son." [68] Despite the persistence of Jacobitism as demonstrated by rebellions in 1708, 1715, and 1719, "no measures were taken to reconcile them to government". [69] In the intervals between the rebellions,

> . . . the arts of peace were successfully cultivated in Britain, and the national wealth was greatly augmented; but of that wealth, no part or portion accrued to the Highland Chiefs, who still kept their people upon the old establishment . . . [70]

While they may have disagreed on specific policies, Whig polemicists shared common ground on most of their proposals for reforming the Highlands and Islands. After the Forty-Five, their greatest concern was that Jacobitism had not been exterminated at Culloden, and therefore advocated a number of policies designed to complete the pacification programme begun by the Duke of Cumberland's bloody campaign. As the "Highland problem" was perceived to be mainly one of law and order, Whigs urged the complete disarming of the Gaels and the stationing of troops at strategic points throughout the region in order to crush any future rebellion, and the strengthening of the legal system beyond the Highland line to deal more effectively with cattle-lifting and other crimes. Until it became evident that Jacobitism was a spent force, this emphasis upon military

measures outweighed other considerations.

Whigs also believed that in order to ensure that Gaeldom could no longer pose a threat to the British state, the character of the Gaels themselves had to be reformed. As the Gaels were perceived to be barbarous and pagan, measures aimed at "civilizing" them were proposed. These included the establishment of schools and churches which would teach the English language and promote the Presbyterian faith in order to spread Lowland/English values. Also, the Whigs attacked the social structure in the Highlands and Islands, believing the clan system to lie at the root of the region's alleged backwardness and rebellious tendencies. The clan chiefs, excepting those loyal to the Government, were believed to behave like feudal tyrants, each with a standing army ready to steal and murder at his command. To break the power of the chiefs over the common people, and more importantly, to introduce a market-oriented economy into the region, Whigs pressed for changes to make the Gaels "free"; or alternately, to free the chiefs from their traditional responsibilities towards their clans in order to allow them to assimilate with the rest of the British aristocracy and to manage their estates more along the lines of commercial enterprise. Only then could "improvement" come to the region.

Whig ideology greatly influenced the course of events in the Highlands and Islands in the crucial decades that followed the Forty-Five. Improvers who sought to integrate the region with the rest of the British economy were naturally

of the Whig persuasion, and the replacement of traditional with more modern (i.e. commercial) methods was at the heart of that set of beliefs. The Presbyterian establishment as represented by the Church of Scotland would use the changes that came to the region to establish itself there as never before; the apparent connivance between Kirk ministers and Highland estate managers to contain resistance to Clearance suggests that they shared common interest in the success of the Whig agenda. The displacement of people that was an inevitable outcome of Whig economic strategy made possible the recruitment of large numbers of Gaels for British military service, and ironically, the destruction of the traditional way of life in the Highlands and Islands enabled the Gaels to become a focus for the ideals of the Romantic movement. Their reputation in the Lowlands and throughout Britain reached its lowest point during the Forty-Five, but following the changes that came to Gaeldom, most of them introduced from the outside and most of them traumatic, their image would be rehabilitated.

Notes

1. Rosalind Mitchison, "The Government in the Highlands, 1707-1745", *Scotland in the Age of Improvement*, N. T. Phillipson and Rosalind Mitchison, eds, (Edinburgh, 1970), p. 24.

2. William Ferguson, *Scotland 1689 to the Present* (Edinburgh, 1965), p. 16.

3. A. I. Macinnes, "Scottish Gaeldom: The First Phase of Clearance", *People and Society in Scotland*, vol. I, T. M. Devine and Rosalind Mitchison, eds. (Edinburgh, 1988) p. 71.

4. Mitchison, p. 30.

5. Ibid, p. 32.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid, pp. 33-34.

8. Ferguson, p. 155.

9. Anonymous, *The Rise of the Present Unnatural Rebellion Discover'd; and the EXTRAORDINARY Power and Oppression of the HIGHLAND CHIEFS Fully Display'd. Being an Attempt to prove, that the Common HIGHLANDERS act by Compulsion, and not by Inclination. TOGETHER With some Proposals for encouraging these unhappy Men, to return to their Duty; and screening them from the future Resentment of their Chiefs* (London, 1745) National Library of Scotland (hereafter NLS) ABS.1.86.46, p. 11.

10. Ibid, pp. 21-22.

11. Ibid, p. 22.

12. Ibid, p. 23.

13. Andrew Henderson, *The History of the Rebellion, 1745 and 1746. Containing, A Full Account of its Rise, Progress*

and Extinction; The Character of the Highlanders, and their Chieftains; ... By an Impartial Hand, who was an Eye-witness to most of the facts (London, 2nd ed, 1748, reprinted from Edinburgh ed.), p. 5.

14. Ibid.

15. Ibid, p. 6.

16. Ibid, p. 7.

17. NLS PDP 10/23 (8): *The Chevalier's Market, or, Highland Fair* (London, 1745): published according to Act of Parliament.

18. NLS R.B.1.60: John Duick, *A Memorial for Britions* (London, 1746): "Publish'd according to Act of Parliament..."

19. Ibid.

20. NLS P/BW/17: "Bonnie Prince Charlie", caricature by Richard Cooper (Edinburgh, 1745).

21. NLS PDP 10/23(4) (1745).

22. Ibid.

23. Mitchison, p. 26.

24. Ibid.

25. For a full account of Forbes' role during the Forty-Five, see George Menary, *The Life and Letters of Duncan Forbes of Culloden* (London, 1936). Forbes used his influence with Highland chiefs to deter a number of those with Jacobite sympathies from joining the rebellion. According to John Home, Forbes wanted "to reconcile the Highlanders" to the Government; he told Lord Milton in 1738, "You know very well, that I am like you, a Whig; but I am also the neighbour and friend to the Highlanders; and am also intimately acquainted with most of their chiefs." (John Home, *History of the*

Rebellion in the Year 1745 [London, 1802], p. 21.)

26. H. Robert Duff, *Culloden Papers* (London, 1815), No. CCCXLIII, p. 197.

27. Ibid, p. 298.

28. Ibid.

29. Ibid, pp. 298-299.

30. Ibid, p. 299. General (later Field Marshal) George Wade (1673-1748) became Commander-in-Chief for Scotland in 1724 and was given the task of pacifying the Highlands. His road-making was concentrated around the Great Glen and was intended to facilitate the movement of Government troops in the Highlands in quelling any rebellion. Thomas Telford believed that Wade's roads had been built "with other Views than promoting Commerce and Industry . . . and were therefore generally in such Direction and so inconveniently steep, as to be, nearly unfit for the Purposes of Civil Life." (*Survey and Report on the Coasts and Central Highlands of Scotland. Made by the Command of the Right Honourable the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury, in the Autumn of 1802; by Thomas Telford, Civil Engineer, Edin. FRS.* (P. P. 1803, IV, p. 4.)

31. P. Hume Brown, *History of Scotland* (Cambridge, 1911), iii, p. 261. Quoted in A. J. Youngson, *After the Forty-Five* (Edinburgh, 1973), p. 25.

32. Duff, p. 299.

33. Ibid.

34. Ibid, p. 300.

35. Ibid, p. 301.

36. Ibid.

37. Ibid, p. 298. A.J. Youngson estimated that "between

ten and twenty per cent of the strengh of the Jacobite army came from the substantially episcopalian shires of Aberdeen and Banff." (Youngson, p. 21.)

38. NLS Adv. Ms. 16.1.14: Anonymous, "Some Remarks on the Highland Clans, and Methods proposed for Civilizing them" (no date).

39. Ibid, p. 1.

40. Ibid.

41. Ibid.

42. Ibid, p. 2.

43. Ibid, p. 3.

44. Ibid, p. 5.

45. Ibid, pp. 6-7.

46. Ibid.

47. Ibid, pp. 9-17.

48. Ibid, pp. 17-18.

49. Ibid, p. 19.

50. Ibid, pp. 19-20.

51. Ibid, p. 8.

52. Andrew Lang, ed. *The Highlands of Scotland in 1750* (Edinburgh, 1898).

53. Ibid, p. 9.

54. Quoted in Ian Grimble, *The World of Rob Donn* (Edinburgh, 1979), p. 70, from *Book of Mackay*, pp. 456-7.

55. Lang, p. 18.

56. Ibid, pp. 18-23.

57. Ibid, p. 31.

58. Ibid, pp. 49-51.

59. Ibid, pp. 52-53.

60. Ibid, pp. 59-61. Bruce wrote that the MacDonells had

"within these few years exceeded their ordinary Bounds which was Occasioned thus: Coll McDonald of Barisdale, Cousin Germane to Glengarry, took up his Residence here as a place of undoubted security from all Legal Prosecutions, he entered into a Confederacy with McDonald of Lochgarry and the Camerons of Loch Arkeg with some other as great Villians in Rannoch, a part of Perthshire. This famous Company had the Honour to Methodize Theft into a Regular Trade, they kept a number of Savages in Dependence upon for this purpose whom they Outhounded upon the Sutherlands, Rosses, Munroes, and McKenzies to the North, the Frasers, McIntoshes, Grants, Roses of Kilravock, Brodies, Gordons, Farquarsons, Forbeses, and Ogilvies to the East; and the Shires of Perth, Stirling, Dunbarton, and Argyle to the South."

61. Ibid, pp. 78-81.

62. Ibid, p. 108.

63. Ibid, pp. 143-144.

64. Ibid, p. 144.

65. Ibid, pp. 159-160.

66. Ibid, p. 160.

67. John Home, *History of the Rebellion in the Year 1745* (London, 1802). Home wrote the play *Douglas*, produced in Edinburgh in 1756, and later became secretary to the Prime Minister, the Earl of Bute. (*A Dictionary of Scottish History*, Gordon Donaldson and Robert S. Morpeth, eds, (Edinburgh, 1977), p. 99.)

68. Ibid, pp. 13-16.

69. Ibid, p. 19.

70. Ibid, pp. 19-20.

Chapter 1 *Improvers and Government Agencies*

The "improvement" of the Highlands and Islands was ostensibly an introduction of new methods and systems in an bid to replace the "outmoded" and "antiquated" ways of an area that was left behind when economic growth and development came to the rest of Britain. The story was not simply one of rapacious landlords and self-seeking opportunists; a number of Improvers were driven by humanitarian motives and sought to bring about an economic revolution in the Highlands and Islands that would provide a livelihood for the Gaels and thereby prevent large-scale emigration. But as it became understood that a great deal of money could be made by uprooting the old and transplanting the new, the voices that pled for the Gaels' interests were soon forgotten.

Improvement was more than the reform of agricultural practices or the encouragement of fisheries. By 1830, the Highlands and Islands had been transformed. Not only was the old order destroyed, but new imperatives controlled nearly every aspect of life. The rights of property had supplanted the ties of the clan, and new cultural values were brought from the Lowlands and England. Before "improvements" could take place, however, the Highlands and Islands had to be tamed as a political threat.

Reforming the Highland character

Following the battle of Culloden, the Government's plan for

the Highlands was "pacification" -- the rooting out, by violent means, of the danger posed by Jacobitism to the established order. The Duke of Cumberland's role in achieving this end earned him the title "the Butcher", but it was soon realized that the sword was not the best device for inspiring loyalty to the House of Hanover. With the Act of Attainder of June 1746 (19 George II c.46), heads rolled; the Disarming Act (20 George II c. 52) of the same year forbade the Highlanders from possessing arms; the wearing of Highland dress was outlawed in 1747; and the heritable jurisdictions were abolished (20 George II c. 53). In 1747 the Vesting Act (20 George II, c. 41) was passed, in which nearly everything that belonged to those attainted in the rebellion was turned over to the Crown, to be administered by the Barons of the Exchequer Court in Scotland. But it was not until the passing of the Annexing Act of 1752 (25 George II c.41) that a reformation of sorts was begun in the Highlands.

The Act was passed "annexing certain Forfeited Estates in Scotland to the Crown unalienably; and for making Satisfaction to the lawful Creditors thereupon; and applying the Rents and Profits thereof, for the better civilising and improving the Highlands of Scotland; and preventing Disorders there for the future".[1] A total of thirteen Highland estates were named in the Act, to be managed by a Board of Commissioners for the Annexed Estates. The Board's mission was cultural as well as economic and political in nature. It had the responsibility for introducing new methods of agriculture and encouraging industry and

fisheries, the construction of a new network of communications, the eradication of Roman Catholicism and Non-Juring Episcopacy in the Highlands and Islands (which were firmly associated with Jacobitism), and the crushing of sedition. Its success in this mammoth task was mixed, but a great deal of the records and correspondence dealing with the management of the estates has survived, known collectively as the "Forfeited Estates Papers (1745)". The writings of the Board's factors, surveyors, and other officials were not meant for public consumption, and as a result contain considerable candour in their comments.

The factor on the annexed estates of Lovat and Cromarty from 1755 to 1774 was Captain John Forbes. Responding to a questionnaire sent by the Commissioners in 1755 to the factors inquiring into the state of the estates under their direction, Forbes offered his opinion on what was needed most to "improve" the estate. Of Coigach, he wrote that it was the most uncivilized and "Highland" part of the estate, and being far removed from law courts and poorly connected with the rest of the country, it required greater attention to improve it and "civilize" its inhabitants. To accomplish this, Forbes asserted that . . .

> . . . a new erection of a Church is necessary, or at least, that an Itinerant Preacher, well chosen, and with suitable encouragements, should be settled in the Aird, or the remotest part of Coigach, which lyes at a great distance from the parish Kirk; such an Itinerant might be of great

use, for instructing the people & in culcating Loyalty, Industry and Obedience to the Laws. And as the English Language is of the greatest Consequence, there should be two English Schools erected here, because the Country is very extensive; as also two spinning Schools. [2]

Forbes' belief in the "civilizing" power of Presbyterianism and the English language is manifest. He did not feel the need to explain this position; the Improvers took it for granted. The Gaelic language was symbolic of the Highlanders' distinctiveness, and no attempt of "civilization" would succeed, it was thought, unless it was replaced by English. Forbes continued this idea in his suggestions for Stratherrick, on the Lovat estate. He believed that the construction of schools was an urgent matter, and that the schoolmasters selected should be well-paid and should not be able to speak Gaelic.

> In order therefore to improve & civilize this part of the high=lands, I humbly apprehend that a particular attention to introduce the English Language is of the greatest consequence; And for that purpose schools should be erected, on the different Baronys . . . [3]

Francis Grant was the Board's "General Riding Officer and Inspector". In 1756 he made an inspection tour of the Annexed Estates for a report to the Commissioners. Copied into Grant's report was an address delivered to the "King's

Tenants" on each estate. In it, the attitudes held by the Board towards its tenants is clear. The tenants were held responsible for their own condition; the Commissioners, their new masters, would encourage religion, industry, and obedience, but resistance would be punished. Its tone is one that a parent might adopt in admonishing a child:

> As it has been a great Misfortune to the former Proprietor and family much to be regreted that they gave Cause to it, yet it may be to you and all the Tenants not only no loss but a benefit for it will depend on yourselves entirely to be easie and happy. As the Law and your present Masters appointed for the Execution thereof has nothing more in view than that good purpose to make you Prosperous in every respect by Encouraging Religion, Industry and dutifull Obedience to your Superiors. On the other hand the Contrary will be Discouraged & punished as Law Directs. [4]

The Board of Trustees for Manufactures and Fisheries was set up in 1727 and was principally concerned with the encouragement of linen manufacture in Scotland. In January 1763, when its remit for the Highlands was passed to the Commissioners for the Annexed Estates, the Board's trustees wrote to the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury, stating that the term of their mission of encouraging and improving the manufacture of linen in the Highlands, in which they had spent an annual sum of £3000 for nine years, had expired. They wrote that they had accomplished this by raising and

maintaining linen stations; paid salaries to teachers for raising and dressing flax; paid salaries to mistresses of spinning schools, and paid the expences of these schools; paid salaries to master weavers and wheelwrights and maintained apprentices and scholars for instruction in these crafts; paid salaries for inspectors and surveyors of wheel reels and other utensils; and paid premiums to encourage the improvement of lintseed and its cultivation.[25] This statement was by way of reminding the Treasury of the things the Trustees had accomplished; what followed was a warning of what might happen if manufacturing in the the Highlands ceased to be encouraged.

> . . . the Linen manufacture hath been introduced into & is spreading itself through the Highlands, the whole Country is thereby greatly civilised & if the same means be continued is likely to become a very useful part of the United Kingdom but if discontinued, which must be the case if the said annual payment cease your Memorialists apprehend & think it their duty to acquaint Your Lordships that it will soon elapse into its former Sloth & Barbarity.[26]

Before the Highlands and Islands could become an integrated part of Britain, the problem of poor communications had to be resolved. The Annexed Estates Board had made only tentative steps in following up on the Government's military road network, and a great deal of work remained to be done to make the area more accessible by land and sea. The

engineer James Watt (1736-1819) was commissioned in 1785 to make a survey and report on the proposed canal between Fort William and Inverness for the British Fisheries Society, the main interventionist body in the Highlands and Islands after the Annexed Estates Board was dissolved in 1784. Watt believed that the success of the fisheries depended upon the building of the canal; if a quick route from the east coast to the west would enable the supply of grain to be carried more cheaply to the West Highlands, the population there might increase. He wrote that the West Highlands were primarily "grazing countries" and that it was "naturally impossible to extend their Agriculture." He felt that the Gaels' crops were "so defective" that they would be better off using all their land for cattle and import the grain they needed.

> Were the Improvements in the Fishery to take place, the Importation of Grain would very much encrease, because their own Lands would probably produce no more than they do at present, and all that would be necessary for the additional Inhabitants must be imported; and it is probable that industrious hard-working People would consume more in Proportion than the present Inhabitants do.[7]

Roads, bridges, and canals were seen as civilizing tools as important as the spread of English or the improvement of agricultural practices. One writer in 1792 argued that the Caledonian Canal would play a crucial part in the breaking

down of the distinction between Highland and Lowland.

> The first step towards its civilization, and improvement, proceeded from the several roads of communication, formed and upheld by Government, in these countries; this having, in some degree, opened an easy intercourse betwixt the inhabitants thereof, and those of the southern and eastern parts of Scotland and of England, had removed the prejudices which formerly narrowed their minds, and fascinated them to clannish predilection and subordination. [8]

Colonel Robert Anstruther, an inspector of military roads, wrote a memorial on the subject in 1792, and he expressed similar sentiments. Anstruther believed that the new roads had exposed the Gaels to their more industrious neighbours to the south, and had "weaned them from their former slavish dependence of their chiefs, removed old Prejudices, and encouraged Industry."

> Hitherto the Chief Object of Government by making Roads, was to March Troops into a Country formerly inaccessible; but after the happy suppression of the Rebellion, the Plan was extended with a view to Civilize and improve the Country, to make the Highlanders independent of their Chiefs, and Industrious useful subjects, for which purpose many Salutary Laws were enacted, and several Lines of New Roads were made, connected by Cross Roads,

> to open the Communication to every Glen and District of the Highlands. [29]

The civil engineer Thomas Telford (1757-1834) envisaged an ambitious plan which involved a degree of social engineering. His approach involved the construction of roads, bridges, and canals, and in particular the proposed Caledonian Canal; he believed such a scheme would provide the short-term benefit of employment with the long-term benefit of an infrastructure upon which further improvements could be made. But if such improvements were to have an effect on emigration, he wrote, "it is advisable these Works should be undertaken at the present Time." Telford's plan was not enacted upon by the Government, which opted for a communications network which acted mainly to lower the costs of transporting wool and mutton to the Lowlands and which later in the 19th century made the new sporting estates accessible to southerners. In contrast, Telford's scheme sought to . . .

> . . . furnish Employment for the industrious and valuable Part of the People in their own Country. . . they would acquire some Capital, and the Foundations would be laid for future Employments. If, as I have been credibly Informed, the Inhabitants are strongly attached to their native Country, they would greedily embrace this Opportunity of being enabled to remain in it, with the Prospect of bettering their Condition, because, before the Works were completed, it must

be evident to everyone that the whole Face of the Country would be changed. [10]

Improving the Highlands and Islands

The chiefs held immense power over their clans. When clanship was still the dominant force in the Highlands and Islands, this power held the clans together and gave each clan a focus for its energies. Under the concept of *Duthchas*, a chief was the trustee of his clan, and was bound by duty and tradition to pursue the interests of the clan and not to use it for his own self-interest. But as the clan system crumbled under political and economic pressure in the last half on the 18th century, chiefs used the prerogative of *Oighreachd*, a more legalistic concept which gave them the absolute right of property, to "improve" their lands and "civilize" their people. When Archibald Campbell, 3rd Duke of Argyll set about the transformation of his estates, he was determined not to let his people stand in his way. In 1756 he wrote to Donald Campbell, his chamberlain (or steward) in Tiree, "I'm resolved to keep no tenants but such as will be peaceable and apply to industry. You'll cause intimate this some sabbath after sermon." [11]

James Hogg visited Little Loch Broom in 1803 and found George Mackenzie of Dundonnell agonizing over whether to keep his clan intact or to let his land to Lowland shepherds. Hogg commented that "he hath, however, the pleasure of absolute sway. He is even more so in his domains than Bonaparte is in France." [12]

Thomas Douglas, the 5th Earl of Selkirk, in his *Observations on the Present State of the Highlands of Scotland* (1806), acknowledged the reluctance of some chiefs to "improve" their estates. There were, he wrote, some chiefs who retained so much of the "antient feudal notions" that they were unwilling to evict their "old adherents", and as a result submitted to a considerable loss.

> There are many others who, from vanity, are desirous of counting a numerous tenantry, and would willingly preserve the population of their estates, if it could be reconciled to their pecuniary interest. These motives, though now wearing fast away, have however had great effect till of late; so that, not withstanding the length of time that has elapsed since the year 1745, a very considerable proportion of the Highlands remains under circumstances directly arising out of the feudal state, or is at this moment in the crisis of change. But the causes which have hitherto retarded the change are so much enfeebled, that they cannot long continue to have a perceptible effect; and, as an unavoidable consequence, the Highlands in general must fall into that state of occupancy and cultivation which is most conducive to the pecuniary interest of its individual proprietors. [18]

These sentiments had already been adopted by most Highland chiefs. In a purely economic analysis, the "ancient

possessors" of clan lands could not compete against the rewards offered by Improvement. The Earl wrote that since sheep-farming gained a footing in the Highlands, the Gaels "have had a very unequal struggle to maintain. It would be difficult, perhaps, to quote an instance where they have been able to offer a rent fully equal to that which the graziers would have given; and the competition against them has been continually increasing." [14] While some improvers sought to prevent the emigration of the Gaels, the Earl was an active advocate of emigration, and organized the movement of several groups of Gaels to Canada, most notably to the Red River area between 1812 to 1815.[15] He believed that "emigration was an unavoidable result of the general state of the country, arising from causes above all control, and in itself of essential consequence to the tranquillity and permanent welfare to the kingdom." [16] His active role in the depopulation of the Highlands and Islands was not without its detractors, however. An anonymous writer in 1806 poured scorn on the Earl's seemingly selfless enterprise:

> Does he not turn to the peasant and say, "Leave your country; leave a land which has no longer use for you; a land where you may have bread indeed, but where you can only earn that bread by the direliction of every habit which could sweeten the morsel. Emigrate therefore; and if you will but turn towards the colony which I protect, and clear a few acres of its forests, you will become affluent and happy beyond the condition of your

fathers."

> And does he not look towards the Legislature and plead -- "Encourage emigration -- drain off your superfluous people -- depopulate your mountains, and send your hardiest sons to foreign climes, there to seek that happiness and protection which the land of their fathers denied them; there to become the sure and steady friends of the country which turned them from her bosom." -- Such, I contend, is the true import of the Noble Earl's advice. [17]

In the minds of the Improvers, one thing was obvious: the "improvement" of the Highlands and Islands and the existence of the clan system were mutually incompatible. Clanship was widely perceived to be a purely military and not an agricultural system. Indeed, its aim was not a "market" efficiency that sought to optimize production, but rather *beathachadh bòideach*, a "comfortable sufficiency"; this was a non-militarist concept in which a large population and the clan hierarchy could be supported and the various obligations of the chief could be met. Among the supposed evils of the clan system was that it fostered and even encouraged laziness, and some, including the Earl of Selkirk, sought to explain this alleged trait as a direct result of the clan system. He believed, as did most Improvers, that the military orientation of clanship placed supreme importance on the ability of a clansman to fight. What they failed the realize was that the Gaels, like others

who lived in an agrarian society, did not see agricultural labour as an end in itself but rather as a means of subsistence.

> The greatest part of the country was fit only for pasturage, and the small portions of arable land which fell to the share of any family, could occupy but little of their time. On two or three occasions in the course of the year, the labours of the field required a momentary exertion, to prepare the soil, or to secure the crop: but no regular and continued industry was requisite for providing the simple necessaries of life, to which their forefathers had been accustomed, and beyond which their desires did not extend. The periods of labour were short; and they could devote the intermediate time to indolence, or to amusement, unless when they were called upon by the chief to unite for the common defence, or for an attack on some hostile clan. The merits of every individual was estimated by his prowess on these occasions; warlike atchievements were ever the favourite theme among them; and the amusements of their leisure hours generally consisted of active exercises, or displays of strength and agility, calculated to enhance their character as warriors. [18]

The Earl's assertion that the Gaels were indolent by nature, and that this condition would be changed by their

emigration, was ridiculed by Robert Brown (1757-1831), a sheriff-substitute of the western district of Inverness-shire. Brown did not concede the Earl's position on this point, and as an opponent of large-scale emigration, he questioned his logic in assuming that "lazy" people could be made industrious by being forced to face the harsh reality of life in Canada.

> His Lordship's mode of correcting this indolence is sudden and violent in its operation. He says, the people are doing no good to themselves at home, and are a burden on their landlords. He therefore proposes to transfer them to a situation, where they cannot obtain a particle of subsistence, except what they extract from the land by the most severe and unremitting labour. How men of such confirmed habits of indolence may be able to endure this violent regimen, remains to be explained. But his Lordship's specific against Highland indolence, reminds me of the mode by which I have been told idle fellows were wont to be punished in Holland, and other places. They were locked in a cellar, into which water was introduced through a pipe, and the culprit was obliged, either to pump it out, or drown. [19]

Of all the villains of Gaelic folklore, few are detested as much as Elizabeth Gordon, Countess of Sutherland, *Ban mhorair Chataibh* (the Great Lady of Sutherland), her husband the Marquis of Stafford, and their "henchmen", James Loch

and Patrick Sellar. Their ambitious plan involved the removal of the inhabitants of the interior of Sutherland to its coasts where they were to take up fishing, and the introduction of sheep farms into the emptied straths. Great hardships were suffered by the estimated 8,000 people that were forced to move.[20] Whether, the plan was well-intentioned or not, it was certainly true that these Improvers believed in their plan.

According to John Prebble, the Countess of Sutherland "spoke no Gaelic and had inherited her family's contempt for the tongue, manners and customs of the Highland people." [21] Nevertheless, she believed that "improvement" on a massive scale need not disturb her tenants. She wrote to Sir Walter Scott in October 1811, telling him that she was confident "of considerable improvements being effected in Sutherland and without routing and destroying the old inhabitants, which contrary to the Theories respecting these matters, I am convinced is very possible". [22]

In his *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Sutherland* (1812), Captain John Henderson put a number of questions to William Young, "the intelligent gentleman who has the management of the Sutherland estate, and the superintendence and direction of all its recent improvements" (he was the estate's factor from 1811 to 1816). Young's response to a question on sheep-farming encapsulated not only the plan for the "improvement" of Sutherland and the ideology that inspired it, but also the sentiments of those carrying out the plan towards the people

under their power. Henderson asked:

> How are the sheep-farms doing on the Sutherland estate? How many Cheviot sheep are now on it? Are the sheep-farms to be extended? How are the people to be provided for?

To which Young replied:

> Sheep-farms are paying well on the Sutherland estate. The number of Cheviots are now about 15,000. More ground will be laid off for the same mode of husbandry, without decreasing the population. Situations in various ways will be fixed on for the people. Fishing stations, in which mechanics will be settled; inland villages, with carding machines; moor and detached spots calculated for the purpose, will be found; but the people must work. The industrious will be encouraged and protected, but the slothful must remove or starve, as man was not born to be idle, but to gain his bread by the sweat of his brow. [23]

The person most commonly associated with the Sutherland "improvements" is Patrick Sellar (1780-1851), a man who pursued so vigourously his duty of evicting tenants that he was brought to trial for his cruelty. Not suprisingly, Sellar had contempt for Highland ways and often expressed his views at length. In a note to Lord Advocate Archibald Campbell-Colquhoun in May 1815, Sellar justified his

employers' plan for the estates and defends his part in them:

> Lord and Lady Stafford were pleased *humanely*, to order a new arrangement of this Country. That the interior should be possessed by Cheviot Shepherds and the people brought down to the coast and placed there in lotts under the size of three arable acres, sufficient for the maintenance of an industrious family, but pinched enough to cause them turn their attention to the fishing. I presume to say that the proprietors *humanely* ordered this arrangement, because, it was surely a most benevolent action, to put these barbarous hordes into a position, where they could better Associate together, apply to industry, educate their children, and advance in civilization; and I hope I shall be excused for thinking with the greatest deference, that this good motive may be safely applied to a family who have for the last four years to my knowledge, divided, yearly among the tenantry in exchange for work, many thousand pounds beyond the total rental of the Estate. [24]

Sellar was merely an agent for James Loch (1780-1855), the Marquis of Stafford's estate commissioner who is widely credited with having masterminded the reorganization of the Sutherland estates. Loch wrote that "it seemed as if it had been pointed out by Nature, that the system for this remote district, in order that it might bear its suitable

importance in contributing its share to the general stock of the country, was, to convert the mountainous districts into sheep-walks, and to remove the inhabitants to the coast, or to the valleys near the sea." For Loch, it was a simple matter of political economy to determine the plan for Sutherland:

> As there was every reason for concluding, that the mountainous parts of the estate, and indeed, of the county of SUTHERLAND, were as much calculated for the maintenance of stock as they were unfit for the habitation of man, there could be no doubt as to the propriety of converting them into sheep walks, *provided* the people could be, at the same time, settled in situations, where, by the exercise of their honest industry, they should not be exposed to the recurrence of those privations, which so frequently and so terribly afflicted them, when situated among the mountains. [25]

It may be pure cynicism to suggest that it was in the interests of public relations that the people of Sutherland were to be accommodated on the coasts instead of being forced to emigrate en masse, but the Countess of Sutherland in particular was sensitive to the need of not being cast into the mould of a greedy Highland proprietor. It was inevitable, however, that Improvement was to change Sutherland forever. As Loch pointed out,

> It had stood still in the midst of that career of

> improvement which had so remarkably and so splendidly distinguished the rest of the kingdom; and remained separated by its habits, prejudices, and language, from all around . . . [26]

In a purely economic analysis, the common Gaels could not compete in the new system that required a maximum return on investment. If they were unable to adjust to the new priorities, some argued, their emigration was inevitable and not wholly undesirable. To those who advocated Improvement at the price of emigration, it was a obvious solution to the problem of overcrowding and scarcity. For Dr John MacCulloch, who wrote *The Highlands and Western Islands of Scotland* in 1824, it was a matter of efficiency.

> It has been seen, that as this people is maintained chiefly as cultivators, and on lands in a state of extreme division, the population of any given tract must thus be greater than under a more extended system, and that the conversion of many small farms into one, must diminish it. But in this case, the agricultural machine is more perfect; the same produce is obtained by fewer hands, or at a less expense; as in manufactures, that is the state of perfection where the greatest return is obtained on the lowest terms. This is the fundamental argument in favour of large farms, as it is against the crowded population of the Highlands . . . [27]

By the 1820s, the Clearances had become a source of contention throughout Britain. Some saw the forced evictions as unavoidable, while others argued strenuously for a more humane approach to the Gaels. Dr MacCulloch had an answer for those who accused Highland proprietors of greed and oppression. "The proprietors," he wrote, "have been so long accustomed to hear themselves censured and abused, that they almost begin to imagine they deserve it," while the Gaels "never think they have so warm a friend as he who assures them that they ought to be unhappy." [28] In the following case, he writes of complaints about proprietors who prevented their tenants' emigration in order to ensure a large pool of cheap labour for the kelp manufacture.

> It is asserted that the proprietors attempt to crowd the population on these estates, for the purpose of lowering the wages of labour, and thus of keeping both a cheap and ready supply of it at hand for this manufacture, from which they alone derive all the profits. This exquisite remark comes from the same politicians who, in some other place, accuse the same proprietors of depopulating their estates by sheep farming, and of thus causing a ruinous emigration. So difficult it is to ride and drive the ass at the same time. [29]

Improvement had proved to be a two-edged sword by the 1820s, with emigration continuing unabated while the lives of the

Gaels who remained were locked into a grinding poverty. The humanitarian motives of the early Improvers seemed far removed from the methods of the new Improvers who saw the land as a commodity and the inhabitants as an impediment to progress. James Browne, in his *Critical Examination of Dr MacCulloch's Work* (1825), attacked MacCulloch for his defence of the Clearances.

> The Highland proprietors as a body have no doubt a monopoly of the soil of the country; but they are not equally fortunate either in regard to knowledge or the press; and though they may eject, burn out, impoverish, and expatriate the poor defenceless people, public opinion is beyond their controul. To this tribunal they must submit their conduct; and it is to its candid decision that we appeal respecting the falsehood of the charges which have been so industriously circulated against those who had every possible claim to their countenance and protection. [30]

Arguing the case for Improvement

The case for "improving" the Highlands and Islands had to be argued. Those who proposed the development of the region to Government and private investors had to surmount or circumvent the prevailing belief that the place would forever be a wasteland inhabited by poor and unsophisticated people. Instead, they argued that with proper funding and attention, the Highlands and Islands would become a

prosperous part of the United Kingdom, with a booming economy and a body of peaceful and loyal subjects. Schools and churches would be built to civilize and educate, to root out any remaining vestiges of superstition and Papism, which hindered progress; and the encouragement of manufactures, fisheries, and most importantly, agriculture would put the Highlands and Islands on a firm economic basis that would preclude any "disaffection" of the kind that the Whig establishment believed had made the 1745 Rebellion possible.

The Rev. Dr John Walker (1731-1803) was a minister, moderator of the General Assembly, botanist, and "father of Scottish Mineralogy" [31] who toured the Hebrides in 1764 for a report he was to prepare for the Board of Commissioners for the Annexed Estates. His fact-finding mission inquired into not only the physical characteristics of the islands but also the state of the people living there, with a view towards encouraging "improvements". In a letter to Lord Kames, Walker wrote that the Gaels were "most acute and sagacious," [32] but in his report of 1764, he described a place that many of his contemporaries would have said was in "a state of nature" -- in which people lived like beasts and where no innovation or advancement ever took place. He admitted as much, but believed that the Hebrides' potential might be realized if some encouragement was offered. In the preface to his report, he argued that the Islands, while backward, were not without hope.

> Their Soil remains, as it was left at the Creation: The Inhabitants, when compared to their

Fellow Subjects, with Respect to Arts; are in almost the same Situation as in the Days of Oscian, yet they are Countries capable of being greatly advanced by Agriculture; capable of many of the most important Species of Manufacture: possessed of the most valuable Fisheries in Europe: and inhabited by a sensible, hardy, and laborious Race of People. [33]

Walker was aware of the Gaels' reputation for laziness and an unwillingness to improve themselves. But as the success of Improvement depended upon a motivated labour force, he attempted to answer such prejudices:

> I call them laborious, contrary indeed to a received Opinion. But it is only from a superficial View, that they are represented as inconquerably averse to Industry and every kind of Innovation. The Culture of their Fields, carried on by the Spade, with the Strength of their Arms, instead of that of Cattle, and many other Operations, in their rude System of Husbandry, exhibits powerfull though indeed ill directed Efforts of Industry. Their extensive Cultivation of Potatoes, by Hand Labour; their Hardships and Assiduity in the Manufacture of Kelp: the Success of the Linen Manufacture, wherever it has been introduced and the amazing Progress of Inoculation; show, that the Highlanders are as capable to judge of, are as ready to embrace and

> can as vigorously pursue any Innovation that is advantageous or Salutary as any other People whatever.[34]

Walker here asserted that the Gaels lacked only the means to improve themselves; he realized that they were accustomed to life in an agrarian society with different attitudes towards work, and did not suffer from some hereditary antipathy for labour of any kind. This was an important distinction to make; Walker was arguing the case for assistance and encouragement and sought to reassure his readers, by giving examples of the Gaels' determined if "ill-directed" labour, that within the Gaelic character there was no insurmountable barrier to Improvement.

> Unassisted Exertions of Industry are not to be expected from a People still in the Pastoral Stage of Society; nor from unenlightened Minds are we any where to expect the sudden Discontinuance of Bad Customs. But, whatever the Highlanders are defective in industry, it will be found; upon fair Enquiry; to be rather their Misfortune than their Fault: and owing to their want of Knowledge, rather than to any want of the Spirit of Labour. Their Disposition to Industry, is greater than is usually imagined, and if judiciously directed is capable to rise to the greatest Heights.[35]

By 1784 the estates managed by the Commissioners for the Annexed Estates had been returned to their former

proprietors or their heirs. The experiment had met with little success, and many parts of the Highlands and Islands had yet to experience the effects of Improvement.[36] As a result, the case for "improving" the area still had to be argued, and by this time, such arguments were chiefly directed at private sources of capital. The American war of independence had caused some British men of wealth to think twice before investing in colonial enterprises, but they needed to be convinced that profits could be made by investing at home. Doubts about putting money into Highland development certainly remained, and these had to be allayed.

The year 1784 also saw the formation of the Highland Society. This organization was known properly as "The Highland and Agricultural Improvement Society", and its agenda was concerned with the assimilation of the Highlands and Islands with the rest of Scotland through agricultural "progress". It had cultural aims, which included an investigation into the Ossianic controversy, but its main thrust was the promotion of Improvement principles through its sponsorship of prize essays. These essays acted as a powerful forum for the exchange of ideas; they represented the state of current thinking on Improvement, and as they carried the Society's stamp of approval were of considerable influence. Due to the prominence of some of its members, the Highland Society was also a political lobby of importance. Its first president was the 5th Duke of Argyll, and its officers included the Earl of Moray, Islay Campbell, the Lord Advocate, and John McDonald of Clanranald.[37] The objectives of the Highland Society were clearly stated in

its regulations:

> 1. An inquiry into the present state of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, and the condition of their Inhabitants.
>
> 2. An inquiry into the MEANS OF THEIR IMPROVEMENT, by establishing Towns and Villages -- by facilitating Communication through different parts of the Highlands of Scotland, by Roads and Bridges -- advancing Agriculture, and extending Fisheries -- introducing useful Trades and Manufactures -- and, by an exertion to unite the efforts of Proprietors, and call the attention of Government, towards the encouragement and prosecution of these beneficial purposes.
>
> 3. The Society shall also pay a proper attention to the preservation of the Language, Poetry, and Music of the Highlands. [35]

Among the first prize essayists of the Highland Society was Dr James Anderson (1739-1808), an economist and agriculturalist who managed farms in Lothian and Aberdeenshire.[36] In his *An Account of the Present State of the Hebrides and Western Coasts of Scotland* (1785), Anderson acknowledged the attitudes held towards the Highlands and Islands, but stated that times had changed (after all, the Highland regiments had acquitted themselves admirably in the war just finished), and the region now had

"a well-founded claim to national attention." The Gaels had been neglected long enough, and why explore the globe in search of new opportunities for wealth, he argued, when such opportunities existed at home? The English, he wrote, had believed that the Gaels were "a set of men disaffected to Government, averse to labour, and impatient of all lawful subordination," and that they were "little better than a lawless banditti." Anderson wrote that the English believed (as did Lowlanders) that the Highlands and Islands were "an inhospitable desart, incapable of cultivation, or ever becoming the seat of commerce, of industry, or arts," and as a result "turned from it with aversion." [40] But, as Anderson asserted,

> They have not observed the change that has taken place in all these respects; and the natives, discouraged by neglect, and overawed by those severities inflicted on many of their chiefs, have been afraid to put in their well-founded claim to national attention, lest they should be accused of misrepresentation from interested natives, and met with obloquy, instead of support. -- They have thus been suffered to remain neglected and unknown; and while the most distant parts of the globe have been attentively explored, with a view to give encouragement for the manufactures of Britain, those territories, which are so peculiarly our own, and which are much better calculated to encrease the trade, to encourage the manufactures, and to augment the revenues of this

> nation, than any others that have ever been suffered to remain unknown and unexplored . . . [41]

Most of those interested in encouraging manufactures and fisheries in the Highlands and Islands believed that the erection of new villages was of vital importance. In his description of the parish of Kincardine, Ross-shire of 1790 for the first Statistical Account, Rev. Andrew Gallie wrote,

> No corner of Scotland . . . is better adapted, for a manufacturing village, than Kincardine . . . It lies open to several very populous districts, and, were manufactures once established, and shops opened, it would be resorted to by many . . . Those who shall first have the spirit to undertake something in the manufacturing line here, will merit the blessings of hundreds, in a corner half depopulated, and in danger of being totally deserted; besides contributing greatly to their own immediate benefit and emolument. [42]

Also writing for the Statistical Account in 1790, Rev. J. Anderson of the united parish of Kingussie and Inch stressed the need for a centre in which trade could be conducted. Tradesmen had nowhere they could carry on their business, wool had to exported in its raw state because there was no means in the district to produce a more finished product, and the flax which might have proved to be "a source of wealth to both proprietor and tacksman, has been neglected because skilful people are not collected in one close

neighbourhood, to carry it through the whole process." But, as Rev. Anderson pointed out, "there is no village either in the parish, or in the whole district. This inconvenience is severely felt." [43] The idea of planned villages was popular well into the nineteenth century. The plan for establishing manufacturing villages seemed doomed to failure, but the erection of fishing villages remained an attractive proposition. Sir John Sinclair, the editor of the first Statistical Account and an active Improver on his estate at Ulbster in Caithness, believed that "there is no species of villages, which merits more to be encouraged, than *fishing* establishments. The produce of their industry may be called almost clear gain. By their exertions, a great addition is made to the food of the country, independent of the produce of the soil; while a hardy and useful race of people are reared, well calculated for the naval defence of the country." [44]

Villages of either sort were regarded at the time as something of a panacea for the underdevelopment of the Highlands and Islands. However, one man had little doubt that new fishing villages would transform the area. John Knox (1720-1790), who was to the promotion of Highland fisheries what his namesake was to the promotion of the Reformation, believed that the establishment of fishing villages was the key to improving the quality of life of the Gaels; by earning their living from the sea, they would be freed from many of the hardships that came with subsistence agriculture and would no longer be forced to pay the excessive rents being charged by some landlords. According

to Knox, fishing villages should be founded where "the people should be comfortably lodged, and accommodated with provisions, firing, stores of salt, materials and utensils for the herring and white fisheries, independent of lairds, stewards, or intermediate jobbers."

> They should enjoy, in the most ample manner, and in all possible cases, the freedom and spirit of the British constitution. The idea of feudal aristocracy, and of feudal subordination should be utterly extinguished; and every man, of whatever degree or profession, should be master of his own time in all seasons, whether at the height of the harvest, or the fisheries, without the interference of any superior whatever. This implies the erection of towns at convenient distances, and in the most eligible situations, on those extensive shores; which towns should be enbued with all the privileges of royal boroughs, for the distribution of justice, as well as the conveniency of the inhabitants in whatever relates to trade, navigation, and fisheries. [45]

Before any fishing villages could be built, Knox had to argue his case. In his *A Discourse on the Expediency of Establishing Fishing Stations, or Small Towns, in the Highlands of Scotland and the Hebride Islands*, based on a lecture delivered to the fisheries committee of the Highland Society of London in March 1786,[45] he described the "deplorable" conditions that the Gaels endured, and inferred

that no progress was possible without some assistance from the rest of Britain.

> Here is a considerable body of people without capital, and a coast without towns where the natives can be supplied with ,nets, casks, salt, hooks, lines, and provisions. --- Here are no places where fishers, women and children, from distant parts, can be accompanied with lodgings, either while in health or in sickness. The inhabitants of these shores have but scanty dwellings to themselves, and are equally ill provided in necessaries for the accommodation of persons who flock thither in the fishing seasons. [47]

Knox had a part in the founding of the British Fisheries Society, which came into being in July 1786. Officially known as "The British Society for Extending the Fisheries and Improving the Sea Coasts of this Kingdom", the Society was formed when "several Noblemen and Gentlemen, Members of the Legislature and others, applied for and obtained, near the close of the last Session of Parliament, an Act of Incorporation, forming them into a Society, with a view of attempting the Remedy of . . . grievous and impolitic Evils" by encouraging the Highland fisheries through the building of fishing villages.[48] Its first governor was the 5th Duke of Argyll, who was also the president of the Highland Societies of Edinburgh and London.[49] In the Society's Incorporation, the change in attitudes towards the

Highlands and Islands in the forty years since the battle of Culloden is clear: it was now a place to be helped.

To the PUBLIC

IT has often been observed with, wonder and regret, that a very considerable part of the Coast of Great Britain continues destitute of the blessings of Art, Industry, and Independence, though inhabited by a numerous tribe of British Subjects, not less capable, nor less inclined than their Fellow citizens to become useful Members of the Community; and that many of the Inhabitants emigrate from thence, in large bodies, to cultivate, under incredible hardships, the distant wilds of America, while the surface of their native land is exceedingly short of sufficient cultivation, and while the very numerous adjoining Firths and Seas teem with a wonderful and inexhaustible degree an untouched and unprofitable treasure.

It has excited indignant sorrow, that their Distresses should drive our Fellow Citizens into foreign parts, at a period when the encouragement of Population ought to be the peculiar policy of Great Britain, and more especially that species of Population which may serve to man her future Navies with expert and hardy Seamen. [50]

When reading the papers of the British Fisheries Society from its early days, one detects a sense of confidence and enthusiasm in the minds of the officials, and the feeling that with the dedication of sufficient thought and resources, the Highlands and Islands would be transformed. Occasionally, though, a "dose of reality" brought them back to earth. The first governor of the Society, the 5th Duke of Argyll, sent his agent Lachlan Mactavish on a tour of the Hebrides with the Committee of Directors in July-August 1787. In his journal of the tour, Mactavish wrote that while the Directors were quite sure that the Highlands and Islands was the most promising part of Britain for the advancement of the fisheries,

> . . . the rugged and mountainous face of the Country, appeared to be such a formidable barr to the General improvement of the Land, as dampened their hope of success, in that particular, very much.[31]

John Knox was not the only writer to advocate the encouragement of the fisheries. James Fea was a Royal Navy surgeon and a native of Orkney who wrote *Considerations on the Fisheries in the Scotch Isles* (1787), which concerned the Hebrides as well as the Northern Isles; like Knox, he believed that the fisheries as could bring prosperity to people who were hard put to survive by agriculture. He wrote that the islands were neglected and oppressed, while containing a "noble race" and a potentially "immense trade" which needed only encouragement. The phrases he used, such

as "great success", "constant treasure", and "little expense" could not help but attract the attention of prospective investors. Fea wrote that the islanders, "who are intitled to all the rights and benefits of society, are neglected and oppressed . . ." while "in those climates, which seem purposely formed by nature, an immense trade may be procured, and carried on with great success."

> . . . the Scotch Islands are peopled with a hardy, laborious, faithful, brave, and virtuous race of men, who deserve to be treated with more regard, not only on account of their being our fellow subjects, but because they are useful to the Empire at large, and may become greatly more so if properly encouraged . . . It is by encouraging the fisheries, a constant treasure, which is peculiarly our own . . . These fisheries, so abundant, so rich, and so extensive, would be an inexhaustible source of wealth, which may be procured with little expense . . . [52]

A problem with the fisheries was that the success of this expensive enterprise depended very much upon the cooperation of the fish -- this difficulty was to become apparent in the nineteenth century. Another man had a more certain proposition. Thomas Telford was commissioned by the Government in 1802 to survey and report on the Highlands, with a view towards improving communications there. Telford was concerned with emigration; he believed that a network of roads, bridges, and canals would bring lasting employment

and prosperity to the Gaels, and held the Highland landowners responsible for not pursuing a more labour-intensive improvement scheme than sheep farming. He estimated that 3000 people had emigrated from the west coast and central Highlands in 1801 and that three times that number were preparing to leave in 1802. In Telford's opinion, the chief cause of this emigration was the policy of "converting large Districts of the Country into extensive Sheepwalks. This not only requires much fewer People to manage the same Track of Country, but in general an entirely new People, who have been accustomed to this Mode of Life, are brought from the Southern Parts of Scotland." [53]

Telford believed that the Government needed to assume a role in the prevention of large-scale emigration by regulating the landlords' power to evict their tenants. He realized that while "in the Improvement of a Country, the Interference of Government should extend only to the removing [of] Obstacles . . . so as to promote the general Good of the Empire," [54] in his opinion the urgent case of Highland emigration warranted an exception to the rule of laissez faire.

As the Evil at present seems to arise chiefly from the Conduct of the Landowners, in changing the Economy of their Estates, it may be questioned whether Government can with Justice interfere, or whether any Benefits are likely to arise from this Interference. [55]

Telford then contrasted two views on Improvement. The first was the conventional wisdom as held by most landowners, which regarded "productivity" of the land as the prime consideration in the planning of improvement policy. The Gaels were to be made "productive" as well, even if in the interests of the Empire this was, to mean crofting and fishing with an uncertain future, migration to the Lowlands, or emigration.

> In one point of View it may be stated, that, taking the mountainous Parts of Scotland as a District of the British Empire, it is the Interest of the Empire that this District be made to produce as much human Food as it is capable of doing at the least possible Expence; that it is the Interest of the Empire the Food so produced, should not be consumed by Persons residing amongst the Mountains, totally unemployed, but rather in some other Parts of the Country, where their Labour can be made productive either in the Business of Agriculture, Fisheries, or Manufactures; and that by suffering every Person to pursue what appears to them to be their own Interest, that although some temporary Inconveniences may arise, yet, upon the Whole, that Matters will in the End adjust themselves into the Forms most suitable for the Place. [58]

Essentially, this view meant that the Gaels could no longer look to their chiefs for protection as they had in the past.

Their continued presence was not indispensible as in earlier times; if they were to be retained on an estate, it was because their labour was needed for making kelp or quarrying slate or manning the fishing boats. The monetary interests of the landlords were all-important in an age of individualism in which large personal fortunes were regarded as beneficial to the country as a whole. Telford, however, took exception to this view of Improvement. He believed that the clearance of large numbers of people from their native lands was unwise. He predicted, with a good degree of accuracy, that sheep farming would be overextended, by which time the depopulation of the Highlands and Islands would be largely complete. Further, he argued, the Gaels had in recent years acquited themselves well in the army and the navy and it would be shortsighted for the Government to allow their emigration and the resulting loss to the recruitment pool. For these reasons, Telford argued for Government intervention to prevent landlords from emptying their lands of people.

> In another point of View it may be stated, that it is a great Hardship, if not a great Injustice, that the Inhabitants of an extensive District should all at once be driven from their native Country, to make way for Sheep Farming, which is likely to be carried to an imprudent Extent; that, in a few Years, this Excess will be evident; that before it is discovered, the Country will be depopulated, and that Race of People which has of late Years maintained so honourable a share in the

Operations of our Armies and Navies will then be no more; that in a Case where such a numerous Body of the People are deeply interested, it is the Duty of Government to consider it as an extraordinary Case, and one of those Occasions which justifies them in departing a little from the Maxims of general Policy; that for this Purpose Regulations should be made to prevent Landowners from lessening the Population upon their estates below a given Proportion, and that some Regulation of this sort would in the End be in favour of the Landowners . . . [57]

Telford's case was not accepted by officialdom, and the living conditions of the Gaels at the turn of the century remained very poor as emigration continued on a large scale. While some Improvers such as the Earl of Selkirk openly advocated emigration, others agreed with Telford that another approach should be taken which would extend the benefits of Improvement to everyone. Changes in the attitudes towards the Highlands and Islands were taking place, and an awareness grew that there was a definite lack on the part of most landlords to take any positive action on the behalf of their people; the argument was not one that chiefs should retain a large tenantry out of a feeling of feudal obligation, but that more efforts should be made, with the assistance of the Government, to find a labour-intensive alternative to sheep farming that would provide a livelihood for the Gaels and benefit the economy of the country as a whole. The landlords were being put on the

defence, and increasingly they were accused of imprudence, or worse, greed. An anonymous essayist writing in 1803 attempted to estimate the changes of population in the Highlands and Islands, and in the process named some of the attributes of the people who were leaving Scotland in increasing numbers.

> It would be desireable & a matter of curious speculation, to approximate with any degree of precision, the encrease to which the present number might with care & speedily be carried; but considering the productive powers of a moral, uncorrupted people, living peaceably & contentedly in the simplest habits with only natural wants, - religious, a propensity to early marriage, humane, affectionate, sober, frugal, high spirited tho' poor, intuitively sagacious, keenly industrious when labouring for themselves, & above all so patient, capable of fatigue & hardship, with privations in the quantity and quality of food, scarcely to be endured by any other civilized race . . . [58]

The essayist here asserted that the Gaels had all the qualities necessary to take an active role in Improvement. What was needed, ". . . considering at the same time the improveable state of the Soil they cultivate," was, in his opinion, "a little more attention & encouragement from their Landlords, who on the present footing of things enjoy a moiety of the produce of their labour, without being so rich

as other proprietors under different circumstances drawing only a fourth of gross territorial income . . ." but what was vital was "the fostering care of a beneficial government, aiding by premiums, freedom from vexatious petty direct taxes, facilitating by the construction of land and water communications or other expensive public works". Provided there was a change in landlords' priorities and a dedicated intervention of Government, especially in the improving of communications, he calculated a "a threefold population of the present standard; one third to be maintained by agriculture & pasture, an equal number by the fisheries & the rest by other arts manufactures and commerce."[55]

Improvement and Traditional Values

As the Improvers pressed on with their various schemes for reforming the Highlands and Islands, it was inevitable that there would be a conflict between "new" and "old" values. This conflict was largely due to opposing cultural imperatives -- between one which discounted the past and looked to the future, and one which could not divorce the past from the present. What the Improvers regarded as "resistance" was often nothing more than an unenthusiastic response to their plans; however, this lack of willingness to cooperate was usually explained as the Gaels' alleged love of leisure. The Improvers were men of action whose careers may have depended upon the success of their schemes, and they reacted bitterly to any recalcitrance or refusal to obey commands.

Archibald Menzies was the Annexed Estates Board's general inspector (he took over from Francis Grant, see above). In 1767 he inspected the estates of Perth, Struan, and Strathyre and was not pleased by the inhabitants' apathy to the Board's plans. It was his opinion that the sons of tenants should be sent to the Lowlands (or a "civilized" part of the Highlands) for training. Menzies hinted that these boys, seven years on, would have had a sense of industry about them and would help to "convert" their neighbours to the tenets of Improvement. There existed a vague idea that if Gaels went to live amongst Lowlanders, they would somehow acquire better manners and habits, but Menzies did not explain the exact way in which this was to come about.

> As it will be found difficult to carry on the best concerted Plan of Improvement with the present Ignorant awkward, lazy Inhabitants; I should humbly Propose, to push with vigor the Scheme formerly adopted by the Board, by causing the Farmers send their sons to be bound apprentices to Farming in such countries as the Board would chuse to Introduce the Culture of, into their own Farmers, to be sent young and to be bound for 7 years; by which means they would be fully instructed in their Trade, and would know how to Execute whatever they should be ordered. ~ I am afraid untill that is brought to a bearing nothing of great Consequence will be done . . . [sic]

Thirty years on, this strategy still held favour. John Blackadder surveyed Lord Macdonald's estates in Skye and North Uist in 1799 and held out hope that the planned importation of "South Country overseers" into North Uist would inspire the people there to change their farming practices.

> . . . it is to be hoped that the Farms proposed to be carried on under the direction of South Country overseers on Lord Macdonald's account, will exhibit such a degree of Profitableness as will in time excite the Tenantry of the Country to follow a different course of Management from what they have done hitherto. If this be not the case, the Country must remain long stationary in point of improvements. [1]

The apparent lack of interest in Improvement on the part of the people must have been frustrating for Blackadder. He wrote that the people of North Uist were "acute in understanding, seemingly polite, and very tractable," and he found that "many of them possessed of a considerable degree of local Knowledge in rural affairs, some of them possessed of much greater and extended Knowledge of the world." There was no intellectual barrier to the Gaels' understanding, but he was at a loss to understand their reluctance to learn about new agricultural techniques. Blackadder had in fact encountered at first hand the conflict between Improvement and traditional values; the attitudes towards the Gaels had

changed too much by the end of the century for a simple accusation of laziness to suffice, as it would have done twenty years earlier for Archibald Menzies. Yet Blackadder thought he discovered among the people he conversed with

> . . . a spirit for rejecting new modes of improvement, and an independent cast of mind which will not be bound down (as the Farmers in other countries generally are) by Covenants in Leases to do what other people think right for them to do, if they do not think the thing proposed right themselves. The Reporter found that the Common Farmers discovered no desire to ask questions, and less to answer any relative to Agricultural affairs. [62]

It sometimes seemed to the Improvers that depite all their efforts, they could not convince the Gaels that "improvement" was in their best interest. Lachlan Mactavish, who accompanied the Committee of Directors of the British Fisheries Society in their tour of the Hebrides of 1787, described the plight of Captain MacLeod, the proprietor of Rodel in Harris. Apparently, the man was unable to inspire his tenants to take up fishing.

> I was Sorry to learn that altho He has been uncommonly Zealous in directing the attention of the natives to the fisheries, by very Consistent encouragement such as boat-lines, hooks &ca which he furnishes gratis, yet still they go but

unwillingly to work; and notwithstanding, that he gives them the highest praise for their fish, over and above the encouragement already mentioned, few or none of them can be got to attend to the business but when he agrees to give them stated wages ~ But as he hopes that time and Experience will get the better of their prejudices, He means to persevere; being satisfied in his own mind, that when they get a right view of their Interest, no people upon earth can see it more Clearly or pursue it more Steadily than the Generallity of Highlanders ~ ""

No one was more bitter in his vituperation than Patrick Sellar. The reorganization of the Sutherland estates had not passed without incident, and in their haste to carry out "improvements", the Countess of Sutherland and her agents failed to consider the fierce attachment all peasants have for their ancestral land. Sellar understood the nature of the conflict between old and new, but for him it had become a struggle of monumental proportions. Writing in 1816 on the less than enthusiastic response from the people of Sutherland to the estate's plans for "improvement", Sellar apportioned part of the blame on the teachers and ministers for the tenants' resistance to the plan. Had these people been recruited from outside the Highlands, he implied, things would have gone more smoothly.

> I venture to say that what we have seen among the people during the last four years could not have

happened had the Teachers of Youth, and the Ministers of the several Parishes been men brought from an industrious Country the sons of industrious Parents, and with a passion for industry in them, had they not been completely the reverse of all this bred in a country of sloth and idleness the sons of highland tenants and whisky smugglers, and with a tone imbibed from the earliest infancy of destation to every introduction to industry or innovation on the ancient language and manners of the Gael. [64]

He exhumed the idea of a plantation of Lowlanders to spur the Gaels' "industry". Sellar hinted that those areas of Sutherland where the use of Gaelic was on the decline were by nature more progressive than others; he believed that Gaelic culture was synonymous with backwardness and squalour. These attitudes were not quite as evident as they had once been, due to the popularity of Ossian which had suggested that Gaeldom did indeed possess a culture, and to the reputation earned by the Highland regiments. In Sellar's case, however, the conflict between Improvement and traditional values had become a battle between his career ambitions and the obstinacy of the Gaels.

I think if Lord and Lady Stafford were pleased to fill up a few of the first vacancies with persons to be searched for in Aberdeenshire or Kincardineshire districts, where the people are extremely industrious it might have the happiest

effect. The sure road to the head is by the heart and while the heart is kept subject to ignorance and prejudice, little genuine cooperation can be expected. The want of the Gaelic language will at first be quibbled on by the Clergy, but without much reason, for during the whole line of coast betwixt the Meikle Ferry and the Ord, there are very few old people who do not understand the english language, and except the Golspie Fishers very few young ones who cannot speak it fluently. [65]

In defending their reorganization of Highland estates, Improvers such as Patrick Sellar often compared the allegedly backward agricultural practices of the Gaels with the advanced commercial enterprises that existed elsewhere, and concluded that the people themselves were the greatest obstacle to economic improvement. But according to A. I. Macinnes, "the more discerning of contemporaneous commentators, notwithstanding their vested interests in questioning the Whig concept of progress, considered that the commercialisation of agriculture within Scottish Gaeldom should take account of existing landed and human resources as well as market demands and that the fashionable pursuit of improvement must offset projected financial benefits against immediate social costs." [66] The views of the former group ruled the day, however, and Improvers in general came to see the retention of a tenantry on the land as beneficial to the estate proprietors only insofar as it provided labour for the manufacture of kelp (in the islands) and of course,

to provide men for military service, the recruitment of which was not always profitable but good for the proprietors' social standing. As a group, the Improvers were not greatly influenced by the "cultural rehabilitation" of the Gaels brought about by popularity of Ossian, Sir Walter Scott, and the emergent cult surrounding the Forty-Five. In fact, the attitudes of Improvers toward the Gaels changed little between 1745 and 1830.

Notes

1. The Annexing Act of 1752 (25 George II c.41). Quoted in Annette M. Smith, *Jacobite Estates of the Forty-Five* (Edinburgh, 1982), p. 23.

2. Scottish Record Office (hereafter SRO), E.729/1/12. Forfeited Estates Papers (1745): *Factors' reports* c. 1755. Report from Captain John Forbes, factor upon the annexed estates of Lovat and Cromarty (in answer to the Commissioners' orders and instructions of July 30 1755).

3. Ibid. pp. 26-27.

4. SRO E.729/7/3-4. Forfeited Estates Papers (1745): *The Report of Mr. Francis Grant General Riding officer and Inspector* (1756).

5. SRO NG.1/1/17/76. Board of Trustees for Manufactures and Fisheries Papers: From a representation to the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury, from the Trustees of the Board, in Edinburgh, (21 January 1763).

6. Ibid. The Board of Trustees' linen stations in the Highlands were later taken over by the Annexed Estates Board, but this method of encouraging manufacturing industry in the Highlands was eventually discarded. The transfer of the Trustees' linen stations to the Annexed Estates Board was facilitated by the fact that a number of the Trustees were also Annexed Estates Board commissioners. (Virginia Wills, 'The Gentleman Farmer and the Annexed Estates', in T.M. Devine, ed. *Lairds and Improvement in the Scotland of the Enlightenment*, Ninth Scottish Historical Conference, Edinburgh University, [1978], p. 41.)

7. *House of Commons Sessional Papers of the Eighteenth*

Century - Reports and Papers, vol. 53 (fisheries), app. no. 27. *Mr Watt's Survey, Report, and Estimate* (1785), pp. 280, 287-8.

8. A Letter from a Freeholder of Inverness-shire, to Lord Adam Gordon, dated 15 March 1792. From *Prize Essays and Transactions of the Highland Society of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1799), 1st series, I, p. 344.

9. National Library of Scotland (hereafter NLS), Adv.Ms.33.4.19, pp. 1-2. Col. Robert Anstruther, *Memorial in relation to the Roads of Communication made at the Public Expence through the Highlands of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 25 March 1799).

10. *Survey and Report on the Coasts and Central Highlands of Scotland. Made by the Command of the Right Honourable the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury, in the Autumn of 1802: by Thomas Telford, Civil Engineer, Edin. FRS.* (P.P. 1803, IV, p. 17).

11. *Argyll Estate Instructions: Mull, Morvern, Tiree, 1771-1805*, Eric Cregeen, ed. (Scottish History Society, Edinburgh, 1964), pp. xviii-xix.

12. James Hogg, *A Tour in the Highlands in 1803* (Edinburgh, 1986), p. 92.

13. Thomas Douglas, 5th Earl of Selkirk, *Observations on the Present State of the Highlands of Scotland, with a view of the causes and Probable Consequences of Emigration* (London, 2nd edn. 1806), pp. 25-26.

14. Ibid. p. 32.

15. *A Dictionary of Scottish History*, Gordon Donaldson and Robert S. Morpeth, eds. (Edinburgh, 1977) p. 197.

16. Earl of Selkirk, p. 2. The Earl was forced to retire

from the emigration business when his settlements were harassed by the fur companies in Canada (Charles Fraser-Mackintosh, *Antiquarian Notes* (Inverness, 1897), p. 107.

17. NLS BCL.D5583(4). *Eight Letters on the Subject of the Earl of Selkirk's Pamphlet on Highland Emigration*, Anonymous, 2nd edition, (Edinburgh, 1806), letter II, p. 14.

18. Ibid. pp. 18-19.

19. NLS BCL.D5583(4). Robert Brown, *Strictures and remarks on the Earl of Selkirk's Observations on the Present State of the Highlands* (Edinburgh, 1806), pp. 106-7.

20. This figure comes from Ian Grimble, 'Clearances', in *The Companion to Gaelic Scotland*, D.S. Thomson, ed. (Oxford, 1983), p. 46.

21. John Prebble, *The Highland Clearances* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1963), pp. 51-52.

22. NLS MS 3881, f. 89. Letters to Sir Walter Scott. This comment referred to the Earl of Selkirk's advocacy of emigration.

23. Capt. John Henderson, *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Sutherland* (London, 1812), p. 135.

24. *Papers on Sutherland Estate Management, 1802-1816*, R.J. Adam, ed. (Scottish History Society, Edinburgh, 1972), 4th series, VIII, p. 156.

25. James Loch, *An Account of the Improvements on the Estates of the Marquess of Stafford* (London, 1820), pp. 70-72.

26. Ibid.

27. Dr John MacCulloch, *The Highlands and Western Islands of Scotland* (London, 1824), IV, p. 138-9.

28. Ibid, III, p. 157.

29. Ibid, III, pp. 157-8

30. James Browne, *A Critical Examination of Dr MacCulloch's Work* (London, 1825), p. 167.

31. *Dr. Walker's Report on the Hebrides of 1764 and 1771*, Margaret McKay, ed. (Edinburgh, 1980), pp. 1-5.

32. Ibid. p. 8. From Sir William Jardine, 'Memoir of John Walker D.D.', in *The Birds of Great Britain and Ireland* (1842), III, iii, pp. 24, 36.

33. Ibid. p. 33.

34. Ibid. p. 35.

35. Ibid.

36. For a full account of the successes and failures of the Annexed Estates Board's mission, see Annette M. Smith, *Jacobite Estates of the Forty-five* (Edinburgh, 1982).

37. Account of the Institution and Principal Proceedings of the Highland Society of Scotland, from *Prize Essays and Transactions of the Highland Society of Scotland*, 1st series, I, p. vi.

38. Ibid. p. iii.

39. *The Concise Dictionary of National Biography*, George Smith, ed. (Oxford, 2nd ed. 1906, reprinted 1979), I, p. 21.

40. Dr James Anderson, *An Account of the Present State of the Hebrides and Western Coasts of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1785), pp. xi-xii.

41. Ibid. pp. xii-xiii.

42. *The Statistical Account of Scotland, 1791-99 edited by Sir John Sinclair*, D.J. Withrington and I.R. Grant, eds. (reprinted Wakefield, England, 1973-83), 20 vols, IV, 512-513.

43. Ibid. XVII, p. 200.

44. Sir John Sinclair, *Analysis of the Statistical Account of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1825, reprinted 1970), pt. 2, pp. 183-4.

45. John Knox, *A View of the British Empire, more especially Scotland; with some proposals for the Improvement of that Country, Extension of the Fisheries, and the Relief of the People* (London, 3rd edn, 1785), II, pp. 433-4.

46. Jean Dunlop, *The British Fisheries Society 1786-1893*, (Edinburgh, 1978), p. 24.

47. SRO GD.9/1/16-17. British Fisheries Society Papers: John Knox, *A Discourse on the Expediency of Establishing Fishing Stations, or Small Towns, in the Highlands of Scotland and the Hebride Islands*, (London, 1786). John Smith, an Englishman, proposed an alternative plan to the Highland Society which involved the building of a smaller number of larger towns; he predicted that if this were done, a series of cities the size of Liverpool would evolve on the west coast. Smith wrote that his plan would produce "a hive of labourers and not a cluster of pensioners." He believed that "the more the working class are brought by close neighbourhood to be witnesses of each other, the more they will be excited not to consume their hours in lazy basking or vain tattle." (John Gray, ed. *Some reflections intended to promote the success of the Scotch Fishing Company*, [London, 1789], p. 60.) The Highland Society preferred Knox's more realistic scheme.

48. SRO GD.9/1/299. British Fisheries Society Papers: *Incorporation of the British Society*, (1786).

49. Dunlop, p. 25. The other founding members of the

Society were influential men. The Deputy Governor was the Earl of Breadalbane, and of the thirteen directors, eight were Members of Parliament. Prominent members from Highland areas were Francis Humberstone Mackenzie of Seaforth, Lord Gower (Marquis of Stafford), and the Earl of Moray, and from the Lowlands were the Marquis of Graham, Sir Adam Fergusson, and George Dempster.

50. SRO GD.9/1/296-9.

51. SRO GD.9/1/25-6. British Fisheries Society Papers: *To His Grace the Duke of Argyll: a journal of the tour of the Hebrides by the Committee of Directors of the Society by Lachlan Mactavish*, July - August 1787.

52. James Fea, *Considerations on the Fisheries in the Scotch Isles . . . A General Account Elucidating the History, Soil, Productions, Curiosities, etc. of the Same, the Manners of the Inhabitants, etc.* printed privately, (London, 1787), section 2, pp. 4-5.

53. Telford, pp. 14-15.

54. Ibid. p. 14.

55. Ibid. p. 16.

56. Ibid.

57. Ibid. pp. 16-17. Telford cited as examples of a better kind of Improvement the new farming practices carried on in Breadalbane and the fishing villages "on the Principle laid down and practised so successfully by Mr. Hugh Stevenson of Oban, at Arnisdale on Loch Hourn."

58. NLS Adv.Ms.35.6.18, pp. 3-4. Anonymous, *State of Emigration from the Highlands of Scotland, its extent, causes, and proposed remedy* (London, 21 March 1803).

59. Ibid. pp. 4-5. The well-intentioned plan for the

improvement of the system of communications in the Highlands had an ironic twist. Whereas this writer, Telford, and others believed that improved communications would in the end obviate the need for emigration, the new network of roads, bridges, and canals actually facilitated the advance of sheep farming by making it cheaper (and therefore more profitable) to transport wool and mutton to Lowland markets. Later in the nineteenth century, as the commercial attractions of sheep farming waned, this communications system was augmented by the railways which allowed easy access from England and the Lowlands to the "deer forests"; these were estates, some formerly under sheep and some newly cleared of tenants, which were opened to sportsmen for hunting purposes. Contrary to its original intentions, the improvement of Highland communications had the effect of accelerating emigration.

60. SRO E.729/8/17-18. Forfeited Estates Papers (1745): *Journal of Archibald Menzies, General Inspector, concerning estates of Perth, Struan, and Strathyre (Arnprior), with commissioners' instructions to him*, (1767). The Board's scheme that Menzies referred to was formulated in 1761 and involved the apprenticeship of young men, chiefly the sons of tenants, to Lowland farmers. According to Annette Smith, the idea was reasonable as a means of promoting good farming practices, but as in so many other areas of the Board's work, it was unsuccessful and was completely abandoned in 1775. (Smith, *Jacobite Estates of the Forty-Five*, p. 97.)

61. SRO RH.2/8/24/139-140. Macdonald Papers: John Blackadder, "Survey, description, and valuation of Lord Macdonald's estates of Skye and North Uist" (1799).

62. Ibid.

63. SRO GD.9/1/9. British Fisheries Society Papers: Journal of Lachlan Mactavish (entry 16 July 1787).

64. Patrick Sellar, from 'Note concerning Sutherland', (May 1816), *Papers on Sutherland Estate Management, 1802-1816*, XIII, p. 184. For a vivid portrait of Sellar, see Iain Crichton Smith's *Consider the Lillies* (Oxford, 1968).

65. Ibid.

66. A.I. Macinnes, "Scottish Gaeldom: The First Phase of Clearance", *People and Society in Scotland I, 1760-1830*, T. M. Devine and Rosalind Mitchison, eds. (Edinburgh, 1988), pp. 74-75.

Chapter 2 *Civilizers, Educators, and Evangelizers*

It was not until the defeat of the Jacobites in 1746 that any real interest was shown in the subject of religion in the Highlands and Islands. In order to ensure that the region no longer posed a threat to the establishment, outside agencies began to involve themselves in the moral, educational, and spiritual rehabilitation of the Gaels. Their first aim was to see that the established Church of Scotland had no further competition from the rebellious non-juring Episcopalians and Roman Catholics. As attitudes towards these denominations became more liberal in the late 18th century, especially as they proved their loyalty to the British constitution, more attention was given to providing the Gaels with a basic education that would focus upon spreading literacy in English to encourage the use of the Bible while at the same time teaching "civilizing" values such as hard work and the superiority of southern culture and the English language. The task of providing an education for everyone in the Highlands and Islands was beyond the resources of the outside agencies, but the process if anything assisted emigration by raising expectations. The rise of an indigenous evangelical movement which was driven by the work of local lay preachers and spiritual Gaelic poetry not only won the Highlands and Islands for Presbyterianism in the early 19th century but acted to transform the Gael from the traitorous barbarian and pagan of popular image to an evangelical who viewed the world as "a glen of tears" and whose only prospect of happiness lay in an Afterlife.

Religion and disaffection after the rebellion

Despite the result of the battle of Culloden and the "pacification" carried out by Government troops, many observers believed that Jacobitism, in the Highlands and Islands still posed a dangerous threat to the Hanoverian establishment. While the estates of attainted Jacobites were annexed to the Crown and the outward symbols of Gaelic culture banned, the perceived dangers of non-juring Episcopacy and Roman Catholicism, closely identified with the Forty-Five, were more difficult to root out. Clergymen of these denominations were considered by Government supporters to be the active agents of the exiled Stuarts and the "popish" powers of the Continent who sought to revive Jacobite aspirations. As a result, the religious persuasion of the Gaels was believed to be of considerable importance to British national security.

In c. 1747 a "loyal subject" made a report to the Duke of Newcastle, stating that several Jacobites in the French service were recruiting men in the Highlands, and "with the Assistance of Popish Priests, and other equally dangerous Emissaries raised the Rebellion Spirits of the common Highlanders, to such a pitch, that they Seem more inclined to a Rebellion, than ever." [1] The informant reported that the Jacobite agents were spreading rumours to the effect that Charles Edward Stuart had become a Protestant and that the French, Spaniards, and Prussians would arm and support them in a new rebellion.

> They represent to these poor deluded and infatuated people That they are enslaved, and entirely Governed by a Military power, And they further Suggest to them, that the only way they can fall on, to recover the use of the Highland dress, is, to rise unanimously, in Arms for the Pretender, on whom they bestow great encomiums, And whose Title to the Crown they make them believe is beyond all dispute. [2]

It was a widely held belief among the Presbyterian establishment in the Lowlands that the "poor deluded and infatuated" people of the Highlands and Islands were not capable of responsible decisions concering either politics or religion. In later years, as it became obvious that Jacobitism as a political force was eliminated at Culloden, the moral and spiritual state of the Gaels was left to religious and charitable organizations; but in the years immediately following 1746, the activities of Catholic priests in particular were seen to be subversive. The informant wrote that "Popish Priests" throughout Gaeldom "doe instill Such Religious & politicall principles into the minds of the Gentlemen and common people" in areas where "where nothing is professed but the Roman Catholick Religion" of the "indefeasible and *Jure divino* Hereditary Right of the Stewart Family." [3] He wrote that notwithstanding the "unwearied endeavours" of the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge (established 1709) and the Royal Bounty (established 1724 and provided

for itinerant missionaries and catechists), "Popery is prevailing dayly" in the Highlands and Islands, where "the number of Priests is considerable." [4]

In a statement which must have seemed ominous, the priests were alleged to be indoctrinating young Gaels in the tenets of Jacobitism. Young Gaels were "early byassed & tainted in their principles with the Popish Books, Rebellious pamphlets, declarations, Manifestos, and songs" supplied by the priests, which acted to "create a dislike in them to the present Royall Family, and constitution as by Law Established." [5]

In the mind of another anonymous informant, Roman Catholic priests were not the only agents of disaffection. *The Highlands of Scotland in 1750* is a dossier which is believed to have been written by Edmund Bruce, a Government official who surveyed the forfeited and other estates in the Highlands and Islands.[6] It is supremely Whiggish, i.e. it is Unionist, Presbyterian, and anti-Jacobite. According to the author, parts of the Highlands were under the sway of non-juring Episcopalian clergymen who were resolutely opposed to the Government and George II. He wrote that Morvern was "mostly inhabited by Camerons who profess themselves Protestants," but that they along with the people of Ardnamurchan and the Stewarts of Appin "are the most deeply poisoned with Disaffection to our Happy Constitution in Church and State of any People I ever knew." [7]

They Idolize the Nonjuring Clergy and can scarcely keep their temper when speaking of Presbyterians. The Reason of this I take to be that one Mr John McLachlan a Nonjurant of the Highest Kind lived Chiefly among them. This man who was at least half a Papist and a most Active Zealous Cunning Fellow with a pretty good Share of Learning did more harm among the Campbells, McDougals, Stuarts, McLeans, and Camerons, than any Six Priests that ever were in Scotland. [8]

The author wrote that John McLachlan "often travelled through these and the Adjacent parts of the Country Administering the Sacrament of the Supper, admitting People only on this express Condition that they would not hear any Minister who prayed for King GEORGE." [9] This man was intimately involved in the 1745 rebellion, for "he joined the Pretender's Son soon after he Landed and kept close by him 'till after the Battle of Culloden. He preached frequently in both Languages and exerted himself to the utmost by Encouraging both Officers and Soldiers to fight vigourously for their Cause." [10] He wrote that the Camerons "boast of their firm adherence to the Protestant Religion in all the Periods of Time since the Reformation," but "they shewed so little regard to any Religion in their practise that their adherence to Protestancy seems to have been a part of the Pretender's Political Scheme," for the reason that "it wou'd have appeared too glaring to have none but Popish Clans appear zealous for his Interest. The greatest part of the Gentry in Lochaber loves the Nonjuring

Clergy . . ." [11] The author was unaware of the Rev. John Cameron, the Church of Scotland chaplain at Fort William, who was a devoted Jacobite, an early nationalist perhaps, and who was present at the battle of Culloden and met Charles Edward Stuart the day he left Scotland in 1746.[12]

The Campbells of Argyll received more sympathetic treatment, however. For Whiggish political and religious reformers, the clan was a model for others to follow. Their anti-Stuart credentials extended back to Covenanting times and they fought for the Government at the battle of Culloden; the leading clan gentry were important members of the Scottish political elite. The reputation of the Campbells "since the Reformation and their Hearty Disposition to promote and support the Cause of Religion and Liberty is so well known that I need only Remark of this Country in General," and soundness of politics and religion were not exclusive to the clan's leaders: " . . . The Common People are generally Honest and Religious, Love the Established Clergy, and give no Encouragement to the Nonjurants, and are more Sensible of the blessings of a British subject than most of the other Clans in the Highlands are . . ." [13]

Prelacy and popery

Unlike the Campbells, most Gaels did give encouragement to the "seditious" Episcopalians and Catholics. Non-juring Episcopalianism throughout Scotland came under pressure after the Forty-Five but its continued presence in the

Highlands and Islands was deemed not only intolerable but dangerous. Non-jurors had refused to take oaths to the Hanoverian sovereigns after the "glorious" Revolution, and with the 1712 toleration act the split between themselves and their non-Jacobite collegues became formal; this fact made them political as well as religious threats in Whig and Presbyterian eyes. That non-jurors had been intimately involved in the rebellion was without question. One of the illustrious "Seven Men of Moidart" who had landed with Charles Edward Stuart in 1745 was George Kelly, a non-juring clergyman; and clans such as the Camerons in Lochaber and the Stewarts of Appin which were served by non-juring clergy fought in the campaigns of the rebellion, to their ruin. The Forty-Five was and still is popularly considered to have been a Roman Catholic enterprise, but give or take the odd Presbyterian, Non-jurors taking part in the rebellion outnumbered Catholics by something like two to one. John McLachlan (the itinerant non-juring minister referred to above) joined the Jacobites, and an excerpt from a letter written in 1748 to Robert Forbes (see below) testifies to the losses suffered by the Episcopalians, and to the considerable ignominy McLachlan suffered as a result of living in the midst of the victorious Campbells.

> Now I live for the most part like a Hermite, because all my late charges almost were kill'd in battle, scattered abroad, or cow'd at home; and the people of this country are generally so bigot in Whiggism and so insolent on their late success, that it is vastly mortifying for me to live among

them. [14]

Where once the Episcopalians dominated in the Highlands, they were now pressed. They shared with the Presbyterians the problem of poor communications and the difficulty of recruiting qualified Gaelic-speaking ministers and catechists, but were banned and short of funds as well. One of the most faithful supporters of the cause was Robert Forbes (1708-75), an Episcopalian clergyman who was captured on his way to join the rebellion in September 1745. His most enduring legacy is *The Lyon in Mourning*, a collection of Jacobite material compiled from 1747 to his death and which remains an important source on the Forty-Five. Forbes became Bishop of Ross and Caithness in 1762, and wrote a journal of his first episcopal visit there. Forbes' acceptance of the need for bilingual worship was reflected by his experience with the language barrier when he visited Muir of Ord in the Black Isle. He was reluctant to give sermon as he spoke no Gaelic, but upon hearing the catechist's warning that "the honest Souls would take it highly amiss if they did not see me perform both Prayers and Sermon," he did so, his words being translated by two assistants. Forbes commented that "indeed the external Devotion of the people was admirable, and past all Description, as all the Highlanders have a remarkable serious Turn of mind." [15]

Forbes was to be further impressed with the devoutness of the Gaels. He visited Argyll in 1770 and while he was with the Episcopalian congregation of Ballachulish he wrote that

in all parts of the Highlands "the devotion of the people was extremely remarkable, and very affecting, insomuch that it drew Tears from mine Eyes. With eager Countenance they kept their Eye fix'd on the clergyman from first to last." [16] During his visit to Callander in the same year he received an indication that at least in one place the thievery that was thought to be endemic to the Highlands was not a problem.

> At Calendar, within a Stone-Cast of the Highway, we saw a fine Field of Shirts, Bed and Table-Linen, which Mrs Forbes supposed to be watched all night; but the Landlady told us they knew no such custom there, though in a Highland-Country, where there are several persons who can speak nothing but Galic, an Experiment, this, which We durst not try about Edinburgh or Leith, or any part of the South Country. [17]

Non-juring Episcopalians in the Highlands were regarded as outlaws of a sort until the death of Charles Edward Stuart in 1788. Their difficulties were not merely political, however. They were financially hard-pressed as the Presbyterians controlled all teinds (the one-tenth share rendered by parishioners for the support of churches and mininsters); the problem of finding clergymen willing to work under such conditions, particularly those with Gaelic, proved to be a chronic one. A letter written by Stewart of Invernahyle and others to Forbes' successor Bishop Petrie in 1782 asked for more regular visits by clergymen to Appin,

"and that such of them as are deficient in the Galic language bring a sufficient person along with them, for the benefit of the common People, who are now fully resolved to break off unless they are more regularly supplied for the future than they have been for some time past." [18] They noted that "as we have had the Rev. Mr Taylor, from Perthshire, twice of late, who does not speak the Galic language, we hope, in the first place, your Reverence will send us one who is acquainted with that language, in hopes it will have the desired effect as to the Common People." [19]

The Episcopalians were clearly worried that unless the provision of Gaelic-speaking ministers improved, their flock might be lost to the dreaded Presbyterians or to the Roman Catholics, who would have been known through the Jacobite connection and had the advantage of external funding. But the problems of the Scottish Episcopal Church in the Highlands were to continue well into the 19th century. The report of the Gaelic Episcopal Society in 1830 noted that in Morvern "there are many persons who are members of the Episcopal Church who are visited twice a year by Mr MacLennan, at Fort William. A catechist for this district would be invaluable." [20] MacLennan himself wrote:

In the classic country of Morvern, and in Sunart, they require a chapel and a clergyman, or a catechist, being at different distances of from twenty to fifty miles from our chapel, which obliges me to go over that immense tract of country twice a year. They also require a

gratuitous supply of prayer books. [21]

In common with the non-juring Episcopalians, Roman Catholics were on the defensive following the Forty-Five. Religion aside, they were identified with treason and sedition, and many Government supporters seriously considered the Catholics of the Highlands and Islands to be a standing army for the Jacobite cause. In passing the death sentence on Simon Fraser, Lord Lovat, Lord Hardwicke said the defeat of the Jacobites had prevented "this Kingdom from becoming a province to some of the great Popish Powers, who have so long watched for the destruction of our liberties." [22] Roman Catholics played an important role in the conflict from the outset, regardless of the manoeuvers of "popish powers". It was Bishop Hugh MacDonald who blessed Charles Edward Stuart's standard at Glenfinnan in August 1745, and the Catholics of Moidart, Arisaig, Knoydart, Morar, Glengarry and Lochaber joined the cause under their respective chiefs.[23]

Their participation was not enough to ensure victory, however, and the "pacification" that followed Culloden sought to root out Catholic priests and their followers in the Highlands and Islands. Public policy as determined by the King's ministers in London stressed the destruction of Catholicism; after Cumberland's reign of terror, however, the Scottish military establishment, composed of Presbyterians who despised Episcopalians, knew the preponderance of non-jurors in the rebellion and acted accordingly. But the Catholics certainly did not escape

retribution. In the spring of 1746, Government warships arrived at Barra and landed troops. The people there were told that the island would be devastated unless the Catholic priest living among them were surrendered; a missionary gave himself up.[24] The Duke of Cumberland issued orders to demolish all Catholic chapels in the Highlands and arrest any priests that were found, [25] and in Glenlivet, Braemar, Strathaven, and throughout the West Highlands and Hebrides, frequent searches were made by Government forces to capture Catholic priests and missionaries.[26]

In the aftermath of Culloden, the second most wanted man in Scotland was probably Hugh MacDonald, the son of MacDonald of Morar and Gaeldom's first Roman Catholic bishop, who was hunted incessantly for years after the Forty-Five. In a 1753 report to Propaganda, the Vatican-based body which directed foreign missions, MacDonald gave this account of Government persecution:

> For some years past we have been suffering more than ordinary persecution. Sometimes it happens by the mercy of God that the virulence of our enemies is somewhat relaxed, but then, under the instigation of malevolent persons, it suddenly breaks out with new violence. The soldiers too, in hopes of gaining as much money as they know has already been paid to their comrades for captured priests, are constantly endeavouring to lay hands on the clergy. [27]

MacDonald was finally apprehended by Government agents in November 1755. At his trial at the High Court of Justiciary at Edinburgh in February 1756 he was charged as being "held and repute a Jesuit, priest, or trafficking Papist", and was sentenced to be "banished forth of this realm, with certification, that if he ever return thereto, being still Papist, he shall be punished with the pain of death." [28] MacDonald changed his name and carried out his duties more covertly. Presbyterian commentators such as Rev. John Walker and the Drs. Hyndman and Dick credited the Roman Catholic clergy with considerable feats of conversion, and perhaps their claims were exaggerated in order to attract Government funding for missionary schemes. While the priests did receive outside funding, they endured the same difficulties as their Protestant counterparts, such as poor communications and a lack of qualified clergymen.

In a report of the Highland vicariate of 1764, MacDonald described South Morar as being "extremely rough country, so that in some parts it is difficult to travel even on foot", but that it was "all Catholic, and contains 318 souls." [29] He wrote that if the districts of Moidart, Arisaig, and South Morar were each provided with a missionary they would have more than enough work to do, "but alas," he observed, "through all these areas there is no-one to serve the faithful people except Mr William Harrison, who has to attend as best he can to the islands of Canna and Eigg also." [30] Macdonald wrote that this was a man "of burning zeal for the salvation of souls, in whose service he has endured, and continues to endure, incredible hardships", and

because of the large area he had to cover, "he scarcely ever spends two considerable nights in one place, but must go travelling though worn out with toil." [31] Indeed, after the Forty-Five many districts of the Highlands and Islands did not have a single Roman Catholic priest or lay worker, some for 30 years, due to the dangerous political situation and the physical difficulty of the task.[32]

Colin MacDonald of Boisdale made strenuous efforts to convert his Catholic tenants of South Uist to Protestantism, and his use of strong-arm tactics were dubbed by Catholic Gaels as *Creideamh a' bhata bhuidhe*, or the "yellow-stick belief". MacDonald, who was raised as a Catholic but converted to Presbyterianism, sought to "reform" the people initially by procuring the attendance of Catholic children at schools on the island established by his father. A Catholic historian of the late 19th century reported with considerable horror, "it was said that scurrilous and even immoral sentences were set to the poor children to copy; and in the Lent of 1770 attempts were made to force flesh-meat into their mouths." [33] The parents withdrew their children from the schools in protest, and MacDonald responded by assembling his tenants and ordering them to sign a declaration renouncing Catholicism or face eviction. The islanders refused, stating their readiness to beg from door to door rather than embrace the Church of Scotland. MacDonald came back with the proposal that if the children were brought up in the "reformed" manner the tenants could retain their holdings without further molestation. The tenants answered this offer by saying that they valued the

souls of their children as much as their own.[34]

In frustration Colin MacDonald wrote to the Commissioners of the Annexed Estates in February 1771 with a plea for money to augment the salary for a schoolmaster. He reported to the commissioners that except for the island's gentry and their dependents, all the people of South Uist were Roman Catholics.[35] He told the Commissioners that he "has done all in his power to encourage the Protestant Religion, by keeping a Schoolmaster at his own house for his own children and Brethren, and such of his Tenants & Servants as he could prevail upon to resort thereto," and in doing so he had "incurred · the Displeasure of most of the Roman Catholicks." [36] He further reported that his father had mortified £5 "to be applied to make up a Salary for a Schoolmaster to be kept on his own lands for the Encouragement of the Protestant Religion" with the hope that "some other charitable person or Society would contribute to the Salary of such a Schoolmaster." [37]

The Annexed Estates Board preferred to leave educational and religious missions outwith their estates to other agencies, but MacDonald hoped they would make an exception in his case. He wrote that if the Commissioners were to add to the £5, he would "give all the encouragement in his power to to accomodate such a Schoolmaster, by giving his a house Garden ground for planting potatoes grasing for milk cows &c to the value of £5 ster. more, or the £5 in Cash, if preferred to these, " explaining that "it is impossible to get a proper Teacher to go to so remote, and disagreeable a part of the

Country -- among Strangers & Roman Catholicks without a suitable Salary." [38] His plea came to no avail, but the islanders had come to the realization that they would have to choose between their home and their religion; they appealed to Bishop Hay, Vicar apostolic of the Lowlands, for assistance in emigrating to America. Subscriptions were raised from Catholics throughout Scotland, and a large number of the South Uist Catholics left Gaeldom.[39] This episode is an example of emigration from the Highlands and Islands that was not primarily due to Clearance or economics in general, although MacDonald of Boisdale was an "enterprising" landlord who was probably glad to be freed of such obstinate tenants. For their part, the Catholic hierarchy did not view the event as entirely negative. In a letter addressed to Propaganda on 10 July 1772, the three Scottish bishops expressed the hope that this exodus might have a good result: the spread of the "true faith" in distant lands.[40]

By the end of the 18th century, official attitudes concerning Scottish Catholics were changing to the extent that the Government gave a grant towards the training of Scots boys for the priesthood, and priests throughout Scotland were praying for King George.[41] While the Roman Catholic Church was no longer officially discouraged in the Highlands and Islands, and indeed in 1799 the proposed Highland College (a seminary) received £300 from the Government, [42] its position in Gaeldom was not promising for other reasons. Abbé Paul MacPherson, one-time rector of the Scots College at Rome, wrote that a high proportion of

Catholic Gaels had emigrated to America or had "changed the barren hills of the Highlands for the fruitful plains of the Lowlands." [43] MacPherson related that the few Catholics remaining there lived on the margins of existence but "they also find greedy Chieftains and Lairds ready to catch at their miserable superfluities," so that nothing remained "for the poor clergy." [44]

Civilizing Gaeldom

The existence of religion outwith the established church in particular and the state of morality and religion in the Highlands and Islands in general were believed to be of economic as well as political importance in the transformation of the Gaels from barbarous rebels to hard working and loyal British subjects. The economic "improvement" of the region depended upon the reshaping of the Gaelic character itself, without which, it was thought, the efforts of various Government agencies to improve communications and agricultural practices would be to no avail.

Capt. John Forbes, factor on the annexed estates of Lovat and Cromartie, believed that the civilizing effects of education and religion were vital to the success of the Annexed Estate Board's scheme. In Forbes' mind, "education" meant the teaching of the English language, and "religion" meant the presence of the Church of Scotland, i.e. the Presbyterian establishment, to the exclusion of others. For the improvement and civilization of the people

of Beauly on the estate of Lovat he recommended in 1755 the erection of a new church in Glenstrathfarrar "where the people are grossly ignorant, & among whom there are a great many Papists and scarce a person can be found who can speak one word of English," and two schools which would cure the Gaels of their ignorance of that language. [44] Forbes went on to describe a "pernicious" habit among the Gaels that was subsequently to be denounced alike by Patrick Sellar and the evangelicals (often hypocritically) of a later era: the distillation of *uisge-beatha*. In later years, the Gaels were forced to distill and sell whisky to stay out of debt, but in 1755 distilling was still for pleasure. However, Forbes thought the practice . . .

> . . . has contributed, among other things, to render the people so poor & idle as they are at present, for it makes them neglect their Farms, habituates them to drinking, & of consequence debauches their Morals, breeds quarrels, & subjects them to many fines and penaltys for Concealments and Non=entrys. [45]

Another Government man involved in the economic improvement of the Highlands who was concerned with the moral and religious state of the Gaels was Alexander Schaw, the principal undertaker of the Board of Manufactures' linen station at Glenmoriston. In a report to the directors of the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge in 1755, he described the religious state of the people there, the lack of schools and Presbyterian churches and warned of

the political activities of the Catholic priests working there. The men of Glenmoriston were, in Schaw's words, "engaged in the Rebellions of 1715 and 1745 and this owing to the craft subtility of the Popish Missionaries."[47] Schaw wrote:

> They know no more than by hearsay, that there is a God. : . were they to be asked anything further they would be found to be as ignorant as the wild americans and any of them that profess religion are gross papists and it can hardly be otherways as they are deprived of the means of knowledge and education having no schools among them no minister to instruct them nor publick worship and being thus neglected. The Popish priests, who are indefatigable in making Proselytes corrupt the minds and moralls of the people and Instill into them Rebellious principles destructive to our happy Constitution & Revolution principles.[48]

Five years later, the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland (in conjunction with the SSPCK, see below) sent the Drs. Hyndman and Dick on a fact-finding mission to inquire into the religious state of the Highlands and Islands. Their subsequent report described the inadequate provision of ministers, churches, and schools in many parts, and the disadvantages that the Gaels endured as a result. Hyndman and Dick wrote of the difficulties faced by Kirk ministers at a time when travel in the region was still something of an adventure. Many of the parishes in Gaeldom were too

large for even the most energetic of ministers, they wrote, and several of the parishes more closely resembled "rather a Province requiring the Labors of a Body of Clergy Men than a district fit for the Inspection of a single Pastor", and when the difficulties in communication were taken into account "it is easy to Conceive that during the great part of the year, many of the Inhabitants must be deprived of all Correspondence with their Pastors, be destitute of the public means of Religion." [48]

Hyndman and Dick went on to describe the lack of provision of schools, arguing that "many parts of the Highlands and Islands, have no School for Teaching the Children to Read, and making them acquainted with the principles of Religion", [50] and that such a shortcoming would be exploited by the Catholic priests to subvert the impressionable Gaels. By this time, Jacobitism was a spent force, and Charles Edward Stuart was a middle-aged alcoholic quite incapable of causing further trouble; nevertheless, the fact that many Gaels were not firm Presbyterians (which meant "loyal") worried Hyndman and Dick, who believed that until the young people of the Highlands and Islands could be educated in a way that would preclude political disaffection, the region would be a natural staging point for an invasion by a Continental power.

> The Youth being destitute of the means of proper Instruction at home, and hindered by poverty from going to seek them Abroad, continue in a state of Ignorance, Inherit the prejudices and Errors of

their Ancestors, and become an easy Prey to those who wish every opportunity of infusing Opinions contrary to true Religion, and to the Just Principles of Civil Government. While large tracts possess no means of Educating their Youth, it is easy to forsee the continuance if not the Increase of all these evils under which the Inhabitants have so long laboured. [51]

The implied connection between the presence of Catholic priests and the possible re-emergence of Jacobitism was not as tenable in 1760 as it had been in the years immediately following 1746. But the belief that the Roman Catholic faith and the British constitution were incompatible persisted. Hyndman and Dick must have been worried by the apparent fact that due to the persistent efforts of the priests, the numbers of Catholics in the Highlands and Islands might actually have been increasing. "The priests of this Communion," they reported, "are numerous and active, and although their sallarys be small, yet the advantage of a foreign Education, which they receive from a publick fund, and the influence of their politick Religion gives them over the minds of the people, have Contributed to Cheque the progress of the Reformation, and at some periods, to gain proselites to their own Church." [52] In an area so inadequately supplied with Presbyterian churches and schools as the Highlands and Islands, "where so little good seed of any kind is sown, it is to be wondered that the Enemy should Sow his Fares, and that these should bring furth a plentifull increase." [53]

While the Catholics had established several strongholds, namely in Banffshire and parts of the Western Highlands and Hebrides, their numbers hardly threatened the position of the Church of Scotland. Alexander Webster's census of 1755 [54], assisted by the General Assembly and the SSPCK, counted in Argyll 61,957 Protestants and 4329 Catholics, those mostly concentrated in Ardnamurchan; [55] in Inverness-shire, 53,899 Protestants and 5664 Catholics; [56] and in Ross-shire, 42,901 Protestants and only 20 Catholics. [57] The most marked religious divide revealed by Webster's census was to be found in Uist: in North Uist Webster counted 1909 Protestants and no Catholics; in South Uist and Benbecula, 2040 Catholics and 169 Protestants;[58] and in Barra 1100 Catholics and only 50 Protestants.[59] On the Catholic side, the Highland vicariate reported to Propaganda in 1762-3 that there were some 12,900 Catholic *communicants* within its area.[60]

The difficulties posed by the lack of good communications in the "reformation" of the Gaels were equalled by the language barrier. The Church of Scotland did not have enough Gaelic-speaking ministers to meet the challenge, but the commonly-held opinion was that rather than provide a Gaelic-speaking clergy, the responsibility rested upon the Gaels to learn English, although in 1755 the synods of Argyll and Glenelg had complained to the General Assembly of "the distressed Situation of their Bounds by the want of Preachers having the Irish Language." [61] Hyndman and Dick wrote that the Gaels' ignorance of English "lays them under

great disadvantages, both with regard to Religion, and to Civil life."[62] They observed, "the knowledge of the Gaelic language becomes a necessary Qualification in every Minister who is to serve in these Countrys and the difficulty of supplying vacant Parishes is greatly increased."[63] But the language barrier extended beyond the provision of ministers. Hyndman and Dick asserted that the "common people" of the Highlands and Islands could not conduct "transactions with the more Southern parts of great Britain without the intervention of their superiors who know the English language, and are thereby kept in that undue dependence and unacquaintance with the arts of life which have long been the Misery of these Countrys,"[64] but failed to mention that seasonal migration to the Lowlands had undoubtedly contributed to the growing levels of bilingualism. They concluded, "till the partition arising from different languages be removed, & the Common language of great Britain be defused over the Highlands, the Inhabitants will never Enjoy in their full extent the benefits of Religion and Civil Government."[65]

In summation, Hyndman and Dick recommended to the General Assembly that the Highlands and Islands needed the erection of new parishes, the building of new churches, and these to be supplied with qualified ministers.[66] "Should this plan take place," they wrote, "the popish missionarys could not avail themselves of the necessary absence of Pastors from the remote parts of their Care, In order to poison their flocks with principles of Superstition, and Disloyalty."[67] They believed that the efforts directed at the region, from

the provision of schools and churches to the improvement of the economy, were interdependent in the struggle to bring the Lowland/English version of "civilization" to the Gaels.

The Rev. Dr John Walker was subsequently sent by the General Assembly to inquire into the religious state of the Highlands and Islands, and he shared many of Drs Hyndman and Dick's beliefs concerning the Gaels. His mission in 1765 was "to gain such intelligence, and to make such Observations, as might be conducive, to promote the laudable designs of the Church, in Instructing the Inhabitants of those Remote parts, in the Right Principles of Religion and Government." [66] Walker described the "great disadvantages" of a region that was "far remov'd, by [its] distant Situation from the more enlightened parts of the Kingdom," [67] and the inability of the Gaels to understand English, which prevented them from reading the Bible. According to Walker, they also suffered from "the mistaken Principles of their ancestors," and the "prejudices of an uncivilized state," all of which combined to prevent the Gaels from "acquiring proper notions of Religious and civil Liberty"; these handicaps were aggravated by "the Activity and success of the Emissaries of the Romish Church, the difficulties are but too evident, to which the poor Inhabitants are subjected". [70] However, Walker was eager to point out that the Gaels were not by nature pagans, or worse, "papists". "I constantly observed," he wrote, "that wherever they have access to Schools, to publick worship, and to the ordinances of Religion, there, they are more regular in their morals, more civilized in their manners,

and in their way of Life, more active and Industrous, than their countrymen, who are Strangers to these advantages. [71] He wished to reassure sceptics and/or Lowland bigots that the Gaels would take full advantage of any opportunity to become "civilized". He acknowledged the efforts of the Government and the Church of Scotland to promote Christianity to the Gaels, but he observed with regret, "the Popish Religion is visibly on the increase" due to the extent of the parishes, the spiritual ignorance of the people, and the assiduity of the priests. "In some parts of the Highlands, the inhabitants have quitted the Protestant Religion . . . merely by being left destitute of the ministry and assistance of the Protestant Clergy." [72]

Although Walker desired to rehabilitate the Gael's image, he did not accord them much sophistication in choosing their faith. The conversion of the people to Roman Catholicism was "a more easy business, than it would be in any other Country", [73] citing the Gaels' ignorance of religion and their veneration for the past and for their ancestors. These characteristics, he argued, "are powerful Arguments, of which, the Priests never fail to make proper use, and are very successful ones, in persuading them to return to the Superstitions of the Church of Rome." [74] Walker feared that the continued presence of Roman Catholicism in the Highlands and Islands would corrupt the Gaels for "not only in the Principles of Religion, but in those of Government . . ." [75] Presbyterian churchmen such as Walker believed that Roman Catholicism and progress of any kind were mutually incompatible because of the alleged superstition and

aversion to change that was inherent in that faith. If the Gaels were "lost" to the Catholics, every attempt to reform them would fail; in the Catholic districts of the Highlands and Islands, "not only the morals and manners of the People, but the very soil, is more rude and uncultivated. The Popish inhabitants are as tenacious of the old customs, as they are of the old Religion." [76] Walker believed that the means to oppose the spread of Roman Catholicism among the Gaels lay in the improved provision of Presbyterian ministers and churches, and the spread of education. Without better provision of schools, he argued, "it is scarce to be expected, that the state of the Country is ever to be much altered for the better, or that Religion, Industry, and civilized manners, are ever to make considerable Progress." [77]

The provision of schools -- the SSPCK

The monumental task of providing schools for the people of the Highlands and Islands, believed to be so necessary by Walker and others for the rehabilitation of the Gaels, was in the 18th century largely left to the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge (hereafter SSPCK). The SSPCK was founded in 1709 with the chief purpose of spreading literacy to the Gaels; its mission was openly evangelistic, for its guiding principle was the Protestant tenet of salvation through knowledge of the Bible. Always an Edinburgh-based organization, it represented the current state of Lowland attitudes towards the Gaels, from the nadir of 1745 to the rehabilitation that took place from the late

18th century onwards. The Society never intended its school system to be an alternative to the parish schools; rather, it stipulated that its schools could only be instituted in those parishes that already had schools. The 1696 Education Act had made it obligatory for every parish to have a schoolhouse and a master paid for by the landowners, but this provision where it was observed was little better than useless in the large and sparsely-populated parishes of the Western Highlands and Hebrides. Recognizing this, the SSPCK schools were ambulatory, enabling them to provide instruction to a community and then to move on.

In an anonymous account of the SSPCK written in 1809, in reality a fundraising pamphlet, the inquiries made by the Society's founders 100 years earlier were said to have "soon furnished them with melancholy proofs of the profound ignorance, and gross barbarism of the neglected inhabitants." [78] They had found the Gaels to be "destitute of almost all means of knowledge and improvement", and although the each parish was supplied with "Protestant" ministers (the term Presbyterian avoided so as not to put off any potential contributions from England), the parishes were too large to be served by a single clergyman.[79] "From these causes," the writer continued, "it is certain and not to be wondered at, that intellectual darkness, the grossest and most profound, brooded over this unhappy country, that its inhabitants were ignorant of the first principles of the Christian system, and that what notions they had of a religious nature, were only a mixture of popish and pagan superstition." [80] The Gaels' shortcomings were not merely

intellectual or theological, however: "their minds were fierce . . . their manners were barbarous . . . they were plunderers of the loyal and peaceful inhabitants of the lowlands of Scotland; and in general, hostile to the happy constitution of Government established at the Revolution." [81] On the surface, the SSPCK was founded on the motives of patriotism and Christian love. "It was impossible for cultivated and benevolent minds to comprehend without commeriseration, a people, and those their own countrymen, in so unhappy a condition. The generous Founders of this Society pitied them, and formed a noble plan for their relief." [82] But education then as now had a socializing function which cynically can be described as indoctrination, and in the 18th century, education for the "lower orders" sought to teach the people to "know their place", both socially and politically.

> By establishing Schools for the instruction of youth, [the founders] wished to rescue their uncorrupted minds from the ignorance and barbarism of their fathers, to establish in them the first principles of science and religion, and to open to them the channels of further improvement, by teaching them to speak and to read the English language. [83]

The SSPCK's desire to spread literacy through the Highlands and Islands was not based on the modern notion that it is essential for good citizenship; rather, the Society's stated aim was to enable the Gaels to achieve salvation. The

Society declared in 1796, "The grand and important end which the Society do always and have always proposed to themselves by their appointment is the Salvation of Souls," [84] and in the same document, "the great object of the Society from the beginning has been and still is to send the Scripture to the Highlanders and to teach them to read them."[85] As English was the official language of Scottish Presbyterianism since Reformation times, and as the SSPCK directors were for the most part Lowlanders who believed in the superiority of English over Gaelic, it followed that English was the medium of instruction in the Society's schools. A problem that came to the directors' attention in 1751 was that while the Scriptures were taught in English in their schools, the young Gaels understood nothing but Gaelic. The directors, "considering the Hurt and Prejudice to the Design of the Society by the Schoolmasters teaching the Children to read English Books in the remote parts of the Highlands without understanding that Language", resolved that any students speaking Gaelic either in the schoolhouse or when playing outside would do so "in pain of being chastised" and that the schoolmasters were to appoint censors to make note of such trangressions. Further, the schoolmasters were instructed to explain the meaning and interpretation of the English words so that the children would understand what they read.[86]

Gaelic (as well as Latin, which was an important key to educational advancement in mainstream Scottish education) was banned in the schools from the time of the Society's incorporation, although it commissioned a Gaelic-English

dictionary which was compiled by the poet Alexander MacDonald in 1741. Until 1767, it was an offence punishable with dismissal for an SSPCK teacher to teach Gaelic to pupils. With the publication of the first Gaelic New Testament in 1767 under SSPCK auspices, however, the schools became bilingual. This change of policy was not made because the Society's directors dropped their desire to spread the knowledge of English, but because they believed that the use of Gaelic would further their evangelical ambitions. Curiously, James Boswell gave the credit for the Society's about-turn to one Samuel Johnson. Boswell wrote:

> It seems some political members of the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge had opposed the pious undertaking, as tending to preserve the distinction between the Highlanders and Lowlanders. Dr. Johnson wrote a long letter to a friend, which, being shown to them, made them ashamed, and afraid of being publicly exposed; so they were forced to a compliance. It is now in my possession and is, perhaps, one of the best productions of his masterly pen. [87]

Gaelic culture may well have received a boost from this most unexpected quarter! At any rate, by the 1770s the SSPCK could claim to have made considerable progress in the "civilization" of the Gaels, which involved education, evangelization, the instilling of "loyalty", and not least, the continuing attack on Roman Catholicism. Acording to a pamphlet published in 1774, the schools "hath wrought change

in many places: ignorance hath been in a great measure dispelled; the English language hath made considerable progress; the arts of civilization have been in some degree introduced; and thousands have been educated in the principles of loyalty and the Protestant religion, who lately fought the battles, and extended to distant parts of the world the glory of Britain." [88] The SSPCK considered itself to be in the vanguard of opposition to Roman Catholicism (as well as non-juring Episcopacy) in the Highlands and Islands. Almost thirty years after Culloden, "popery" had lost any rebellious intentions it may have had; but in the Society's fund-raising pamphlets it played upon anti-Catholic sentiments to elicit support. Sectarian hatred remained strong enough for anti-Catholic riots to break out in the towns of the Lowlands in the 1770s. "When Popery, the foe of liberty, which enslaves the mind, and corrupts the heart, is making daily and too successful attempts on our fellow-subjects; shall Protestant brethren, and countrymen, not use every effort to diffuse the principles of a religion which alone makes loyal subjects, useful citizens, and good men?" [89] It was as if the minds of the Gaels were empty vessels into which loyalty and patriotism could be "infused", good habits could be "formed", and into which religious beliefs could be "trained"; these were optimistic plans considering the temporary nature of the Society's schools. The SSPCK argued that it was the means for such a reformation, for its "invariable objects" had been,

> . . . to spread the knowledge of the English

language among the natives of the Highlands and Islands; to infuse into their minds sentiments of loyalty to their Sovereign, and of love to their country; to train up their children in the principles of the true Protestant Reformed religion, and to make them useful members of the community, by early forming them to habits of industry and virtue . . . [30]

The state of civilization and religion in the 1790s

The spirit of Improvement was manifested in *The Statistical Account of Scotland*, edited by Sir John Sinclair and published from 1791 to 1799. It is an incomparable source for the analysis of Scottish society in the late 18th century; consisting of returns by ministers of the established (i.e. Presbyterian) church, it provides a religious and cultural as well as economic portrait of every parish in the country at a particular point in time with a particular point of view, and its objective approach revealed a more enlightened attitude to society, both Highland and Lowland. In the case of Gaeldom, *The Statistical Account* is useful for determining the extent to which the various efforts of "civilizing" the area after the Lowland fashion were successful. It was compiled about a half-century after the Forty-Five, and if anything it pointed to the fact that the process of making Gaeldom more like the rest of Britain was an uneven one. As was to be expected, the areas more accessible by land and sea to the Lowlands made the change more quickly.

The Rev. David Dunoon, who provided the return for Killearnan in the Black Isle in 1794, reported that during the last 40 years the "manners" of the people had "undergone a very pleasing alteration." [91] Before that time, "the generality of the inhabitants were, then ignorant in the extreme, and much disaffected towards our civil and ecclesiastical establishments"; but since the change, the churches were attended "with regularity and devotion", and the people had learned "not indeed the chearless refinements of modern Philosophy," i. e. democracy, "but in the perusal of the gospel of peace, to find a healing balm to sooth and to comfort them under the pressure of all the calamities of life." [92] According to the parish return of 1791, the people of Inverness had undergone a similar transformation. They were reportedly decent, regular in church attendance, well affected to the Government, neighbourly, and industrious, and among them "instances of dissipation and profligacy" were rare. [93] Their customs and habits had undergone during the previous 30 years "an alteration greatly to the better. Even the lower farmers and cottagers are by far more industrious than they were formerly, more cleanly in their persons and houses, and improved considerably in their apparel. They make a pleasing appearance on Sundays." [94]

For a community such as Harris, it was a different story. According to the parish return provided by Rev. John MacLeod in 1792, the remoteness of the place from the Lowlands was compounded by the scattered nature of the population.

"Unfortunately the people of this country are so detached from each other," MacLeod wrote, "that there is really no fixing on a station in which any one public institution can be of universal benefit. This circumstance in their local situation, is one great cause of the low state both of knowledge and industry in which we find them." [95] The chronic problem of a lack of qualified clergymen meant that for most people of Harris public worship was a rare occasion. MacLeod admitted that the resulting religious state of the people was due to poor provision by the Church rather than their own shortcomings, arguing that the people were virtuous in a number of ways, and hinted that they were capable of being good Christians were they given the chance.

> Their vices are such as must be supposed, among a people professing Christianity, to proceed from difficulty of access to gospel ordinances, and from a total want of police. We would therefore spread a veil over them. They are more than counterbalanced by their virtues, almost the pure fruits of nature. They are sober, docile, sagacious, and capable of industry, were a channel opened to them in which industry might be profitably exerted. They are kind and courteous to strangers, hospitable and charitable even to excess. They have the strongest attachment to their native country, and entertain the most ardent gratitude to benefactors. [96]

In practical terms northwest Sutherland was as remote from

the Lowlands as Harris, but like the Campbells, the MacKays were "loyal" and staunch Protestants before the Jacobite rebellions and therefore did not need to be "civilized". According to Rev. Alexander Falconer's return of 1791-2, the people of Eddrachillis "are all Presbyterians, and have been so, for so long a time back, that the present generation have no remembrance of seeing in the country any residenter of another persuasion." [97] Despite their distance from the "civilized" south, Falconer found the people to be "remarkable for their attendance upon divine ordinances and public worship, for the sobriety and regularity of their manners and lives, without being addicted to any particular vice in any remarkable degree." [98]

Their character for peaceableness, and their harmony among themselves, is uncommon. For the last 20 years and more, scarce one instance has happened of any of them receiving any bodily hurt from another . . . They love also to appear as decent and clean as possible; so that the fishers, who frequent this place, have declared they make the most decent and cleanly appearance of any Highlanders on the whole coast. [99]

In his return for the parish of Kintail in 1792, Roderick Morison reported that there were 654 Protestants, but alarmingly, 186 Roman Catholics. [100] Morison offered several explanations for this. The presbytery of Lochcarron had passed an act in 1778 which made the keeping of accurate

baptismal registers mandatory, and to pay for this, all parents who wanted their children baptised were to pay one shilling. The result of this change was that "many of the most ignorant in Glenelchaig hearing of the new act, considered it as a heavy grievance; and, to avoid its consequence, applied to Roman Catholic priests for baptism, and in the heat of passion dragged whole families after them." [101] Morison failed to consider, or refused to admit to, the possibility that this was a case of non-juring Episcopalians choosing to become Catholic rather than Presbyterian. A second explanation was the number of Catholics had increased as a result of intermarriage. "When a Protestant man marries a Roman Catholic woman he has very little domestic peace or happiness till he profess that religion, in which, he is often told by the wife, salvation can only be expected. This is a web which catches many a silly fly." [102] The third reason offered by Morison concerned a curious (and rather questionable) effect of the West Highland climate which he alleged the Catholic priests exploited in order to gain converts.

> It is to be regretted that the people are subject to low and melancholy fits, which (as is conjectured) arises from too much hazy and damp weather; on these occasions a priest, with whom the art of exorcism is supposed to be found, attends for relief to the distressed. If it happens that a kind providence thereafter removes the malady, the glory of the cure redounds to human frailty, and the pretended miracle becomes

> the ground and ostensible reason on conversion. [103]

The last reason given by Morison for the increase of "popery" in his parish was simple ignorance, but he hoped that a school to be established by the SSPCK would remedy the situation. "The people in the district of Glenelchaig," he wrote, "where Popery prevails most, are extremely ignorant, and easily become the dupes of trafficking priests." [104] Morison explained this as a result of ignorance and illiteracy, but expressed the hope that the SSPCK "will soon appoint a school, whereby the blessings of knowledge may be more liberally diffused through this valley, which is in the near neighbourhood of a Popish district." [105]

Evangelical religion and Gaeldom

The battle for the hearts and minds of the Gaels in the years after the Forty-Five was inconclusive. With the death of Charles Edward Stuart in 1788, Episcopalian non-jurancy was a dead issue. Likewise, Roman Catholicism was fast losing its tag for rebellion, and its reputation for "loyalty" was further enhanced with the raising of the Glengarry Fencibles in 1794, a Catholic Highland regiment raised by a priest from Badenoch, Father Alexander MacDonell. These events in the political sphere allowed the Episcopalian and Catholic clergy to consolidate their positions in north Argyll, and South Uist, Benbecula, and Barra respectively. The Lowland-based interventionist bodies

found the task of "civilizing" the Gaels to the tenets of the established church difficult, and while the presbyterian Church of Scotland was dominant in the Highlands and Islands by the late 18th century as never before (largely due to the problems of the other churches) it was far from secure.

The Presbyterian establishment in the Highlands and Islands was largely unaffected by the first Secession of 1733 in which the Associate Presbytery was formed, or the second Seccesion of 1761 from which came the Relief Presbytery. The religious scene in the region was to be transformed not through the efforts of outside agencies but by an indigenous evangelical movement which in a relatively short time was joined by the majority of people in the Highlands and Islands. When the split between the Evangelical and Moderate factions became irreconcilable on a national scale with the Disruption of 1843 the Gaels joined the Free Church in large numbers: the deepening split between the Evangelical and Moderate factions had come to represent the widening social divisions in Gaeldom as a whole.

The rise of evangelicalism can be traced largely to the work of local lay preachers and the educational schemes of the Gaelic school societies (see below). Other causes include the effect of religious revivals, the lack of interest (or even connivance) of some Moderate ministers to the injustices of eviction, clearance, poverty, and emigration, and perhaps more abstractly to a renewed spirit of optimitism after the grim years that followed the Forty-Five, and a resurgence of the "old spirit of loyalty" among

the Gaels, this time to an evangelical preacher instead of a chief who may have abandoned his old obligations.[106] Evangelical religion acts to turn its adherents' attention away from the injustices of worldly life and towards the Afterlife, an effect which has its attractions for oppressed people.

Evangelicalism in the Highlands and Islands had both a spiritual and a social mission. In religious life it stressed the reorganization of ecclesiastical structures, the strict observance of the Sabbath, the importance of catechism and family worship in the Gaelic language, and it placed great emphasis upon the provision of Bibles, even if the Lowland-dominated General Assembly preferred the English-language version. In the social sphere, evangelicals sought to encourage piety and set out to reform Gaelic social customs such as the "immoral" music, dancing, drunkenness and fighting that often surrounded baptisms, marriages, and funerals, supposedly solemn occasions, and they also attacked the "lax" sexual morality which permitted adultery and fornication to go unchecked. True to the Calvinist tradition, evangelicals worked to suppress the remnants of paganism such as the telling of unchristian Fingalian stories.[107] While they might have been "killjoys" in some respects, the zeal with which they sought converts brought them success in a region where the conventional efforts of the established church had been characterized by more than a degree of complacency. The evangelical message offered the Gaels a sense of spiritual dignity at a time when their way of life was being torn apart by impersonal

forces.

Two men who had considerable influence on the evangelical movement in the Highlands and Islands were the Haldane brothers, James and Robert. They were staunchly Calvinist lay preachers of the Baptist and Congregationalist tendency who organized Sunday schools, published evangelical tracts, conducted preaching tours throughout Scotland, and in 1805 claimed to have trained 200 lay preachers.[108] James Haldane, a former seaman, made a preaching tour of parts of the Highlands and Orkney in 1797. He raised the ire of Moderates there for his Antinomian views and his lack of formal credentials, but in his well-attended outdoor revival meetings he was able to assert that what the people heard in the sermons in their local church was not the Gospel; rather, the Gospel was a message that dwelled upon the doctrines of election, assurance, and salvation and considered the Bible to the literal Word of God.[109] In this light, it is not suprising that James Haldane's appraisal of the religious state of the people of Inverness was less glowing than that reported by the Kirk ministers in the *Statistical Account* (see above). But Haldane wished for "the revival of real religion in this place, if it shall please God to send zealous ministers among them, of which many of the people are truly desirous."[110] While he was eager to criticize the lack of zeal on the part of the Moderate-dominated established church, he commented favourably on the Gaels' thirst for "real religion". "It is remarkable," he wrote of the popularity of the Men (see below) "to observe the number which flock to hear any of the

neighbouring gospel ministers . . . It is not at all uncommon on such occasions to see three or four thousand people assemble in the open air to hear the word of life." [111]

Neil Douglas made a similar tour in 1797. A Gaelic-speaking lay preacher, he was appointed by the Relief Synod (most of the original Relief Presbytery of the second Secession rejoined the established church in 1779 but the rest remained as the Relief Church or Synod) with the mission of inquiring into the religious state of the Gaels. The Relief Synod was an evangelical body known for its opposition to the lay patronage system and the links between Church and State.[112] It had devised a scheme to send Gaelic-speaking ministers to the Highlands "to preach the Gospel", not in opposition to the SSPCK, it noted, but "to be fellow-labourers with them in the good cause of enlightening men in the knowledge of Christ." [113] In common with other Evangelicals, the Relief Synod tended to ignore denominational or sectarian divides, and Douglas shared James Haldane's complaint about the inadequacy of the established church minsters. He wrote in the journal of his tour that "no sooner do you enter a company in the Highlands, than they begin to entertain you with the conduct of their clergy, they seem so full of the subject, and so disgusted in general at their manners." [114] He found that this was the case "not only with the common people, but even among the higher ranks, some of whom professed themselves ashamed and grieved at the inconsistencies, which they so often saw in persons of that sacred profession." [115] The

favoured manner among Seceders for spreading the Gospel was the revival meeting, and Douglas used his ability to speak Gaelic to advantage at an rain-soaked open air assembly in Argyllshire in July 1797.

> The tears of many visibly flowed, notwithstanding their efforts to conceal them; and their deep sighs and moans might easily be heard. At the close numbers were overheard to say, The Lord, pity us; We have been all our days in ignorance. The very recollection of these circumstances deeply affects in transcribing them, and makes my bowels yearn afresh towards the poor poeple. [116]

Douglas wrote of Argyllshire, "I had found a number of intelligent people here, some of them, I hope, real Christians," [117] and when he saw the people gathering for the meetings he was "quite overcome with compassion for them." [118] But his enthusiasm was not shared by his collegues in Edinburgh. "But it is so, that the mission to the Highlands seemed to excite very little public attention among them." [119] He explained that "this surely could not arise from a sordid begotted spirit, because it was undertaken by Dissenters," nor was it due to "disregard to our countrymen, as if their souls were less precious than the soul of an African, or an Otaheitean," or from "a spirit of vain ambition, and desire of human applause, as if a home-mission was not so much calculated to gratify this and its kindred passions, as a foreign one." [120] Wherever the fault lay, Douglas was sure that souls of many Gaels were in

mortal danger due to the lack of action of their behalf. He argued that the Gaels deserved at least the same attention that was given to the "heathens", but because of their mistaken notions of religion, "publicans, harlots, and Heathens, are more easily prevailed on to come into the Kingdom of Heaven than they." [121]

The activism and enthusiasm displayed by evangelicals both within and without the established church must have worried the Moderates, who sought to maintain the status quo in all things religious and political. Moderatism gave unswerving support to the established order to the extent that many Moderate clergymen saw evangelicalism as a manifestation of the radicalism inspired by the French Revolution. As the Gaels were not thought to be very sophisticated in such things, it was feared that revival preachers might spread disaffection as the Roman Catholic priests had allegedly done years earlier. Alexander Carlyle (1722-1805), minister of Inveresk and leader of the Moderate faction, refused in 1795 to allow an evangelical "missionary" to preach in Gaelic to the Highland soldiers stationed in his parish, on the grounds that "these times of sedition and mutiny . . . require that every person in office should be left to do his own duty, and that strangers should be cautious of intermeddling with the religious tenets or principles of any set of people, especially those of the army." [122] If such a contemptuous attitude towards the Gaels existed throughout Moderatism, it is understandable how support for the evangelicals spread in the Highlands and Islands, not only among lay preachers and their adherents

but also to growing numbers of Kirk ministers. A pattern began to emerge in the early years of the 19th century in which the Evangelical party of the Church of Scotland pressed for a more active role in spreading the Gospel through Gaeldom while the Moderate party insisted that religious provision to the area was quite adequate.

An anonymous article on the religious state of Gaeldom appeared in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* in May 1819. The author argued that the Gaels did not need the services of secessionist missionaries, because "religion is among them and around them." [123] Political or other causes might have caused a decline in knowledge, faith or observance among them, and they no doubt needed some assistance in spiritual matters, he wrote, but it was unfair of some to accuse the established church of neglecting the Gaels; the prospect of relieving their "state of comparative ignorance" in comparison with the Lowlands was "no very distant prospect." [124] The moral and religious state of the Highlands and Islands was better than might be expected, the author stressed, and "for ourselves, we cannot agree with those many pious persons who describe, in such dark and mysterious language, the utter oblivion into which true Christianity is there said to have sunk." [125]

The author went on to warn of the dangers of an uninformed opinion. "We see them half-clothed, shrivelled, poor, speechless, and a-gaze; and we pursue our journey in pity of their abject estate. But in doing so, it is possible that we may be the objects of pity far more than they." [126] The

Gaels did not need to be evangelized; though poor, ignorant, and simple, they were Christians. The author expressed the prevailing Moderate view that was unenthusiastic about evangelicalism but which saw religious activism outwith the established church as dangerous. The activities of secessionist groups were not only spreading unsound doctrine and practices but could cause turmoil and even another split within the Kirk itself. Organizations with evangelical credentials but which were recognized by the Church of Scotland, such as the SSPCK or the Gaelic school societies were more respectable and safer vehicles for civilizing the Highlands and Islands.

In refuting the charge often made by the Seceders that the religious provision by the established church to the Gaels was as poor as in a heathen country, the author correctly pointed out that they maintained their Christian beliefs through the oral tradition, and while it was "indeed melancholy" that Scriptures were handed down through the generations in this way it was "the word of God" nevertheless. "Is every Highlander who cannot read the Scriptures, therefore ignorant of what they contain? Assuredly not." They were known for their astonishing feats of memory in poetry and genealogy, and while there might have been glens without a Bible, "there are none without many of its holiest contents engraven on the hearts of some of its inhabitants." [127]

The *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* article included excerpts from a speech made by Dr Alexander Irvine, a leading

Moderate who worked on the SSPCK's Gaelic Bible, to the General Assembly committee for the state of religion in the Highlands and Islands in 1818. In it, Dr Irvine said that at a time when Britain and Europe were ignorant and barbarous, Gaeldom was the seat of religious knowledge. This was due to Colomba's mission in Iona, "whose light was never totally extinguished in the Highlands and Isles." [128] He too attested to the oral tradition of religion in Gaeldom. While Roman Catholicism was overthrown in the Highlands and Islands, he said, and the vacuum was inadequately filled by the Church of Scotland, "many of the people, from a sense of religious duty, retained and acquired religious knowledge, both to refute error, and defend truth. Their memory is wonderfully tenacious, and the more so, that they cannot always trust to art," and perhaps referring to the oral tradition of *Na Daoine* (see below), Dr Irvine reported that he had met people who could neither read nor write but "who could give an account of a sermon almost *verbatim*; who could tell the contents of a chapter of the gospel they heard once read; who could repeat many of the Psalms and their own sacred songs, and many passages of the Bible, with wonderful propriety and accuracy." [129] He admitted that while the Roman Catholic priests "taught errors not yet altogether eradicated from among protestants, they propagated most dilligently the fundamental truths of the gospel, as I had often an opportunity of observing." [130]

However, Dr Irvine was less complimentary towards the missionary efforts of the Secederes whom he belittled for

their lack of proper, i.e. established church, credentials. Their "unstudied, incoherent, unguarded, and often fantastic" sermons had no other aim but to gain recruits "to make them proselytes of terror." [131] He solemnly informed the General Assembly that the effect of the "missionaries" on the people under their sway was anything but "tranquil". "Many of the converts," he said, "became emaciated and unsocial. The duties of life were abandoned." [132] They had become "sullen, morose, and discontented," and "some of them began to talk of their high privileges, and their right, as the elect few, to possess the earth, that is, to dispossess every one but their own faction." [133] Dr Irvine went on to comment upon the social consequences of the irresponsible preachings of the Secederes.

> It was certainly lamentable to see poor children starving and roaring for bread, when their parents were perhaps twenty miles off attending a conventicle. The business of the farm was neglected; the rent fell behind. The landlord was pronounced unchristian, because he insisted on his dues, and because, upon their refusing to pay them, he declined having such tenants. [134]

Dr Irvine here implied that at least some of the Clearances were due to the meddling of the evangelical "interlopers" -- such an attitude reflected the belief that the Secederes caused only chaos. But he had more horror stories to relate. "And to add to the mischief, families became scenes of discord and disorder, which none but an eye-witness can

comprehend. All this was termed religion," and hinting that the entire social order in the Highlands and Islands was under attack, he wrote, "Unless parents became converts to the Missionary or Independent scheme," (which could include Baptists and Congregationalists as well as the more orthodox Calvinist Secederś) "their authority ceased; the children were taught to disobey them as a duty; so were servants their masters."[135] The responsibility for this turmoil was put firmly upon the insidious preachings of the outsiders; however, Dr Irvine did not accord the Gaels much discernment or common sense in the matter. He attempted to portray the evangelical efforts of the Secederś in the most unfavourable light. He and other Moderates valued church unity above all else and did not object to religious missions to the Gaels provided that they were led by the Kirk or some other "official" body. The Moderates believed that if a problem did exist, it could be solved merely by the improved provision of churches and ministers, without giving much thought to the actual wants of the people in the way of religion; they held the prevailing Lowland attitude shared by interventionist bodies such as the Annexed Estates Board, the SSPCK, and others, that the Gaels were incapable of "civilizing" themselves. Yet, in the end it was not the efforts of these bodies that the Gaeldom was transformed, but as the result of an indigenous evangelical impetus which inspired the Gaelic school societies and most importantly the lay preachers known as "The Men".

The provision of schools -- the Gaelic school societies and others

A powerful tool of indigenous Highland evangelicalism was created with the founding of the Edinburgh Society for the Support of Gaelic Schools in 1811. It had the objective of rescuing the Gaels "from a depth of ignorance, which exposed to the most imminent peril multitudes of their immortal souls." [136]

This was an evangelical society which sought to address a problem that had plagued previous attempts by the SSPCK and others to educate the Gaels -- the language barrier. In common with the SSPCK, its chief aim was to spread the Gospel through the operation of ambulatory schools, but it departed from the norm with the policy of teaching the people to read the Bible in Gaelic and a non-denominational policy. The founders of the Society were careful to acknowledge that the efforts of the SSPCK had been "highly beneficial, as a means of promoting civilization and Christian knowledge in the Highlands and Islands", [137] but although the SSPCK was maintainting 290 schools at which nearly 16,000 young people were taught, they observed, "it is a melancholy fact that many parts of the Highlands and Islands continue in a state of great ignorance, and that only a small proportion of the inhabitants can read in any language." [138] The founders resolved that the people of the "more highly favoured" parts of Scotland were bound "both by considerations of patriotism and of religion, to exert themselves for ameliorating the temporal and spiritual

condition of these highly interesting, but hitherto neglected parts of their native country." [139]

To accomplish its aim, the Society resolved that "the most expeditious, cheapest, and most effectual method of promoting the instruction of the inhabitants of the Highlands and Islands, is the erection of Circulating Schools, for the express purpose of instructing them in the Gaelic language," and that the only objective "shall be to teach the inhabitants to read the Holy Scriptures in their native language." [140] The Society further resolved to confine its attention "to those parts of the Highlands and Islands which are most destitute of education." [141] To assert that the Society was to be composed of lay people, and perhaps also to ensure that no religious schism would divide its ranks, the founders resolved that their teachers "shall neither be Preachers nor Public Exhorters, stated or occasional, of any denomination whatever." [142] It was a missionary society which gained the popular title *Na Sgoilean Chriosd* (The Schools of Christ).[143]

The Edinburgh Gaelic School Society's ambitious plan was greeted enthusiastically by evangelicals, and auxiliaries were soon formed in Inverness and Glasgow, but unlike the parent body they adopted a bilingual policy. The Sixth Annual Report of the Edinburgh Society included a testimonial from Rev. John Shaw, minister of Bracadale on Skye, who believed that its plan was the best yet devised for extending religious knowledge to the Gaels, which would not only bring them salvation but which "tends great to

promote civilization in the uncultivated tracts to which it is directed". [144] He had no doubt that the name of the Society would be "long cherished among the hills of the North, after it has ceased from its labours, as the best benefactor of the inhabitants; yea, and with respect to many souls, its memorial shall be , held in everlasting remembrance." [145] In another testimonial to the Edinburgh Society, Rev. Shaw wrote, "The blessing of the present generation that was ready to perish, is coming upon you, and it is impossible to calculate how many, in future ages, will arise and glorify God in your behalf." [146] None of the Gaelic school societies were primarily concerned with spreading literacy or the preservation of the Gaelic language or even promoting educational advancement -- they were in the business of saving souls. Rev. Shaw believed that the endeavour was contributing in its own way to help civilize the Gaels; "It brings to bear upon them, that mighty engine of civilization, comfort, and holiness - the Scriptures, pure and unadulterated. Go on, then, and prosper; and may the Lord stir up many, that shall be able and willing to help you, in these labours of love." [147]

The Edinburgh body received a further testimonial from Rev. Alexander Stewart, the minister of Dingwall and translator of the Old Testament into Gaelic. He reported that through their children, parents were becoming evangelized, and "thus the walls of the cottage were illuminated by the taper which was lighted in the School."

Prayer has been introduced into families, where no

form of devotion existed before: Swearers, liars, and drunkards, have appeared to stand in awe of their own children, knowing how they had been taught at School, to abhor these vices as sins which provoke the wrath of God, and drown the soul in perdition. [148]

In its desire to spread the Gospel through the Highlands and Islands by the most efficient means, the Edinburgh Gaelic School Society taught its students only to read and write Gaelic using only religious texts. To achieve this end, subjects were excluded which other educators would have considered essential, such as English or arithmetic, and perhaps we need to look no further to see why Gaelic never became a commercial or technical language. While teaching Gaels to read and write in their own language was important, an opportunity to expand Gaelic into the new fields of knowledge that came with the Industrial Revolution was not seized. As one writer has put it, "these schools seem to us now not so much as an educational achievement as an educational opportunity lost." [149] However, the Glasgow and Inverness auxiliaries, although smaller and less influential than their Edinburgh parent, decided to include English and arithmetic in their curriculums. The Glasgow Society instructed its teachers to determine whether a prospective student could read the Gaelic Bible; if not, then this deficiency was to be corrected before advancing onto other subjects, resolving that no student was to be taught anything "without being able, first, to read the Scriptures in his vernacular tongue." [150]

Regardless of their shortcomings, the strength of the Gaelic school societies lay in their extention of the benefits of education to girls and illiterate adults, their ability to reach even the remotest areas, and in their non-denominational approach to education which sought the cooperation and participation from all persuasions, including Roman Catholics. In time the Catholic clergy cooperated with the various schemes -- perhaps they supported the change in morality and religiosity that the schools engendered. Rev. Anthony McDonald, a priest on the Isle of Eigg, wrote a letter in 1821 commending the work of the Edinburgh Society.

> In this very Island, I can testify that a wonderful change has been produced on the habits of the people; their improvement in morals is most visible and striking; formerly they devoted the Sabbath entirely to idle conversation or frivolous amusements, as they had nothing of serious nature to engage their attention, but now they regularly attend Divine worship, and read the Scriptures in their private families. In many instances the parents are instructed by their children, by hearing them read the Word of God, in their native language. [151]

The Education Act of 1803 sought to cope with the changing distribution of the Scottish population but was as ineffectual in the Highlands and Islands as it was in the

growing industrial centres. In order to assess the shortcomings of the existing system, a parliamentary select committee on the education of the poor published in 1818 the returns to a questionaire sent to parish ministers throughout Britain, and as the Gaels were poor by any measure the whole of Gaeldom was covered. The replies of the ministers revealed that the provision of education varied widely, and generally the areas more accessible to the Lowlands were better provided. Rev. H. Fraser, minister of the consolidated parishes of Ardchattan and Muckairn, could write that in his area that "the poorer classes have even more ample means of education than most of the parishes in the county; a desire for which is common to the whole of the Highlands, who generally labour under a disadvantage of distance." [152] Similarly, Rev. Hugh McDougall, minister of Killin on Lochtayside, reported that "the poorer classes have the best opportunities of educating their children, as they are not only taught free, but generally have their books supplied gratis." [153] The situation in more outlying areas was altogether different. Rev. Donald McLean of the Small Isles parish wrote of the situation on Rum, Canna, Eigg, and Muck: "The poor are miserably deficient in the means of education; the parish consists of four islands very much separated, it is impossible for all children to attend, although earnestly desirous of doing so." [154] According to Rev. Alex Bethune of Harris, "The poorer classes are without the means of education, and most of them are very desirous of possessing them." [155]

It is evident from the returns to the select committee

inquiry that the Gaels were eager to be educated, but as in so many other cases, poverty and poor communications stood in their way. Rev. William McRae, minster of Barvas, Lewis reported that due to the size of the parish, one-fifth of the children of the parish could not attend the school, and those that could "are scarcely able to pay any fees". However, he found that the people were "very desirous of having their children educated" which was evident by the popularity of the schools of the Gaelic societies. [156] James Russell, minster of Gairloch in Wester Ross, wrote that the means of education in his parish were insufficient due to the scattered population, but wrote that prior to the introduction of the schools, "a great apathy prevailed among the lower classes to the advantages of instruction", but as the benefits of education became known, "their sentiments have undergone a complete change, and they are now as zealous as they were formerly indifferent about the education of their children." [157]

The chronically poor provision of education in the Highlands and Islands was confirmed by a survey conducted in 1826 by the Inverness Society for Educating the Poor in the Highlands, the Inverness auxiliary Gaelic school society. It revealed that despite the existence of 171 parish schools, 134 SSPCK schools, 77 Edinburgh Gaelic School Society schools, 48 schools of the Glasgow auxiliary and 65 Inverness auxiliary schools, only half of the estimated demand of education was being met. [158] After their initial period of growth, the Gaelic school societies began to experience funding problems, and in the 1820s the General

Assembly of the Church of Scotland, spurred on by the Evangelical faction, joined the list of organizations that operated schools in the Highlands and Islands. The General Assembly in 1824 appointed a committee to inquire into the existing means of education and religious instruction in the region, and the results of the inquiry demonstrated "a deplorable want of schools and catechists in many parts of the Highlands and Islands . . . and secure the sympathy and liberality of the benevolent, for the remedy of this evil." [158] After studying the committee's report, the General Assembly released a statement that echoed the words of the parish ministers who took part in the parliamentary select committee in 1818: "*Many* children, it is stated in the returns of the clergy, are prevented from attending a school by their distance from it, and by the poverty disqualifying parents for paying the schools fees, or purchasing school books; but *few* or *none* are prevented by indifference." [159]

The General Assembly acted upon the committee's findings by setting up another committee, dedicated to increasing the provision of education and religious instruction. By 1829 this new committee could boast in a report to the General Assembly of an establishment of 85 schools with over 6000 students; and of these students, "2512 were learning to read Gaelic; 5491 English; 3057 Writing and Arithmetic; 63 Book-keeping; 114 Latin; 57 Geography, and 76 Practical Mathematics or Mensuration." [160] The committee had also wished to extend its efforts "for the purpose of instructing the female youth in the branches proper to their sex", but

was unable to do so because of financial constraints; however, it expressed the wish that "both sexes should be instructed in the branches that were more common to both, than one in the branches peculiar to itself." [162] The committee had also sought to extend the benefits of education to another neglected group -- Roman Catholics. According to the committee, a considerable proportion of its students were Catholic children who were not forced to learn anything that was against the wishes of their parents and their priests. They attended the schools "without jealousy, or reluctance, and receive every branch of literary instruction in the same classes with the Protestants, from the same school-books, and without any sort of distinction betwixt the two denominations", but the committee resolved that the schools' religious education was to adhere exclusively to the tenets of the established church, adding that "the Catholic children are invited to participate so far as their advisers may think proper to direct them." [163] The participation of Catholics in the General Assembly schools, as well as those of the Gaelic society schools, could never have been possible without the assent and cooperation of the priests.

The grinding poverty of the Gaels proved to be a serious detriment to the committee's efforts. A letter by Kingussie schoolmaster William McPhail stated that while the price of the required schoolbooks was beyond the means of many pupils, the parents were willing to do without the necessities of life in order to have their children educated.

> The very richest here, if there are any more so than others, are so far from being able to pay fees, that it is no uncommon thing for their children to shun school because their parents cannot purchase the necessary ,school books; and the parents, in this situation, offer me part of their subsistence in barter for the book, though that subsistence is often far too scanty for themselves. They will offer me a daily part of their small, and in winter their rare, pittance of milk and potatoes, which are their only food, - sometimes dearly imported by them from a distance. Though equally necessitous myself, I cannot always be prevailed on to accept of those contributions. [164]

By the 1820s the SSPCK had expanded its scope to include the publishing of Gaelic books and established Raining's School, a teacher-training college at Inverness, but it continued to operate its school system. Patrick Butter, a inspector of schools for the Society, complained in 1824 that in many cases schoolmasters could not speak Gaelic despite the fact that their students understood nothing else. "The plain consequence," he wrote, "is that in the great majority of instances the education of the poor highlander comes in the result actually to nothing." [165] Butter discovered a preference among the parents not only for the teaching of the English language but for its use as the medium of instruction. He explained this as coming from a desire on

the people's part to become bilingual; the Gaelic school societies of Inverness and Glasgow had a bilingual policy, and certainly the Gaels increasingly saw English as the language of economic improvement and advancement in general. Could they have been convinced of the unsuitability or inferiority of their own language, perhaps by the non-Gaelic speaking schoolmasters themselves? Butter wrote that this attitude might have arisen from the people's "sensible perception of a want in this particular whenever they come into contact with any person from the South or when they happen to go southward on business", and resolved to be taught English "if they are to attend school at all." [166]

John Tawse, another SSPCK schools inspector, visited the school at Helmsdale in 1827, where the children whose parents had been evicted during the Sutherland clearances were taught. Of the students, he wrote, "I was much pleased with their appearance and with the manner in which they went through their exercises," and the children "read and repeated with great accuracy, and several of them seemed to have a considerable knowledge of grammar and they answered the questions in the shorter catechism very readily . . ." [167] He found however that the people of Helmsdale "seem to be very indifferent about religion, more so than even in most fishing villages", and reported that the parents laughed at the teacher when he requested them to send their children to the Society's Sabbath school. [168] Tawse threatened the parish minister with the removal of the school unless the Sabbath school were better attended, and wrote a letter on the subject "with the view of its being

shewn to the Marchioness of Stafford." [169]

Three years later, Tawse inspected the Society school at Stornoway and was well pleased with what he found. He had "every reason to be satisfied with the appearance and proficiency of the Scholars," and reported that the students could read and write well in English and Gaelic. They performed well on the shorter catechism and scripture history and understood "the principles and leading doctrines of Christianity"; on the whole the schools had made "as respectable an appearance as I could have wished, and much better than I expected." [170] By 1830, the people of Lewis had been thoroughly evangelized, and their preference for the more vigourous forms of Presbyterianism has shown no sign of abating 150 years hence. By way of explaining how a formerly "uncivilized" people had become so accomplished, Tawse wrote:

> It is well known that a few years ago, a great awakening took place among the people in the Lewis, and so much alive are they to the necessity of religion and personal piety, that a person who does not possess not only personal piety but great devotion of character will not be esteemed as a Teacher in the Island, and his weight influence and example would be much lost. [171]

Tawse was less impressed with the school at Kilmaluag, in the parish of Kilmuir in Trotternish, Skye, which he inspected the same year. Education suffered from the rugged

nature of the area, a problem that was heightened by a "very considerable indifference on the part of the people to the education of their children, and to the religious instruction of themselves and their families." [172] He hinted that too little effort was being made to remedy this indifference "by those whose more immediate duty it is". [173]

Unlike the General Assembly, the SSPCK pressed on with its plans for offering an education to girls. Patrick Butter had found that parents considered the role of education as "enabling the scholar to migrate from his native country," and as females were not thought capable of holding public office or acquiring a fortune, "their attendance on school is deemed an unnecessary waste of time." [174] But in 1830 John Tawse visited an itinerant sewing school temporarily located at Balmacara, Lochalsh and found the girls at the school "variously employed in all different kinds of needle work, some of it very fine, while one was generally employed reading some edifying book aloud". [175] The schoolmistress had made "a most remarkable change in the neatness order and habits of the people", [176] and Tawse wrote that the establishment of more schools such as the one at Balmacara "would do more for improving the habits and manners of the females in the Highlands than any other local institution I have yet seen." [177] As the skills taught by the school had no other application than in the factories of the Lowlands or beyond, the education offered acted as an intended spur to migration and/or emigration. Tawse's belief that the "habits and manners" of Gaelic girls and women needed special attention meant that their rehabilitation had yet to

occur.

The state of civilization and religion in the 1820s

By the 1820s the Gaels were indeed becoming "civilized". Where people in the Highlands and Islands had been illiterate and ignorant, they were now renowned for their enthusiasm for education; and where people had been for the most part only nominally Protestant, they were now on the way to becoming the most vehement Presbyterians in Scotland. This change was increasingly reflected in the attitudes of non-Gaels towards Gaels -- adjectives such as barbarism and paganism were falling out of use, and comparisons between the Gaels and the "savages" of North America and elsewhere were made less frequently.

There were some Lowlanders, however, who viewed the state of civilization in the Highlands and Islands with some alarm. In 1820 the Associate Synod, the remnant of the Associate Presbytery of the first Secession, devised a plan to provide "a more abundant and regular supply of the means of religious and moral improvement to the destitute inhabitants of the Highlands and Islands." [178] The Synod seemed to dismiss all but its own previous efforts in giving the following reasons for the necessity of the plan, but it was clearly dissatisfied with the progress of evangelical religion in the region.

> The disproportion of the instructors to the population, especially when the geographical

situation of the country is considered,--the deficiencies (to use the softest term) of many of the existing instructors,--the prevalence of Roman Catholic superstition, the ignorance and immorality which generally prevails among the inhabitants,--the anxious desire which many of the inhabitants are discovering for instruction, and the important advantages which have already resulted from occasional itinerant exertions. [179]

In the Associate Synod's view, the spiritual condition of the Highlands and Islands was still poor. This opinion was shared by Rev. John Macdonald when he visited St Kilda, the most remote of the Hebrides, in 1822 and again in 1824. His visits were made under the auspices of the SSPCK, and despite the fact that the Society had established a school there as early as 1711, Rev. Macdonald found that the St Kildans "cannot read, and how to pray they know not . . ." [180] His attitude toward the people of St Kilda was similar to that of other churchmen/explorers of the 19th century when encountering "less civilized" people. He discovered that the people . . .

> . . . are fond of receiving and relating news. [I] endeavoured to gratify them as much as I could; and they, in return, entertained me with all the little tales of their island. I found that this gave me readier access to their minds, and enabled me with better effect to introduce, now and then, something about religion; for as

> yet we were not sufficiently prepared for entering fully on that subject . . . [181]

When Rev. Macdonald did gain access to the minds of the St Kildans with regard to religion, he found that "their views respecting it are rather defective, and in many important points extremely inaccurate." [182] He discussed religious matters with them, "and was agreeably suprised at finding that they could repeat many of the questions of the shorter Catechism," although he believed "they understood little of the meaning of them." [183] In addition to the St Kildans' spiritual shortcomings, Rev. Macdonald wrote, "I fear they cannot be exempted from the charge of almost habitual *indolence*." [184] However, he believed that familiarity with the Scriptures would cure both evils. "How desireable on this, as well as on many other accounts, that they might become savingly acquainted with that Gospel, which teaches its true subjects, to be 'diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord!' In this as in many other respects, they admit of much improvement." [185]

A more objective attempt to assess the progress of "civilization" among the Gaels was made in 1826 with the publication of *Moral Statistics of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland*, a survey conducted by the Inverness Society for the Education of the Poor in the Highlands, the Inverness auxiliary of the Edinburgh Gaelic School Society. The results of the survey indicated that only half the Gaels were literate. In the Hebrides and western parts of Inverness-shire and Ross-shire, 70 percent were illiterate;

in the remaining parts of those counties, and in Sutherland, Cromarty, and the Highland parts of Moray, Nairn, and Caithness, 35 percent were illiterate; and in Argyllshire and Highland Perthshire, 30 percent of the people could not read. The survey also discovered that in the western parts of Inverness-shire and Ross-shire, there was one copy of the Bible for every person over eight years of age, while in other parts of the Highlands and Islands, there was an average of only one Bible for every three people.[166] While it highlighted the extent of illiteracy in Gaeldom, by revealing the fact that the supply of Bibles had outstripped literacy, the survey illustrated the increasing desire for education among the Gaels -- people were procuring Bibles in anticipation of learning to read them.

In the effort to improve literacy and spirituality among the Gaels, the evangelical emphasis upon morality was not forgotten. *An Account of the Present State of Religion throughout the Highlands of Scotland*, an anonymous essay written by an evangelical layman of the established church in 1827, contrasted the state of morals and religion in Skye before and after the arrival of evangelical religion. Before that time, "*gross ignorance of spiritual matters* abounded among the inhabitants, [and] ignorance of this kind is invariably accompanied with *debasing superstition*: and so it was is Skye."[167] In addition, the people of Skye were addicted to profane language. The essayist wrote:

> The first speech uttered by children was mixed with curses and oaths; and how could it be

> otherwise, when their parents habitually indulged themselves in this vice, and set the example to their offspring? It has been reckoned that upwards of sixty oaths and imprecations were used in the island. The language of the father to the obstinate child was, "Devil take you." The wife would curse the husband. The children would curse one another, and their neighbours. When they did not approve of the weather, they would curse the wind, the rain, and the snow. They would *damn to the devil* the shoes and clothes they wore. [188]

Before they were evangelized, the people of Skye were lewd. "This sin abounded to an extraordinary degree among them. We shall avoid details which here might be given, as they would greatly shock morality." [189] The people seemed to prefer secular to spiritual pursuits, and even on the Sabbath this was the case. "Much precious time that might have been profitably spent in acquiring useful and Christian knowledge, was spent by the inhabitants of Skye on the most useless trifles. They were most indolent and negligent in temporal concerns, but much more so in spiritual matters." [190] Apparently, much of the people's time was spent enjoying poetry and Fingalian stories, and "even on the Sabbath evenings they would group together for this purpose, and for other amusements quite unlawful on that day." [191] Non-observance of the Sabbath was common among them, and "in going to, and retiring from sermon, the conversation was exclusively of a worldly nature. In Skye, after sermon some would resort to the public house, and not

in a few instances would remain there until they became intoxicated, and closed the scene with a battle." [192]

For most Christians, funerals are solemn events. For the Gaels, they were occasions of much singing, dancing, drinking, and fighting. According, to the 19th century antiquarian Charles Fraser-Mackintosh, funerals were often used as opportunities for settling old scores. He related an episode from December 1814 when a number of Glenelg men who allegedly "from time immemorial were notorious amongst the rest of the neighbourhood for their savage deeds" seized upon the opportunity provided by the funeral of a local woman to attack a party of Lochalsh men who had also attended the funeral -- apparently this manifestation of inter-district rivalry was not deterred by any religious atmosphere which might have surrounded the ceremony.[193] The way in which Gaels conducted themselves on such occasions was to be drastically altered under the influence of the evangelicals, who often pointed to such practices when discussing the barbarities of the past. The essayist described the attitudes on Skye concerning funerals before the arrival of evangelical religion.

Some were free enough to acknowledge that they experienced delight at hearing of the death of a man or a woman, because of the prospect it afforded them of getting their full of whisky. The friends of the deceased were particularly anxious to solemnize the funeral with a great feast. This woful and barbarous practice was so

general, and of so long standing, that persons, when arrived at old age, manifested a great anxiety to lay by a certain sum of money against their funeral. And upon their death-beds, while indifferent about the state of their souls, they would not forget matters regarding their funeral; often expressing that they could not be happy unless men were drunk and fought at their funerals. [194]

The religious and moral situation on Skye was to change in 1805, when a lay missionary of the evangelical Society for Propagating the Gospel at Home, a Mr Farquharson, visited the island. According to the essayist, "Mr Farquharson's sermons were very pointed and justly severe against the sins that overspread the island." [195] The parish minister of Kilmuir was converted to evangelicalism due to the preacher's sermon; monthly prayer meetings were instituted, and the demand for Bibles increased to the point where the minister procured a supply from the Bible Society in London. [196] Not all of the lay preacher's effects were good, however. "In the year 1812, by means of these meetings, an uncommon awakening [was] attended with distress and trembling, and some were so affected as to cry out." [197] The essayist pointed to the extreme reactions of the more acutely affected people.

During the space of six months a considerable number of persons who before were ignorant and careless were awakened. Yet offences ensued

because of two reasons; first, because many of those who were awakened apostatized and went back to their former ways; second because there were some among those who were awakened, particularly females, who became fanatical in the proper sense of the term.

> They pretended to have *dreams* and *visions*, and to have received a spirit of penetration, which enabled them to foretell who should be saved, and who not. A few of these were at this time so positive in their own conceit, of the certainty of what they affirmed, that they neither could be advised nor reasoned out of it by the most intelligent Christians around them. [196]

Evangelical religion was to have an impact on Skye, but in 1827 the essayist was moved to write that "the great mass of the population . . . still remain ignorant and unconcerned about their everlasting interests", and despite the years of work by the Gaelic school societies and the lay preachers (presumably including *Na Daoine*), in the most "unenlightened" parts of the island the state of morality had not improved since 1805 in proportion to the improvement in literacy and the supply of Bibles.[197] But then, evangelicals are not easily satisfied. The writer blamed the failure on the scarcity of evangelical ministers and teachers and the poor support given by parish ministers to the Gaelic schools. He also reported that the revelry surrounding funerals, complete with drinking, fighting, and

piping, had persisted. "If true religion had made any considerable progress among them, these heathenish practices would have been banished from these parishes." [200]

In the end, it was an indigenous movement that won the Highlands and Islands for Evangelicalism. It could be argued that an evangelical tradition had existed in the Highlands and Islands since the days of Columba, but the modern emergence of evangelical religion in Skye, the Northern Highlands and the Western Isles can be traced to *Na Daoine*, or the Men, a group which gained importance in the early years of the 19th century, and in Argyllshire and Highland Perthshire to a number of evangelical Gaelic poets who gained a considerable following. *Na Daoine* have been described as "spiritual tacksmen": a class of lay leaders whose extensive knowledge of the Scriptures and "aura" of spirituality together with an ability to preach to large numbers in Gaelic won many converts for the cause of evangelical Presbyterian religion. Ever fearful of schism, the established church wished to discourage such "unofficial" preachers. In 1749, the Presbytery of Tongue wrote of the fellowship meetings held by *Na Daoine*, "there are in the several parishes some who take upon themselves to read the Scriptures and other book in the Irish language, and to solve doubts and cases of conscience at these meetings." The presbytery fearing that as the lay preachers were liable to cause harm resulting from their lack of training and mindful of its monopoly on religious matters, it prohibited "any to convene the people to reading and conference" unless the parish minister's permission were

obtained.[201] *Na Daoine* were not loved by the landowners or the Moderate clergy, and for their part, their antipathy of for Moderatism and lay patronage earned them few friends in the establishment; one of their number, Murdo Macdonald of Bayble, gained notoriety by praying to God for the removal of the Moderate ministry of Lewis, and two of the Moderate ministers died within the year.[202] *Na Daoine* wore flowing cloaks and long hair, and were fond of mystical expressions, and some of them reputedly possessed Second Sight;[203] undoubtedly powerful in prayer and strict in their piety,[204] they told of having great encounters with Satan in which they naturally triumphed.[205]

A number of *Na Daoine* were teachers for the Edinburgh Gaelic Schools Society and its auxiliaries, [206] and together with the evangelical poets of the 18th and 19th centuries helped to develop the Gaelic language as a medium for evangelicalism. The poets were able to adapt the qualities of secular Gaelic poetry to spiritual ends to bring about the religious rehabilitation of the Gael.

The Gaels' self-image as expressed in poetry

The Gaels have always expressed their thoughts in poetry, and their ideas about themselves can often be found there. In the past, religious Gaels complained of the earthy nature of their literature which praised the heroic, violent, and overtly sexual aspects of life. John Carswell, the first Protestant bishop of Argyll and translator of the Book of Common Order (Foirm na n-Urrnuidheadh) in 1567, the first

book printed in Scottish Gaelic, decried what he saw as . . .

> . . . the blindness and darkness of sin and ignorance and of understanding among composers and writers and supporters of the Gaelic, in that they prefer and practice the framing of vain, hurtful, lying, earthly stories about Tuath de Dhanond, and about the sons of Milesius, and about the heroes of Fionn Mac Cumhail with his giants . . . rather than to write and to compose and to support the faithful words of God and the perfect way of truth. [207]

The conflict between the religious and the secular in Gaelic poetry was to intensify in the 18th century, a time when Gaeldom as a whole underwent traumatic change. The Rev. Alexander Pope, minister of Reay in Strathnavar, was a collector of Ossianic ballads, and wrote in 1763 of the attempts by the Presbyterian clergy to suppress the ballads: "Many of them indeed are lost, partly owing to our clergy, who were declared enemies to these poems; so that the rising generation scarcely know anything material of them." [208]

Pope was an admirer of the celebrated poet Rob Donn (1714-78), also of Strathnavar. Like Pope, Rob Donn was a Presbyterian, but that did not prevent him from writing poetry of a decidely secular nature. This work found a censor in Rev. Dr. Mackintosh Mackay, an evangelical who edited a 1829 collection of Rob Donn's poems. In the introduction to the collection, Mackay wrote unashamedly:

> We have to acknowledge the blame or merit of having suppressed a few of the bard's humerous sallies, which seemed to us of immoral tendency, or at least unworthy of record. To those who feel disposed to censure this suppression, we tender no apology whatever. [209]

With the coming of evangelical religion to the Highlands and Islands, the Gaelic character seemed to be changing, and this was reflected in the poetry. A poetic example of the old Gaelic order can be found in the work of Alexander MacDonald, also known as Alasdair Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair (c. 1700-1770). The best known of the 18th century Gaelic poets, MacDonald was an SSPCK teacher and catechist until he deserted his post to rally support for the Jacobite cause. His Jacobite poetry was the 18th century equivalent to a military recruitment film. One such poem, "A New Song" (Oran Nuadh), is a call to arms which praises the qualities of the Highland warrior -- recklessness, courage, loyalty, and even bloodthirstiness. A stanza from the poem:

> A warrior stout, of sturdy build,
> White-handed, vigorous, active,
> With bagpipes thrust beneath his arm
> Awakes our warlike passions,
> With tunes both sweet and spirit-rousing
> Urging us to slaughter,
> The music of his stirring airs
> Would fire our reckless spirits. [210]

A contemporary of Alexander MacDonald was John MacCodrum, or Iain Mhic Fhearchair (1693-1779). MacCodrum was a *seanchaidh* (oral historian and genealogist) in the old Gaelic tradition, and was appointed bard to Sir James MacDonald of Sleat in 1763. The chief died three years later, and perhaps the poet realized that the successor, Sir Alexander (later Lord) MacDonald, was of the new breed of Highland chief who saw the ancestral clan lands as a disposable commodity.[211] MacCodrum was a Jacobite as was MacDonald, but was Presbyterian (though not an evangelical), so while he belonged to the old order, he was "civilized". He was a survivor of an age that was at least symbolically destroyed at Culloden and in the later years of his life he witnessed the emigration of many people from his native North Uist; [212] he was well-placed to comment upon the the most uncertain time that had ever faced his people.

In his poetry can be found what has come to be the accepted reply of the Gaels towards the injustices of the clearances, and in keeping with tradition, MacCodrum managed to avoid blaming directly the chiefs themselves; likewise, the common people were free from blame, in contrast to the belief promulgated by evangelical poets who held that the people's suffering was a form of divine punishment. In what is believed to be his last song, [213] "Song to the Fugitives" (Oran Do Na Fogarraich), the poet mourned the destruction of the traditional order but did not admit that "the nobility without pity" was the Gaelic ruling elite itself.

'Tis a sad matter to consider, the land is being made dearer, our people have swiftly left and sheep have come in their place . . .

. . . The warrior chiefs are gone who had a yearning for the truth, who had regard for their faithful followers and had a yoke on their foe; they were mindful of the tenantry, (and) not in order to fleece them; widows and orphans were liberally provided for; without want was every poor man around those heroes, who would not look low - their minds were too stately (for that).

Look around you and see the nobility without pity for poor folk, without kindness to friends; they are of the opinion that you do not belong to the soil, and though they have left you destitute they cannot see it as a loss; they have lost sight of every law and promise that was observed by the men who took this land from the foe: but let them tell me whether they will not lose their right to it, without means of saving it, when you go into exile. [14]

If Alexander MacDonald and John MacCodrum represented the old Gaelic order, then Dugald Buchanan, or Dùghall Bochanan (1716-1768) may be taken to represent the new. The evangelical poets were open to outside influences, and Buchanan is said to have been particularly influenced by the English evangelical preacher George Whitefield's second

Scottish visit of 1742.[215] Buchanan is considered to be the outstanding Gaelic poet of the evangelical movement, and his poetry provides a counterpoint to MacDonald's warlike sentiments. As a 20th century editor of his poems wrote, "Buchanan knew well the weakness of his countrymen -- their admiration for martial Glory, their proneness to quick enthusiasm rather than steady self-control, their emotionalism, and their worship of personal prowess."[216] Buchanan's poem "The Hero" (An Gaisgeach) is the portrayal of a warrior, a *Christian* warrior, with the many of the same virtues that Alexander MacDonald praised in his Jacobite poetry, but this time they are spriritual not militaristic. As his editor put it, "It was a courageous assault upon the inveterate paganism of a gallant race."[217] A few stanzas from an English translation of the poem:

> It is not bravery to mangle men;
> It is not fame to be in combat oft;
> Barbaric pride is not nobility of soul;
> True valour is not fierceness without ruth.
>
> But hero true is he who wins,
> O'er Fears of life and dread of death;
> Who meets with an undaunted breast
> The share that Destiny upon him thrusts.[218]

Buchanan's poem "The Skull" (An Claigeann) from around 1764 has been cited by modern writers an an example of the evangelical response to the injustices experienced by the Gaels. It is a meditation on a skull thrown up by a

gravedigger's spade and includes a reference to Gaeldom's erstwhile chiefs, who had now become greedy landlords, and to worldly and indifferent ministers, presumably those of the Moderate faction.

Or a lord of the land
Do I hold in my hand,
   Whose acres were fertile and wide,
Who was generous and good,
And clothing and food
To the naked and needy supplied?

Or wert thou wont to flay
Those under thy sway,
   Ever grinding thy peasants with rent,
And pressing them sore,
Arresting their store,
Though their need should have made thee relent?

Was thine office to preach?
Didst thou warmly beseech
   Thy people in God's great name?
Didst thou turn back again
Those who hurried amain
Blindfold into hell's fierce flame?

Or, alas! did they share
But a stepmother's care?
   Was God's heritage nothing to thee?
Didst thou leave the poor flocks

To the care of the fox,

If their fleeces secured could be? [219]

Despite the social commentary of "The Skull", Dugald Buchanan was no thorn in the side of the British establishment. He was paid £20 per annum, a considerable sum in the 1750s, for acting as teacher and catechist for the Annexed Estate Board on its estate at Kinloch Rannoch;[220] his job was in effect to "civilize" his fellow Gaels. His poetry more generally stressed the Evangelical belief that worldly suffering is God's punishment for sin, and only in the Afterlife can happiness be found. Its message was one of withdrawal from temporal affairs to an almost fatalistic acceptance of divine will. Buchanan's response to the Clearances holds the landlords to be inhumane (and by implication unchristian) but does not advocate challenging the status quo. According to Donald Matheson (1719-82), an evangelical poet from Sutherland and a contemporary of Buchanan, the turbulent changes being suffered by the Gaels were divine retribution for centuries of paganism and barbarity.

Our ancestors marred
At the very beginning,
Their strength and their case
In old ways of sinning;

The corruption widespread has left me,
Like a poor withered tree--
Of all bloom it bereft me. [221]

As Evangelicalism gained ground in the early 19th century, the Gaels began to see the world and themselves in a new light. The clans had been eager to become involved in political causes on an international scale, i.e. Jacobitism, but as evangelical religion replaced clanship as the driving force of Gaelic society there was a general retreat from temporal affairs and a rejection of old ways.

The outside agencies that intervened in the Highlands after the Forty-Five to bring order and economic prosperity to the region believed their success to be dependent upon the concurrent spiritual and moral rehabilitation of the Gaels. In their eyes, the transformation of the Gaels from rebellious and indolent barbarians to loyal and industrious Presbyterians required the supplanting of Gaelic with English and the elimination of the Non-juring Episcopalian and Roman Catholic clergy whose influence prevented the instillation of proper beliefs, morals and habits. The task of educating the Gaels was largely left to the SSPCK, an evangelical society which saw the promotion of literacy as a means of saving souls rather than as aiding the development of a skilled and well-informed citizenry, and operated on the premise that "civilization" was something the Lowlands could pass on to the Highlands.

The evangelical movement which was to spread throughout Gaeldom came not as a result of the efforts of Lowland-based bodies but rather through the work of *Na Daoine* and the

Gaelic school societies. The evangelical message preached a withdrawal from worldly affairs and an acceptance of divine will in the face of adversity; this provided the Gaels with an alternative to the cultural disorientation that attended the disintegration of clanship and was undoubtedly more attractive than the message of the Mqderate-dominated Church of Scotland whose ministers were often seen benefit materially from the "improvements" that left the people destitute. By the 1820s the Gaels were generally thought to be sober and religious, a belief confirmed by the reputation of the Highland regiments.

Notes

1. National Library of Scotland (hereafter NLS): MS 98, ff. 39-40. Excerpts from 'Informations' regarding the Highlands, c. 1747, anonymous, *Un to his Grace the Duke of New Castle one of His Majesty's Principall Secretarys of State.*

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

6. Andrew. Lang, ed. *The Highlands of Scotland in 1750.* From manuscript 104 in the King's Library, British Museum, published by William Blackwood & Sons (Edinburgh, 1898) p. vii.

7. Ibid, p. 70.

8. Ibid, pp. 70-71.

9. Ibid, p. 71.

10. Ibid.

11. Ibid, pp. 85-86.

12. Henry Paton, ed. *The Lyon in Mourning, or, A Collection of speeches, letters, journals, etc., relative to the affairs of Prince Charles Edward Stuart, by Bishop Robert Forbes,* three vols. (Scottish History Society, Edinburgh, 1895-96), I, p. 99. The Rev. John Cameron is the only Presbyterian churchman mentioned in *The Lyon in Mourning.*

13. Lang, pp. 133-35.

14. J.B. Craven, ed. *Records of the Dioceses of Argyll and the Isles 1560-1860* (Kirkwall, 1907), pp. 196-97.

15. J.B. Craven, ed. *Journals of the Episcopal Visitations of the Right Rev. Robert Forbes, M.A., of the Dioceses of Ross and Caithness, and of the Dioceses of Ross and Argyll, 1762 &*

1770 (London, 1923), pp. 160-1 (entry for July 25, 1762).

16. Ibid, pp. 315-6 (entry for 8 July 1770).

17. Ibid, p. 321 (entry for 10 July 1770).

18. Craven, *Records of the Dioceses of Argyll and the Isles*, p. 260.

19. Ibid.

20. Ibid, p. 298.

21. Ibid.

22. David Norman Mackay, *Trial of Simon, Lord Lovat of the '45* (Edinburgh, 1911), p. 293.

23. William Forbes-Leith, *Memoirs of Scottish Catholics During the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (London, 1909), two vols, II, p. 334.

24. Ibid, II, p. 342.

25. Ibid, II, p. 328.

26. Ibid, II, p. 347.

27. Ibid, II, pp. 362-64.

28. *Scots Magazine*, Feb. 1756, p. 100.

29. Roderick Macdonald, 'The Highland District in 1764', *Innes Review* (Edinburgh, 1964), p. 148.

30. Ibid.

31. Ibid.

32. Christine Johnson, *Developments in the Catholic Church in Scotland 1789-1829* (Edinburgh, 1983), p. 238.

33. Alphons Bellesheim, D:D., *History of the Catholic Church in Scotland*, translated by D. Oswald Hunter Blair, four vols. (Edinburgh, 1890), vol. IV, p. 219.

34. Ibid.

35. SRO E.728/39/2: Memorial by Colin MacDonald of Boisdale, Esq., February 1771, to the Commissioners for the Annexed

Estates.

36. Ibid.

37. Ibid.

38. Ibid.

39. Bellesheim, IV, ibid.

40. Ibid, IV, pp. 219-20.

41. Johnson, p. 1.

42. Ibid, p. 124.

43. Ibid, p. 238.

44. Ibid.

45. Scottish Record Office (hereafter SRO) E.729/1: Report from Captain John Forbes, factor upon the annexed estates of Lovat and Cromarty (in answer to the Commissioners' orders and instructions of July 30 1755), pp. 17-18.

46. Ibid, p. 7.

47. John Mason, *Schools on the Forfeited Estates in the Highlands* (unpublished typescript, 1949), p. 6; from SSPCK minutes of General Meeting, 5 June 1755 (GD.95/1/4).

48. Ibid; from SSPCK minutes of Directors of the Society, 20 March 1755 (SRO GD.95/2/7).

49. SRO CH8/212/1: Report of Drs. Hyndman and Dick, appointed by the General Assembly to visit the Highlands and Islands, 1760, pp. 78-79. Another joint effort of the General Assembly and the SSPCK was Alexander Webster's census of 1755 (see below).

50. Ibid, p. 81.

51. Ibid.

52. Ibid, pp. 83-84.

53. Ibid, p. 84.

54. James Gray Kyd, ed. *Scottish Population Statistics*

(including Webster's Analysis of Population 1755) (Edinburgh, 1975). Kyd cites several reasons for Webster's success in obtaining the cooperation of parish ministers: firstly, that he was acting on the behalf of the Government, Lord President Dundas specifically; secondly, that he was Moderator of the General Assembly, and thirdly, that ,he was known for his work in the provision of annuities of the widows and children of the clergy (ibid, p. xv.). In addition, Webster explained in his introduction that he had asked the SSPCK to order every minister within the bounds of those presbyteries where it had established a school to cooperate with the census, with the threat of removing the school(s) in case of non-compliance (ibid, p. 7).

55. Ibid, pp. 33-35.

56. Ibid, p. 60.

57. Ibid, pp. 61-62.

58. Ibid, p. 60.

59. Ibid, p. 59. Webster's estimates are haphazard by late 20th century standards. He counted the number of people on the "roll of examinables", i.e. those who could be examined on the catechism (usually from 6-8 years of age). Webster used the following formula to approximate the total number of inhabitants per parish (*n* being the year of age at which catechism was begun in that parish):

$$\text{No. of examinables} \times ([30+n]/31)$$

(D. J. Withrington, "The S.P.C.K. and Highland Schools in the Mid-Eighteenth Century", *Scottish Historical Review* (Edinburgh, 1962) vol. XLI no. 132, pp. 90-91.)

60. James Darragh, "The Catholic Population of Scotland since the year 1680", *Innes Review* (Edinburgh, 1953), IV,

p. 54. Darragh estimated there were around 33,000 Catholics in Scotland between 1755 and 1765, considerably more than Webster's total (ibid.)

61. William Ferguson, "The Problems of the Established Church in the West Highlands and Islands in the eighteenth Century", *Records of the Scottish Church History Society* (Edinburgh, 1972) vol. XVII, p. 28.

62. SRO CH.8/212/1, p. 81.

63. Ibid. Hyndman and Dick failed to mention the effect of seasonal migration to the Lowlands in search of employment on bilingualism.

64. Ibid, pp. 81-82.

65. Ibid, p. 82.

66. Ibid, p. 86.

67. Ibid.

68. SRO CH.1/1/55: Rev. John Walker's Report to the General Assembly on the state of the Highlands and Islands, 1765, p. 590.

69. Ibid, pp. 595-596.

70. Ibid, p. 596.

71. Ibid.

72. Ibid, pp. 610-611.

73. Ibid, p. 614.

74. Ibid.

75. Ibid, p. 615.

76. Ibid.

77. Ibid, p. 610.

78. Anonymous, *A Short Account of the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge in the Highlands and Islands* (London, 1809), p. 1.

79. Ibid, pp. 1-2.

80. Ibid, pp. 4-5.

81. Ibid, p. 5.

82. Ibid.

83. Ibid, p. 6.

84. SSPCK Account of Funds, 1796; quoted in John MacInnes, *The Evangelical Movement in the Highlands of Scotland, 1688 to 1800* (Aberdeen, 1951), p. 238.

85. Ibid.

86. SRO GD.95/2/7: SSPCK Minutes of Committee Meetings, 5 March 1751, pp. 30-31.

87. Quoted in J.L. Campbell, *Gaelic in Scottish Education and Life, Past, Present, and Future* (Edinburgh, 1945), p. 55.

88. Anonymous, *An Account of the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge, From its commencement in 1709. In which is included, The present state of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland with regard to Religion* (Edinburgh, 1774), p. 52.

89. Ibid.

90. Ibid, p. 53.

91. *The Statistical Account of Scotland, 1791-99, edited by Sir John Sinclair*, D.J. Withrington and I.R. Grant, eds., 20 vols, (reprinted Wakefield, England, 1973-83), 20 vols, XVII, pp. 432-433 (parish of Killearnan).

92. Ibid.

93. Ibid, XVII, p. 108 (parish of Inverness).

94. Ibid.

95. Ibid, XX, p. 87 (parish of Harris).

96. Ibid, XX, p. 94.

97. Ibid, XVIII, p. 386 (parish of Eddrachillis).

98. Ibid, XVIII, pp. 386-7.

99. Ibid.

100. Ibid, XVII, p. 528 (parish of Kintail).

101. Ibid.

102. Ibid, XVII, pp. 528-9.

103. Ibid, XVII, p. 529.

104. Ibid.

105. Ibid.

106. See T.M. Murchison, 'The Disruption', *Companion to Gaelic Scotland*, D.S. Thomson, ed, (Oxford, 1983), p. 63.

107. See John MacInnes, *The Evangelical Movement in the Highlands, 1688 to 1800* (Aberdeen, 1951).

108. A.L. Drummond and James Bulloch, *The Scottish Church, 1688-1843* (Edinburgh, 1973), p. 153.

109. Rosalind Mitchison, *A History of Scotland* (2nd ed. London, 1982), p. 368.

110. J.A. Haldane, *Journal of a Tour through the Northern Counties of Scotland and the Orkney Isles, in Autumn 1797. Undertaken with a view to promote the knowledge of the Gospel of Jesus Christ* (Edinburgh, 1798), p. 86. "Sold for the benefit of the Society for Propagating the Gospel at Home."

111. Ibid.

112. Drummond and Bulloch, p. 62.

113. Neil Douglas, *Journal of a Mission to part of the Highlands of Scotland, in summer and harvest 1797, by appointment of The Relief Synod, in a series of letters to a friend, designed to shew The State of Religion in that country, and The claim the inhabitants have on the compassion of fellow Christians, by Neil Douglas, minister of the Gospel* (Edinburgh, 1799), p. 173.

114. Ibid, p. 85.

115. Ibid, pp. 85-86.

116. Ibid, p. 57.

117. Ibid, p. 59.

118. Ibid.

119. Ibid, p. 136.

120. Ibid, pp. 136-7.

121. Ibid.

122. Mitchison, p. 369.

123. Anonymous, "On the State of Religion in the Highlands of Scotland", *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, May 1819 (No. XXVI, Vol. V), p. 138.

124. Ibid.

125. Ibid.

126. Ibid.

127. Ibid, p. 139.

128. Excerpts from a speech by Dr Alexander Irvine of Little Dunkeld delivered to the General Assembly committee for the state of religion in the Highlands and Islands and the necessity of erecting new parishes in 1818. from "On the State of Religion in the Highlands of Scotland" (no author), *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, May 1819 (No. XXVI, Vol. V), p. 139.

129. Ibid.

130. Ibid.

131. Ibid, p. 142.

132. Ibid.

133. Ibid.

134. Ibid, pp. 142-3.

135. Ibid, p. 143. In the appendix to his speech, also

reproduced by *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, he included some anecdotes of a more shocking nature which he thought might have given undue distress to the General Assembly. "I had the misfortune to see melancholy instances of poor females totally deprived of their mental faculties, raving mad, in all the wildness of frantic despair. I prayed with them, and comforted them; but they refused to be comforted. I shall never forget their shrieks, their groans, and their looks; and, poor things, they could not tell why they were reduced to this state, but that they were frightened by Mr ----. Some of them, if my information be correct, died in a way I shall not name. Of one or two cases I could have no doubt." (Ibid, p. 143.)

136. *The Sixth Annual Report of the Society for the Support of Gaelic Schools* (Edinburgh, 1817), p. 24.

137. Ibid. (Resolutions of the Gaelic School Society [Edinburgh], 16/1/1811).

138. Ibid.

139. Ibid.

140. Ibid.

141. Ibid.

142. Ibid.

143. Victor Edward Durkacz, *The Decline of the Celtic Languages* (Edinburgh, 1983), p. 123.

144. *The Sixth Annual Report of the Society for the Support of Gaelic Schools*, p. 2.

145. Ibid.

146. *The Third Annual Report of the Calton & Bridgeton Association for Religious Purposes; with A Summary Account of the Societies aided from its funds* (Glasgow, 1818), p. 95.

147. Ibid.

148. Ibid, pp. 18-19.

149. John A. Smith, "Gaelic Schools", *Companion to Gaelic Scotland*, p. 259.

150. Durkacz, p. 113.

151. Inverness Society for the Education of the Poor, *Moral Statistics of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland* (Inverness, 1826), appendix: letter from Rev. Anthony McDonald, Catholic clergyman on Isle of Eigg, (16 March 1821), p. xv.

152. Parliamentary Select Committee on the Education of the Poor: digest of Returns to Circular Letter, &c. (1818), p. 1289.

153. Ibid, p. 1415.

154. Ibid, p. 1370.

155. Ibid, p. 1368.

156. Ibid, p. 1427.

157. Ibid, p. 1428.

158. Inverness Society for the Education of the Poor, "Report on the Present State of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland", prefixed to *Moral Statistics of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland*, p. 28.

159. *Statement as to the want of schools and catechists in the Highlands and Islands, by a committee of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1825), p. 3.

160. Ibid, p. 5.

161. *Report of the Committee of the General Assembly, for increasing the means of Education and Religious instruction in Scotland, particularly the Highlands and Islands. Submitted to the General Assembly, May 1829.* (Edinburgh, 1829), p. 7.

162. Ibid, p. 11.

163. Ibid.

164. Ibid, p. 30.

165. SRO GD.95/9/3: P. Butter, *Journal of a Visit to the Schools of the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge* (1824), p. 16.

166. Ibid.

167. SRO GD.95/9/4: SSPCK schools visits by John Tawse (1827-1830), p. 87.

168. Ibid, p. 87.

169. Ibid, pp. 87-88.

170. Ibid, p. 179.

171. Ibid, pp. 181-2.

172. Ibid, pp. 173-4.

173. Ibid, p. 174.

174. SRO GD.95/9/3, p. 35.

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Chapter 3 *Travellers*

Prior to the Forty-Five, few people from the Lowlands, England or abroad ever ventured beyond the Highland line. Fear, ignorance and the difficulty of travel kept them away, but the outcome of the battle of Culloden meant to many that the Gaels were at last tamed, and the military roads begun by General Wade in 1727 (but used to advantage by the Jacobites) were at least the beginning of a modern communications network. For some years after the Forty-Five, travellers' accounts of the Highlands and Islands were preoccupied with the conflict and these were almost invariably written from a Whig perspective. The Gaels were regarded with contempt for their support of the Stuart cause, which was explained as resulting from their poverty and their generally backward and barbaric nature.

However, with the elimination of the Jacobite threat which had inevitably soured attitudes towards the Gaels, interest was reawakened in the race of "noble savages" first described by Martin Martin in his *Description of the Western Isles of Scotland* (1703). Martin's work directly motivated Samuel Johnson's tour of 1773, in which he sought an ancient culture unrefined by modern innovation. Johnson discovered that he was too late, but his account marked the move away from a bland and uncritical acceptance of the standard Whig pronouncements on Highland "improvement". At the same time, Johnson wanted to find evidence to disprove the authenticity of James Macpherson's Ossian, which first appeared in 1760. Despite his efforts, Ossian lured increasing numbers of

visitors to the Highlands in search of a wild and primitive place inhabited by people also fitting that description. As the Highlands and Islands became a favourite subject for Romantic writers such as Sir Walter Scott in the early 19th century, a tourist industry emerged in the region, and while improved communications made travel to the West Highlands and Hebrides less of an adventure, it was made comfortable.

There are a number of recurring themes in the accounts of various travellers, and these are set out as follows: first, the changing attitudes towards Jacobitism and the Gaels' involvement with it; second, the impact of Ossian and later the Romantic movement upon perceptions of the Highlands; third, the abolition of clanship; and last, the travellers' unabating fascination with the manners and customs of the Gaels.

Memories of the Forty-Five

Politics dominated most travellers' thinking towards the Highlands for more than thirty years after the rebellion, and misconceptions such as the assumption that Jacobitism was espoused throughout Gaeldom, and the idea that the clan system would have survived but for the defeat of the Jacobites, were repeated again and again. Those of the Whig persuasion could hardly hide their delight at the outcome, and the carnage that followed it was easily dismissed. This euphoria lasted for some time.

Richard Pococke (1704-1765) was an Anglican bishop and

seasoned traveller who made tours of Scotland in 1747, 1750 and 1760, during which he was made burgess of Aberdeen, Glasgow, and other cities.[1] He passed by Culloden in 1760 and saw the mass graves of the Jacobites there. In his journal of the tour, he commented that following the battle, the dead Highlanders "were all instantly stripped by the Women who went loaded with Spoils to Inverness, and the bodies were soon naked all over the field." However, he pointed out that "it is said the few that fell of our Soldiers were not stripped: those in the field of Battle were killed by Musket Shot and Cannon Ball; the others by the broad sword." He made the obligatory political comment that all visitors of his time made in reference to the battlefield; his being that 16 April 1746 was a day "of such consequence to the British Dominions, and Crowned the Duke with immortal Lawrels."[2] Presumably Pococke was unaware that the majority of Jacobites were Episcopalians.

Thomas Pennant (1726-1798), a Welsh traveller and naturalist, visited Culloden during his tour of 1769 and expressed similar sentiments. For both commentators, the Government victory there in 1746 marked a new era not only for Gaeldom but for Scotland as a whole -- an assimilation into the British system which they viewed as the desirable replacement of diversity with uniformity. Pennant referred to Culloden as "the place that *North Britain* owes its present prosperity to," and his use of that term instead of "Scotland" was common for thirty years after the battle, which was viewed as a watershed by those of the Whiggish persuasion.

Pennant wrote of the nearby Culloden House and its one-time occupant, Duncan Forbes of Culloden, "a warm and active friend to the house of *Hanover*, who spent great sums in its service, and by his influence, and by his persuasions, diverted numbers from joining the rebellion," but who nevertheless "met with a cool return for his attempt to sheath, after victory, the unsatiated sword." "The unsatiated sword" was in fact the beginning of the Duke of Cumberland's bloodthirsty pacification of the Highlands; Pennant argued, "but let a veil be flung over a few excesses consequential of a day, productive of so much benefit to the united kingdoms." [3] The most famous visit of the Highlands and Islands during this period was undoubtedly that made by Samuel Johnson (1709-1784), the leading English man of letters of his time. He was a staunch Tory; Carlyle called him the "last of the tories",[4] but he was not concerned with the political beliefs of the Gaels. By the time Johnson visited Scotland in 1773, Jacobitism as a political movement was extinct. The "Young Pretender" was in his fifties, broken and nearly forgotten (the cult surrounding him had not yet developed) and a threat to no one.

The political tenets of the Islanders I was not curious to investigate, and they were not eager to obtrude. Their conversation is decent and inoffensive. They disdain to drink for their principles, and there is no disaffection at their tables. I never heard a health offered by a Highlander that might not have circulated with

propriety within the precincts of the King's palace. [5]

However, not all travellers could not resist a jab at the defeated clans. Mary Anne Hanway, a young English aristocrat who toured parts of the Highlands in 1775, commented on Charles Edward Stuart's support in the early stages of the rebellion. It was her opinion, based on "the observations I have been enabled to make of the life and manners of the people," that it should have come as no suprise that the Jacobites so easily gained volunteers and captured towns." Hanway's explanation for this was that those "well-affected to government" were greatly outnumbered "in comparison with that ignorant multitude, which run with the stream, and are one moment ready to join the Pretender's standard, and the next, on sight of our troops to discard their new-acquired friends and throw up their bonnets for KING GEORGE." In that light, she wrote, "is it then a matter of wonder that towns should yield, which had it not in their power to make the least resistance to this rabble of desperadoes? for *such*, and not an army, it might, with justice, be stiled." [6]

Ossian and Romanticism

With the "translations" of ancient Gaelic poetry by James Macpherson in the early 1760s, attitudes towards Gaeldom became less predetermined by politics. Ossian presented the Gaels not as backward barbarians but rather as "noble savages", and later, in the full bloom of Romanticism, the

poems and novels of Sir Walter Scott presented to readers an idealized picture of the Highlands and Islands in the days of clanship. Reflecting this cultural rehabilitation of Gaeldom, the themes that were discussed by travellers prior to Romanticism, such as Jacobitism, the inherent barbarity of the clan system, poverty, and idleness, were replaced by an emphasis on Gaeldom as a mysterious and magical place inhabited by a noble race of hardy mountaineers. In general, scenery and the elegant savagery of Macpherson's and Scott's fictional heroes became more noteworthy than the actual state of the Gaels. With Romanticism came a new appreciation of the Highlands and Islands as an area of outstanding natural beauty, and places formerly considered dismal and uninviting now beckoned tourists bent on experiencing the scenic wonders that England and the Lowlands lacked. Loch Lomond and the Trossachs were attractions that were easily accessible to outsiders and became particular favourites of sightseers, especially following Scott's depiction of the area in his poem "The Lady of the Lake" (1810).

Robert Heron (1764-1807), a writer on various subjects who was employed by Sir John Sinclair in the preparation of the *Statistical Account*,[7] wrote a guidebook to Scotland in 1799. His enthusiasm for the Trossachs, that safe and picturesque entry point to the Highlands, predated Scott's; Heron wrote, "every object that can affect the mind with ideas of the rude grandeur and sublimity of Nature, seems here assembled; and no traveller of taste can view this scene without delight and astonishment."[8] The Englishwoman Sarah Murray

(1744-1811), widow of the Earl of Dunmore and author of *A Companion and Useful Guide to the Beauties of Scotland*, also published in 1799, was equally taken with the Trossachs:

> The awfulness, the solemnity, and the sublimity, of the scene at the ford, and by Loch Catherine, is beyond, far beyond description, either of pen or pencil! Nothing but the eye can convey to the mind such scenery: --well may it be called Loc-a-chravy, the lake of the field of devotion. [9]

James Hogg (1770-1835), a sheep farmer in the Borders and the future "Ettrick Shepherd" of Scottish literature, visited the Highlands and Islands in 1803 and communicated his impressions to Walter Scott, who had included ballads contributed by Hogg in his *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*. Hogg too was impressed with the Trossachs; upon entering the area, his initial reaction was that "Nature hath thrown these together in a rage. But on seeing the spreading bushes overhanging the rocks, and hearing the melody of the birds, I softened the idea into *one of her whims*." Such scenes were not to be found in the Borders, to be sure, and "as I had set out with a mind so intent on viewing the scenery of the Highlands," he wrote, "and coming to such an interesting place on the very day that I entered them, I was more than ordinarily delighted." [10]

Dorothy Wordsworth also toured the Highlands in 1803, with her brother William and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and was positively enthralled with the Trossachs. Her account is

apolitical, and she apparently considered the Highlands and Islands to be less of a place where people lived than a subject for artists and poets. At any rate, she was overcome with the "excessive beautifulness" of the place.

> We had been through many solitary places since we came into Scotland, but this place differed as much from any we had seen before, as if there had been nothing in common between them; no thought of dreariness or desolation found entrance here; yet nothing was to be seen but water, wood, rocks, heather, and bare mountains above . . . A road, which has a very wild appearance, has been cut through the rock; yet even here, among the bold precipices, the feeling of excessive beautifulness overcomes every other . . . ''

When Wordsworth and her companions approached Tarbet, at Loch Lomond, they encountered a boy tending a herd of cattle. The sight filled her heart with awe and sent her pen in a characteristically romantic direction. Her tone is condescending in the extreme, and her reference to "a half-articulate Gaelic hooting" confirms the fact that she adhered to the Samuel Johnson school with regard to the Gaelic language.

> While we were walking forward, the road leading us over the top of a brow, we stopped suddenly at the sound of a half-articulate Gaelic hooting from the field close to us. It came from a little boy,

whom we could see on the hill between us and the lake, wrapped up in a grey plaid. He was probably calling home the cattle for the night. His appearance was in the highest degree moving to the imagination: mists were on the hillsides, darkness shutting in upon the huge avenue of mountains, torrents roaring, no house in sight to which the child might belong; his dress, cry, and appearance all different from anything we had been accustomed to. [12]

"It was a text," Wordsworth concluded, "containing in itself the whole history of the Highlander's life--his melancholy, his simplicity, his poverty, his superstition, and above all, that visionariness which results from a communion with the unworldliness of nature." [13]

The cult surrounding the Forty-Five was gaining adherents. James Hogg was an Episcopalian (and not a Whig) and had undoubtedly heard the popular songs by Robert Burns and others commemorating the rebellion. It was therefore not unnatural for him to identify in some way with the Jacobite cause. He was moved with indignation over the Duke of Cumberland's pacification campaign; when he came upon the ruins of the Cameron of Lochiel stronghold at Achnacarry, burned by Government troops in 1746, he saw that "the marks of the fire are still visible, not only on the remaining walls of the house and offices, but also on a number of huge venerable trees, which the malevolent brutes had kindled." [14] In common with many visitors to the Highlands

after the turn of the century, Hogg was touched by the tragic grandeur that was quickly forming around the Forty-Five. He confessed:

> While traversing the scenes where the patient sufferings of the one party, and the cruelties of the other, were so affectingly displayed, I could not help being a bit of a Jacobite in my heart, and blessing myself that, in those days, I did not exist, or I should certainly have been hanged. [15]

A Voyage Round Great Britain was published by William Daniell in 1813 but not published until 1825. Daniell (1769-1837) was a professional landscape painter who specialized in northern English and Scottish subjects,[16] and his tour was undoubtedly for business purposes. It is a large elegantly bound volume, complete with colour engravings by the author, and provides ample evidence that a market had developed for nearly anything with a Highland subject. In the preface to the book, Daniell explains the appeal of his work.

> The country on which we are about to enter is one of the most picturesque in the whole circuit of the island. It has been repeatedly explored and described; but the curiosity of the public respecting it is still unsatisfied, especially in whatever regards the illustration derived from the pencil. None of the tours in the west of Scotland now extant contain engravings at all worthy of

> their respective subjects; and it is a matter somewhat suprising, that a tract so inviting to the painter should not have called forth a single series of views. [17]

Robert Southey (1774-1843), an Englishman who became poet laureate of Britain in 1813,[18] visited the Highlands in 1819 with Scots engineer Thomas Telford. Suprisingly for a court poet of the Romantic age, Southey was on the whole more interested in agricultural issues than in scenery. But no one, it seemed, was immune to grand and sublime sights. Southey visited Ballachulish, "one of the finest spots we have seen, or can expect to see", an area that might have been considered gloomy and foreboding by an earlier traveller, but not by Southey -- he described it in truly poetic style.

> The evening was glorious. To the west the Linnhe Loch lay before us, bounded by the mountains of Morvern. Between those two huge mountains, which are of the finest outline, there is a dip somewhat resembling a pointed arch inverted; and just behind that dip the sun, which had not been visible during the day, sunk in serene beauty, without a cloud; first with a saffron, then with a rosey light, which enbued the mountains, and was reflected upon the still water up to the very shore beneath the window at which we stood, delighted in beholding it. The effect was such that I could almost have wished I were a believer

in Ossian. [19]

John Eddowes Bowman was very much caught up the Romantic ideal, and he knew Scott's novels by heart. For him, Scott provided an ideal vision of the Highlands and Islands, full of beautiful glens and brave people, without the deprivation and emigration that earlier travellers had found so distasteful. At the beginning of his journal, Bowman explains his motives for making the visit. It seems that his impressions had already been predetermined.

> I had for many years felt a strong desire to visit Scotland: - its wild and romantic scenery; its many monuments of rude and barbarous ages; the marvellous events of its ancient and modern history; and the spirit of liberty which still lingers among its mountains, and breathes in its native poetry, had long operated, as so many talismans, to allure me to its soil . . .[20]

The analytical perspective of 18th century travellers is not to be found. Rather than a place to be feared, detested, or reformed, the Highlands had become a grand backdrop for a brave race doing brave deeds. Even Rob Roy MacGregor, formerly considered to be a vagabond cutthroat and a menace to civilization, was reduced to a character from an historical novel. Indeed, Scott's fiction had become a palatable alternative to an often messy past. Bowman recorded his impressions of Loch Lomond:

> This tract was formerly held by the formidable Clan of the MacGregors, which under the celebrated Rob Roy was the terror of the whole country. We fancied that this must be the spot to which Osbaldistone and the wily Baillie Jarvie were conducted by one of Rob Roy's gillies, when they crossed the lake on their return to Glasgow after their adventurous journey to Aberfoil, as the latter place lies over the mountains in this direction. [1]

Bowman's next comment revealed the extent to which attitudes toward Gaeldom had changed. The tourist industry there evidently had become developed enough by 1825 for Bowman to take a boat ride on the loch, and for the occasion, a piper had been laid on to provide the suitable accompaniment. "Here the views are most sublime, affording every gradation of form and colour necessary for a grand picture," Bowman wrote in the language of a true connoisseur of scenery, "and as the vessel alters her course, which she constantly and most judiciously does, the grouping of the scenery is perpetually changing giving the idea of enchantment." He certainly had a vivid imagination.

> The bagpiper on board our vessel was playing some Jacobite tunes and Gathering pibrochs; and we could not help peopling the neighbouring glens and mountains in our imaginations, with hundreds of kilted highlanders, whose common practice it was, within the memory of old persons still

living, at such a summons from their chief, to rush down from their retired dwellings to the appointed place of rendezvous, to pillage and slaughter any hostile clan: presented some singular effects. ==

The extinction of clanship

The period 1745-1830 saw the demise of clanship in the Highlands and Islands. The clan system had been identified with barbarity and treason in the years after 1745, but by the time George IV visited Scotland in 1822, the chiefs and clan gentry had successfully made the transition to the class of landed proprietors, taking up their places in the polite society of Edinburgh, London, and the Continent. The change was made possible through the reorganization of Highland estates along commercial lines, and clansmen were no longer viewed as as military assets in the traditional sense but as recruits for the Highland regiments of the British army, and together with their families as an obstructive and ultimately disposable supply of labour.

Travellers to the Highlands and Islands noticed and often commented upon these changes, but what they wrote was more often than not based on preconceptions and hearsay than close observation. At first the chiefs who "civilized" their clans and "improved" their lands were roundly applauded, a notable exception being Johnson and Boswell. But as the ideals of Romanticism took hold and Scott's poems and novels told the world of the idyllic albeit violent

society clanship had supposedly engendered, the chiefs were just as often condemned for neglecting their duty to their clans. Clearance and emigration were denounced but rarely was an alternative solution suggested.

Dr Johnson and fellow-traveller James Boswell (1740-1795) were wistful about the loss of the Gaels' fierce independence that the breakdown of clanship seemed to symbolize; they had hoped to find boldness and defiance, but instead found capitulation. Boswell recorded in his account of the tour an exchange that took place with Lord Macdonald during their visit to chief's estate in Skye. In light of the man's Eton education, as well as his being "a gentleman of talents," Johnson had been "very well pleased with him in London." But unfortunately for Lord Macdonald, "my fellow-traveller and I were now full of the old Highland spirit, and were dissatisfied at hearing of racked rents and emigration." Unhappy with meeting a chief without a clan, Johnson told him: "Sir, the Highland chiefs should not be allowed to go farther south than Aberdeen. A strong-minded man like Sir James Macdonald, may be improved by an English education; but in general, they will be tamed into insignificance." [23]

Following that remark, Johnson and Boswell attempted to provoke Macdonald by impressing upon him what they believed to be his duties as the chief of a Highland clan, but with little success. Alas, the two men were more embued with the "old Highland spirit" than was their host. Johnson is still lambasted for the ill-informed remarks he made regarding the

Gaelic language and the Ossianic controversy, but he was considerably more critical (and publicly so) of the chiefs' abandonment of their hereditary responsibilities than a number of revered Gaelic poets. As Boswell relates:

> My endeavours to rouse the English-bred Chieftain, in whose house we were, to the feudal and patriarchal feelings, proved ineffectual, Dr. Johnson this morning tried to bring him to our way of thinking, --Johnson. 'Were I in your place, sir, in seven years I would make this an independent island. I would roast oxen whole, and hang out a flag as a signal to the Macdonalds to come and get beef and whisky.'-- Sir Alexander was still starting difficulties. --Johnson. 'Nay, sir; if you are born to object, I have done with you. Sir, I would have a magazine of arms.' --Sir Alexander. 'They would rust.' -- Johnson. 'Let there be men to keep them clean. Your ancestors did not let their arms rust.' [24]

While he displayed the typical Whig tendency to curse anything that smacked of feudalism, Thomas Pennant was quite content with those chiefs who combined improvement and progress with the enlightened paternalism that he believed was part of the clan system. He was a guest at Dunvegan Castle in 1774 and was greatly impressed by the MacLeod chief, a man who "feels for the distresses of his people, and [is] insensible of his own" to the extent that he "has relieved his tenants from their oppressive rents", and in

doing so "has received instead of the trash of gold, the treasure of warm affections, and unfeigned prayer." In exchange he would receive gratitude, a quality which still existed "among those accustomed to a feudal government." [25]

Essentially, Pennant argued for the replacement of hereditary responsibility with charity; he believed that "the highlanders may bless the hand that loosened their bonds, for tyranny more often than protection was the attendence on their vassalage," but that the "gleams of kindness that darted every now and then amidst the storms of severity" had produced "a sort of filial reverence to their chieftain" which he believed to be "in a great degree retained." [26]

Pennant wrote that as a result of the changes brought about since the Forty-Five, such as the abolition of heritable jurisdictions (which Whigs mistakenly took to be the basis of the chiefs' power), "the noxious part of the feudal reign is abolished; the delegated rod of power is now no more." But he stressed that "the tender relation" and the "mutual inclination to beneficience" of the old system should be retained; he wrote, "the chieftain should not lose, with the power of doing harm, the disposition of doing good." According to Pennant, these sentiments were shared by the chief, "which ripen into actions that, if persisted in, will bring lasting comfort into his own bosom, and the most desired of blessings amongst a numerous clan." [27] Pennant was evidently unaware that it had become common practice for chiefs to retain their tenants somewhere on their estates

not out of sentiment but rather to manufacture kelp and to facilitate military recruitment.

Mary Anne Hanway viewed the passing of clanship as something eminently desirable, and credited the civilizing influence of England with accomplishing the change. Her words imply a sentiment expressed by visitors from south of the border, of the inherent rightness of the English way of doing things. Adherents of this belief wanted to spread goodness and light, in the form of progress and industry and the English language to all parts of Britain (and later to the world), always using England as the ideal. Gaeldom represented a great challenge to this form of cultural manifest destiny. Hanway admitted to some resistance to this "noble" cause, but believed that by the time of her tour there was no one who objected to the Treaty of Union.

In the past, Hanway wrote, "it very frequently happened, that, a chieftain would involve his slavish subjects in the calamities of public contest, to gratify his private ambition, his envy, or his avarice. Such, in fact, was the general practice all over this country, till the union with England regulated the power, and put an end to the inhospitable bickerings of these petty princes, and chieftains." [28] Since the union, however,

> . . . many wise acts since passed, have given a proper proportion of liberty to the commonality. Industry, civilization, and plenty, are the natural consequence of such political, public

measures: Notwithstanding this, it was a good while before either the higher or lower degrees of the Scots, could be taught to consider the union of the kingdoms as either constitutional or salutary. Time, however, with its reconciling power, hath rubbed off these prejudices; and I dare say there are none of either rank, who do not rejoice at the friendship which subsists between the two countries. [29]

In contrast to Hanway, the travel writer Sarah Murray was well-informed concerning issues that faced the Gaels, and she was to pass these on to her readers; indeed, her account can be seen as a continuation of Johnson's criticism of Highland "improvement". When she wrote her guide in 1799, the numbers emigrating from the Highlands and Islands was on the increase as evictions became commonplace. Murray attributed the high rate of emigration to the desire of landowners for more and more money and the means they used to get it. "When proprietors lived on their property like patriarchs of old," she wrote, "spending their incomes amongst their tenants, connections, and dependants, they were rich in love and money." "But now," she continued, "almost every laird with his family must in winter reside in London or Edinburgh, where he spends more than he can afford, and gets deeply into debt." She argued, "this is the cause of the alienation of estates as well as the oppression of poor tenants, and the source of emigration."

What is the cause of that dire necessity? The

first cause is luxury; the second, oppression. The remedy, I am afraid, is scarcely now practicable; because, when proprietors of land have learned how to spend on luxury, more than their property can fairly and justly produce; and they have screwed up their poor tenants to a far higher pitch that they can possibly bear, is it likely that they will relax in their oppression, or retrench in their luxurious mode of living? The poor Highlander's alternative therefore is, whether to starve in, or fly from, his native land. [80]

James Hogg visited the seat of George Mackenzie of Dundonell, near Little Loch Broom, in 1803 and found his sheep-farming expertise consulted by the proprietor. Hogg described a situation that was repeated numerous times throughout the Highlands and Islands, and was the very essence of the crisis that faced Gaeldom. "His glens are so crammed full of stout, able-bodied men and women," Hogg wrote, "that the estate under the present system must have enough to do maintaining them." He found what arable land there was to be "impoverished by perpetual cropping", and except for one farm held by newcomers, "the extensive mountains are all waste; for the small parcels of diminuitive sheep which the natives have, are all herded below nearest the dwellings, and are housed every night."

> Dundonell asked me what I thought it would bring annually if let off in sheep walks. I said I had

only a superficial view of it, but that, exclusive of a reasonable extent near the house, to be occupied by himself, it would bring not below £2,000. He said his people would never pay him the half of that. He was loath to chase them all away to America, but at present they did not pay him above £700.

He hath, however, the pleasure of absolute sway. He is even more so in his domains than Bonaparte is in France. I saw him call two men from their labour a full mile, to carry us through the water. I told him he must not expect to be served thus by the shepherds if once he had given them possession. [31]

By the time Robert Southey toured the Highlands in 1819, the rehabilitation of the Gaels' image had reached an advanced stage. The unattractive aspects of the Forty-Five were forgotten, and the Highland regiments had been warmly praised for their loyalty and fearlessness in wars around the world. The Highlands as portrayed by Sir Walter Scott had seized the popular imagination, but his romantic vision did not agree with reality in a place where commercialism and not a picturesque feudalism was the spirit of the age. Southey's was one of the dissenting voices that was raised over the dark side of Improvement that clearance and emigration seemed to represent.

His political stance is difficult to pinpoint - he was often

accused of espousing one philosophy, abandoning it for another, and then denouncing the former.[32] But referring to the controversy surrounding the "improvements" undertaken upon the Sutherland estate, he wrote that there was "a considerable fervent in the country concerning the management of the M[arquis]. of Stafford's estates." He explained that "a political economist has no hesitation concerning the fitness of the land in view, and little scruple as to the means," and admitted that in light of the poverty and the overall impression of sterility that the Highlands conveyed, "the traveller who looks only at the outside of things, might easily assent to this reasoning." He judged the stone huts inhabited by the Gaels to be the worst housing he had ever seen, and felt they deserved better (even if the Irish Gaels did not!).

> But these men-sties are not inhabited, as in Ireland, by a race of ignorant and ferocious barbarians, who can never be civilized till they are regenerated--till their very nature is changed. Here you have a quiet, thoughtful, contented, religious people, susceptible to improvemeht.

> To transplant these people from their native mountain glens to the sea coast, and require them to be cultivators, others fishermen, occupations to which they have never been accustomed--to expect a sudden and total change of habits in the existing generation, instead of

gradually producing it in their children; to expel them by process of law from their black-houses, and if they demur in obeying the ejectment, to oust them by setting fire to these combustible tenements--this surely is as little defensible on the score of policy as of morals. "

Highland manners and customs

The people who visited the Highlands and Islands were intrigued by the strange manners and customs of the people they encountered. The terms used by some travellers in describing the Gaels is similar to that of some 20th century Westerners in describing people of the Third World. The same words are used: wretched, lazy, primitive, dirty, ignorant, warlike, drunk, backward, etc. It seemed as if Lowlanders and the English were amazed that people in Britain actually lived as the Gaels lived. They spoke a strange language, they wore odd clothes, they lived amongst wild surroundings in primitive conditions; in short, they were as different from themselves as could be possible and seemed to embody the ideal of "noble savages". While the Gaels were still perceived as a threat, these differences were not merely curiosities but were threatening in themselves; but as Gaeldom was pacified and economically integrated with the rest of Britain, they became spectacles.

Richard Pococke visited Tongue on the northern coast of Sutherland in 1760. He was impressed: "The people are in general extremely hospitable, charitable, civil, polite, and

sensible." [34] On the other hand, Thomas Pennant was taken aback by the scenes of poverty he witnessed, but what he found even more objectionable was sloth; lazy people would never be able to improve themselves. He wrote of the standard of housing in Upper Deeside, "the houses of the common people in these parts are, shocking to humanity, formed of loose stones, and covered with clods, which they call *devols*, or with heath, broom, or branches of fir: they look, at a distance, like so many mole hills." He continued:

> The inhabitants live very poorly, on oat meal, barley cakes, and potatoes; their drink whisky, sweetened with honey. The men are thin, but strong; idle and lazy, except when employed in the chace, or any thing that looks like amusement; are content with their hard fare, and will not exert themselves farther than to get what they deem necessaries . . . [35]

Pennant did not refrain from making sweeping generalizations on the "national character" of the Gaels. His words were influential, as they became accepted as truth by subsequent travellers for decades. "The manners of the native Highlanders may justly be expressed in these words: indolent to a high degree, unless roused to war, or to any animating amusement," but added "from experience" that they were always ready "to lend any disinterested assistance to the distressed traveller, either in directing him on his way, or affording their aid in passing the dangerous

torrents of the Highlands." Pennant further found the Gaels to be "hospitable to the highest degree, and full of generosity: are much affected with the civility of strangers, and have in themselves a natural politeness and address, which often flows from the meanest when least expected." [36]

Pennant noticed in common with other travellers that the Gaels were naturally curious people, being "excessively inquisitive after your business, your name, and other particulars of little consequence to them: most curious after the politicks of the world; and when they can procure an old newspaper, will listen to it with all the avidity of *Shakespear*'s blacksmith." Of their character, he wrote that they had "much pride, and consequently are impatient of affronts, and revengefull of injuries," but were "decent in their general behaviour; inclined to superstition, yet attentive to the duties of religion, and are capable of giving a most distinct account of the principles of their faith."

Regardless of his many prejudices, Pennant was a keen observer (this fact was grudgingly attested to by Johnson) and could detect the disintegration of the Gaels' traditional way of life, which in his view was inevitable but not undesireable.

> In many parts of the Highlands, their character begins to be more faintly marked; they mix more with the world, and become daily less

attached to their chiefs: the clans begin to disperse themselves through different parts of the country, finding that their industry and good conduct afford them better protection (since the due expectation of the laws) than any their chieftain can afford; and the, chieftain tasting the sweets of advanced rents, and the benefits of industry, dismisses from his table the crowds of retainers, the former instruments of his oppression and freakish tyranny. [37]

Pennant attributed the lack of adequate food supplies in the Highlands and Islands not only to bad weather or poor soil, but also to the evils of whisky distilling. For him, this custom more than any other factor explained the near-constant dearth that the Gaels suffered. In fact, the high rents and congestion in many parts of the Highlands forced many to distill whisky not for consumption but for sale on the illicit market. Of his visit to Islay in 1774 he was moved to write:

> The produce is corn of different kinds; such as bear, which sometimes yields eleven-fold; a ruinous distillation prevales here; insomuch that it is supposed that more of the bear is drank in form of whisky; than eaten in the shape of bannocs. [38]

The French traveller Barthélemy Faujas de Saint Fond was a guest of the Duke of Argyll at Inveraray Castle when he

visited the Highlands in 1784. The Campbell chiefs and gentry were Gaels but of an entirely different sort from the poor peasants about whom Pennant complained. The Argyll estate surpassed all others in the Highlands in embracing the tenets of Improvement; the 2nd Duke of Argyll had begun to cut the ties of clanship as early as 1737 with the selling of tacks to the highest bidder. But like most travellers who visited Inveraray, he was impressed by the urbanity of the company rather than with the policies of the House of Argyll. He wrote: .

> We were received at the house with every mark of friendship in the midst of a numerous company and an amiable family, who, joined to the most polished manners those prepossessing dispositions which are the natural dowry of sensitive and well-born minds. After the first compliments, we placed ourselves at the dinner-table, and as every thing pleased and interested me in this house, which was pervaded, if I may use the expression, with a kindly sympathy, I said to myself -- "The good woman of Tarbet was right. Here is indeed a charming family." French was spoken at this table with as much purity as in the most polished circles of Paris. [35]

The more unique aspects of Gaelic culture attracted the attention of travellers. During her visit to the Highlands, Mary Anne Hanway discovered that "in many houses, they still retain the ancient custom of the pipers playing all the time

the company are at dinner, on his *horrid bagpipes* . . ." She evidently disapproved of this practice: "this is to *me* more dreadful, than the grunting of pigs, the screaming of owls, and the squalling of cats. All these creatures in a concert would be to my ears pleasing, compared to that discordant instrument to which I have a natural antipathy." [48]

Samuel Johnson singled out Gaelic and the bardic tradition for abuse. He had a great desire to expose Ossian as fradulent, and gained Dr McNichol's wrath as a result. Having compiled the first comprehensive English dictionary, his snobbish preference for that language is perhaps understandable, but he was unwilling to admit the possibility that the Gaels could have their own literary tradition. "Of the Earse language," he wrote, "as I understand nothing, I cannot say more than I have been told." However, this lack of first-hand knowledge concerning the subject did not prevent him from declaring that Gaelic "is the rude speech of a barbarous people, who had few thoughts to express, and were content, as they conceive grossly, to be grossly understood." Johnson then proceeded to recount a number of misconceptions concerning Gaelic language and literature which could only have come from a Lowland informant.

> After what has been lately talked of Highland Bards, and Highland genius, many will startle when they are told, that the Earse never was a written language; that there is not in the world

an Earse manuscript a hundred years old; and that the sounds of the Highlanders were never expressed by letters, till some little books of piety were translated, and a metrical version of the Psalms was made by the Synod of Argyle. Whoever therefore now writes in this language, spells according to his own perception of the sound, and his own idea of the power of the letters. The Welsh and the Irish are cultivated tongues. The Welsh, two hundred years ago, insulted their English neighbours for the instability of their Orthography; while the Earse merely floated in the breath of the people, and could therefore receive little improvement. [41]

Perhaps Johnson's motive in rubbishing the very idea of a Gaelic literary tradition lay in his unwillingness to concede that yet another vibrant culture existed (or might still exist) in the British Isles in addition to that of his native country. His claims that "Earse" was never a written language, that no existent Gaelic manuscript was over 100 years old, and that "the sounds of the Highlanders was never expressed by letters" until "books of piety" were translated, presumably from English, were certainly made in ignorance of the Book of the Dean of Lismore, an anthology of Gaelic material dating from the 15th and early 16th centuries, the existence of which was known before Johnson made his assertions. To support his claims, Johnson went on to accuse the Gaels of a general intellectual laziness, which surely did nothing to soften the effect of his first

charge.

> He that goes into the Highlands with a mind naturally acquiescent, and a credulity eager for wonders, may come back with an opinion very different from mine; for the inhabitants knowing the ignorance of all strangers in their language and antiquities, perhaps are not very scrupulous adherents to truth; yet I do not say that they deliberately speak studied falsehood, or have a settled purpose to deceive. They have inquired and considered little, and do not always feel their own ignorance. They are not so much accustomed to be interrogated by others; and seem never to have thought upon interrogating themselves; so that if they do not know what they tell to be true, they likewise do not distinctly perceive it to be false. [42]

While Johnson focused his attention upon the Ossianic controversy, other travellers were moved by less esoteric matters. A peripheral issue perhaps in the scheme of things but one which travellers rarely failed to mention was the distinctiveness of Highland dress. Here was tangible evidence that the Gaels were unlike other Britons. Some observers admired it, while others denounced it as the dress of heathens. Along with the bagpipe, tartan, the kilt, the belted plaid and anything else that could be considered "Highland garb" was banned by the Government in 1747 (except for military use) in an attempt to eradicate the symbols of

rebellion. In the early part of the 19th century, Highland dress became popular, largely due to the fame of the Highland regiments. This fashion became an institution when Sir Walter Scott decreed that for the purpose of George IV's visit to Edinburgh in 1822, it was to be considered the national dress of all Scotsmen.

Barthélemy Faujas de Saint Fond held a dubious but widely-held opinion regarding the origin of Highland dress. He theorized that the belted plaid was originaly introduced to Scotland by the Roman legions, and he saw a parallel between the failure of Rome to conquer the area north of the Highland line and more recent attempts by the Highlands' present inhabitants to preserve their independence. "What is quite certain is that the modern descendants of the ancient Caledonians are so attached to this form of dress, which reminds them of their ancient valour and independence, that the English [sic] government, having repeatedly attempted to induce them to lay it aside, have never been able to succeed." A less romantic but more plausible explanation is that the belted plaid was ideally suited to the climate and terrain of the Highlands, but the Frenchman took the opposite view, stating that "this attire is certainly least adapted to a people who live in so cold and humid a climate as this." [43]

By the end of the 18th century, Highland dress had been transformed into a stylized costume worn chiefly by men of the Highland regiments. But in the Highlands, according to Sarah Murray, "the true Highland dress with the belted

plaid, is now seldom worn; and even the kilt is discarded, except by sporting gentlemen, and farmers, who find it convenient for walking in all places and weathers." [44] Writing in 1819, Robert Southey was pleased at the apparent victory of the trews over the kilt as the preferred dress of male Gaels. "It is proof of increasing decency and civilization that the Highland philabeg, or male-petticoat, is falling into disuse. Upon a soldier or a gentleman it looks well; but with the common people, and especially with boys, it is a filthy, beggarly, indecent garb."

Had he known that only a few years later his patron George IV would put the royal seal of approval on Highland dress, he might have tempered his stance; the monarch began something of a fashion craze in Britain with his brief appearance in a kilt. Southey then repeated the assertion first made in the March 1785 issue of *Edinburgh Magazine* that the philabeg or little kilt was invented by the Englishman Thomas Rawlinson in the 1720s to better clothe the Highland workmen employed in his ironworks in Glengarry and Lochaber.[45]

The more civilized chieftains before that time wore trouse. Those who came from the remote highlands to the rebellion of 1715 were all drest in a long loose garment, home-made, and of one colour, buttoned above and laced below down to the knees, which as the cobler's stall served him for parlour and kitchen and hall, served them for coat, waistcoat, breeches, and shirt. [46]

The effect of George IV's visit on attitudes towards Highland dress is apparent from John Eddowes Bowman's thoughts on the subject. He visited the Highlands in 1825 and remarked that "the Tartan Plaid thrown gracefully over the shoulder, and indeed the whole dress, has a very captivating effect, and is very splendid." [47]

The accounts of those who ventured beyond the Highland line in the years following the Forty-Five reveal a preoccupation with the rebellion. Most travellers, especially those of the Whig persuasion, heaped abuse upon the Gaels for their dangerous folly and backwardness in general. The publication of James Macpherson's Ossian in the early 1760s focused the attention of travellers away from politics and towards the idea of the Gaels as living examples of "noble savagery". However, an influential minority of commentators (notably Samuel Johnson) declined to simply regurgitate the prevailing Whig perspective regarding the "improvements" being undertaken upon Highland estates.

With the arrival of the Romanticism in the early 19th century, the reputation of the Highlands and Islands as a mysterious and picturesque place worth visiting was established. By the 1820s an embryonic tourist industry was in place to meet the demand created largely by the works of Sir Walter Scott which was facilitated by improvements to the region's communications network. Amidst the holiday atmosphere existed voices of dissent, and criticism of the hardship and emigration caused by the commercialization of

estate management came for the most part from English commentators such as Robert Southey. However, most 19th century accounts consist of travelogue descriptions of the romantic and the sublime and reveal the changed status of the Highlander from an object of fear and contempt to that of the archetypal Scot.

Notes

1. Sir Leslie Stephen and Sir Sidney Lee, eds. *The Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 1917, reprinted 1973), XVI, p. 13.

2. Richard Pococke, *Tours in Scotland: 1747, 1750, 1760* (Scottish History Society, Edinburgh, 1887), p. 108.

3. Thomas Pennant, *A Tour in Scotland* (Warrington, England, 1769), p. 158.

4. *The Concise Dictionary of National Biography*, I, pp. 696-7.

5. Dr Samuel Johnson, *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*, (London, 1775, reprinted Oxford, 1924), p. 96.

6. Mary Anne Hanway, *A Journey to the Highlands of Scotland . . . By a Lady* (London, c. 1775), pp. 59-61.

7. *The Dictionary of National Biography*, IX, pp. 702-3.

8. Robert Heron, *Scotland Delineated* (Edinburgh, 1799, reprinted 1975), p. 158.

9. Sarah Murray, *A Companion and Useful Guide to the Beauties of Scotland* (Hawick, 1982), p. 35.

10. James Hogg, *A Tour in the Highlands in 1803* (Edinburgh, 1986), p. 11.

11. Dorothy Wordsworth, *Recollections of a Tour Made in Scotland, A.D. 1803* (London, 1874), pp. 98-99.

12. Ibid, p. 116.

13. Ibid.

14. Hogg, pp. 41-42.

15. Ibid, p. 43.

16. *The Dictionary of National Biography*, V, p. 484.

17. William Daniel, *A Voyage Round Great Britain . . .* (London, 1814), III, p. 1.

18. *The Concise Dictionary of National Biography*, I, p. 1224.

19. Robert Southey, *Journal of a Tour in Scotland in 1819* (London, 1929), pp. 225-6.

20. John Eddowes Bowman, *The Highlands and Islands: A Nineteenth Century Tour* (Gloucester, 1986), p. 3.

21. Ibid, p. 38. The correct spelling for "Bualmaha" is Balmaha.

22. Ibid.

23. James Boswell, *The Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides with Samuel Johnson, LL.D*, (London, 1786, reprinted Oxford, 1924) pp. 254-5.

24. Ibid, p. 256. The chiefs' selling of tacks to the highest bidder, a practice which essentially abolished clanship at a stroke, earned this comment from Johnson: "To banish the Tacksman is easy, to make a country plentiful by diminishing the people, is an expeditious mode of husbandry; but that abundance, which there is nobody to enjoy, contributes little to human happiness." (Johnson, p. 79.)

25. Thomas Pennant, *A Tour in Scotland and a Voyage to the Hebrides*, (Warrington, 1774), p. 293.

26. Ibid, pp. 293-94.

27. Ibid, p. 294.

28. Hanway, p. 126.

29. Ibid, pp. 126-7.

30. Murray, p. 155.

31. Hogg, p. 92.

32. *The Concise Dictionary of National Biography*, I, p. 1224.

33. Southey, pp. 136-7.

34. Pococke, pp. 127-8.

35. Pennant, *A Tour in Scotland*, p. 117.

36. Ibid, p. 193.

37. Ibid, pp. 193-4.

38. Pennant, *A Tour in Scotland and a Voyage to the Hebrides*, pp. 228-9.

39. Barthélemy Faujas de Saint Fond, *A Journey through England and Scotland to the Hebrides*, (English translation Edinburgh, 1784), I, pp. 240-3.

40. Hanway, pp. 132-3.

41. Johnson, p. 104.

42. Ibid, p. 104.

43. Faujas de Saint Fond, p. 266.

44. Murray, p. 155.

45. See J. Telfer Dunbar, *Highland Costume* (Edinburgh, 1977), pp. 33-34.

46. Southey, p. 139.

47. Bowman, p. 71.

Chapter 4 *Romanticists*

As clanship withered under the commercialization of estate management in the decades after the Forty-Five, Gaeldom became a focus for writers and artists. From the 1760s onwards, the Gaels were considered less and less to be the dangerous barbarians who had threatened British civilization, and adjectives such as "dismal" and "foreboding" used by earlier travellers to describe the Highlands and Islands were being replaced by more glowing terms. At a time when increasing numbers of Gaels had to choose between migration to the Lowlands or emigration, a taste for a highly romanticized vision of the Highlands' past developed, which lasted to the Victorian era and beyond. The outside world never knew very much about Gaeldom to begin with, but with James Macpherson's "translations" of ancient Gaelic poetry and later with the poems and historical novels of Sir Walter Scott, both of whom in turn provided inspiration to writers, musicians and artists in Scotland and elsewhere, it was to be fed a constant diet of heroic deeds and epic battles set in a place that never existed outside the vivid imaginations of the Romanticists.

Ossian and Romanticism

The important precursor to the Romantic movement was the work of James Macpherson, who caused the greatest literary controversy in Scottish history -- indeed, the controversy in time became more famous than the poetry itself. The

affair began when Macpherson met the writer and dramatist John Home in 1759. Macpherson stated that he had several pieces of "ancient poetry", and when Home asked to see them, Macpherson asked him if he knew Gaelic. Home replied that he did not, to which Macpherson asked, "Then, how can I show you them?" "Very easily," said Home, "translate one of the poems which you think a good one, and I imagine that I shall be able to form some opinion of the genius and character of the Gaelic poetry." Macpherson declined at first but after some pressure from Home, Macpherson "in a day or two" gave to Home the "translation" of a poem on the death of Oscar.[1] Home was pleased, and showed it to among others Dr Hugh Blair, professor of Rhetoric and Belles Lettres at Edinburgh University. With encouragement (and some say collaboration) from Blair, Macpherson published *Fragments of Ancient Poetry* anonymously in 1760; it sold so well that a second edition was published before the end of the year. The success of *Fragments* enabled Macpherson to make two tours of the Highlands in which he collected Ossianic ballads and manuscripts, and in 1761 he produced the epic, *Fingal*. Macpherson's third and final Ossianic work, *Temora*, was published in 1763.

The authenticity of Macpherson's "translations" of the poems of Ossian was questioned from the beginning by the literati of Edinburgh and London. It fell to Blair to offer a defence, which he did in his treatise on the poems in 1763; he argued that the poems translated by Macpherson were proof of the existence of Gaelic epic poetry amidst a primitive and unsophisticated culture.[2] He sought to strengthen his

argument in favour of the authenticity of the poems by including with the treatise a number of documents supporting his view. He asked his friend David Hume, the great sceptic of the Scottish Enlightenment, for his opinion as to the type of evidence to be included. Hume did not mince his words, and writing from London told Blair that most learned men there doubted the poems were the actual translations of ancient ballads. He did not think the poems would retain their popularity and esteem if their authenticity were questioned, for their "beauty" was not in enough demand to ensure that, and, "if people be once disgusted with the idea of a forgery, they are thence apt to entertain a more disadvantageous notion of the excellency of the production itself." [3]

Macpherson's apparent arrogance angered many of those who doubted his honesty in the first place; Hume wrote, "The absurb pride and caprice of Macpherson himself, who scorns, as he pretends, to satisfy any body that doubts his veracity, has tended much to confirm this general scepticism." Hume had reasons to believe the authenticity of the poems, "more than it is possible for any Englishmen of letters to have," but told Blair of his reasons against it, namely that "the preservation of such long and such connected poems, by oral tradition alone, during a course of fourteen centuries, is so much out of the ordinary course of human affairs, that it requires the strongest reasons to make us believe it." [4]

Those who doubted the authenticity of Ossian were correct in

that the poems were not the literal translations of ancient ballads as preserved in manuscript or taken verbatim from oral sources, but their scepticism came more from a general disbelief that a "barbarous" culture such as Gaeldom could possess epic poetry than from an understanding of Gaelic oral tradition, a subject which few outside the Highlands, let alone in London, knew anything about. In the preface to *Fragments*, Macpherson claimed that he was translating from ancient Gaelic poems. "The date of their composition cannot be exactly ascertained . . . they were certainly composed before the establishment of clanship in the northern part of Scotland, which is itself very ancient," adding that "one circumstance seems to prove them to be coeval with the very infancy of Christianity in Scotland." [5] But Macpherson never complied with his critics' demand to show to the world the original Gaelic manuscripts from which he made his translations; naturally, this refusal to exhibit the original texts led many to disbelieve their existence.

Dr Samuel Johnson was the greatest of Macpherson's critics. His disbelief of the authenticity of Ossian was a major motive for his trip to the Highlands and Islands in 1773, during which he took every opportunity of gaining information which might cast even more doubt on Macpherson's claims. Johnson and Boswell often found people with a knowledge of Ossianic poetry as it existed in the oral tradition, and with the help of their Gaelic-speaking hosts would compare their rendition of certain episodes with Macpherson's "translations"; sometimes they found similiarities, but more often not.

After one such experiment, in which Macpherson's description of a detail closely matched that of the oral tradition, Boswell reminded Johnson that he had said that he did not require Macpherson's translation of Ossian to be any more like the original than that of Alexander Pope's translation of Homer. Johnson replied, "Well sir, this is just what I always maintained. He has found names, and stories, and phrases, nay passages in old songs, and with them has blended his own compositions, and so made what he gives to the world as the translations of an ancient poem." If this was the case, Boswell said, then it was "wrong" for Macpherson to publish Ossian as a poem in six books. "Yes sir," Johnson said, "and to ascribe it to a time too when the Highlanders knew nothing of *books*, and nothing of *six*; -- or were perhaps got the length of counting six." [6]

The controversy surrounding the authenticity of Ossian was at its height during the 1760s and 1770s, a time when no self-respecting man of letters in Europe was without an opinion on the issue, and continued beyond the end of the century. Most dismissed the poems as a modern creation because they believed the Gaels were too backward to possess an ancient literary epic. There was a great number of books and pamphlets published during those years supporting one side of the argument or the other; the most objective of these was the Highland Society of Scotland's report of 1805.

The report was based on thorough investigation and found that while the traditional Ossianic legends were indigenous

to Scotland (some said they were taken from Ireland) and were still to be found in the Highlands, none were found to resemble the fragments produced by Macpherson closely enough to be a direct translation. Therefore, the report concluded, Macpherson had edited the original Ossianic poems wherever he found them and inserted his own compositions, the latter being by far in the majority. This conclusion is shared by modern critics: D.S. Thomson writes, "Macpherson was neither as honest as he claimed nor as inventive as his opponents implied." [7]

However, no one objected to the subject and theme of Ossian; the exploits of the Gaelic legendary heroes as set forth by Macpherson are full of mystery, gloom, sadness, fate, noble savagery, and heroism -- all qualities that would become hallmarks of the Romantic movement. The poems established the Highlands and Islands as an incomparable setting for Romantic stories, and through their French, German, and Italian translations, the rest of Europe learned of Gaeldom. In these ways Macpherson laid the groundwork for Scott's and others' later success in exploiting Highland themes.

The English Romantic poet William Wordsworth was inspired by Ossian and a tour in Scotland with his sister Dorothy in 1803 to write a number of poems about the Highlands. While he dismissed James Macpherson as a forger and imposter, Wordsworth was familiar with Ossianic style and content and occasionally borrowed ideas from Macpherson.[8] It was from his visit to the area around Dunkeld that Wordsworth was moved to write "Glen Almain; or, the Narrow Glen", published

in 1807 and concerned with the legendary bard. Wordsworth must have been alone in expressing the view that the authenticity of Ossian was unimportant. A stanza from "Glen Almain":

> Does then the bard sleep here indeed?
> Or is it but a groudless creed?
> What matters it? I blame them not
> Whose fancy in this lonely spot
> Was moved, and in this way express'd
> Their notion of its perfect rest. *

Wordsworth wrote poems that were more firmly rooted in Highland history. His "Sonnet in the Pass of Killicranky" was inspired by his visit there in 1803, and while it displays considerable political naiveté, it demonstrates the fact that by the beginning of the 19th century, Jacobitism had lost its reputation for insurrection and had become not only a safe literary subject but one readily adaptable to Romantic ideals.

> Six thousand Veterans practised in War's game,
> Tried men, at Killicrankie were array'd
> Against an equal host that wore the Plaid,
> Shephards and herdsmen. Like a whirlwind came
> The Highlanders; the slaughter spread like flame,
> And Garry, thundering down his mountain road,
> Was stopp'd, and could not breathe beneath the load
> Of the dead bodies. 'Twas a day of shame
> For them whom precept and the pedantry

Of cold mechanic battle do enslave.

Oh! for a single hour of that Dundee

Who on that day the word of onset gave:

Like conquest might the men of England see,

And her Foes find a like inglorious grave. [15]

Wordsworth was inspired by a visit to Balquidder churchyard to write "Rob Roy's Grave". In the poem he calls Rob Roy the Scottish equivalent of Robin Hood, and makes the Jacobite into something of a Jacobin. In common with other Romanticists (an exception being Walter Scott), Wordsworth was (at first) taken with the concept of freedom that seemed to emanate from the French Revolution, and because Rob Roy was indeed a law unto himself, he asserted that Rob Roy embodied a number of revolutionary ideals. In the poem he writes that Rob Roy came either too late or too early: too late because "polity was then too strong" and too early because he died before the era of liberty that seemed to Wordsworth to be imminent. The first premise at least is demonstrably wrong, for during Rob Roy's life, "polity" did not exist in the Highlands enough to deter him from anything. Nevertheless, the poem is important if only for the influence it had on Scott -- the title page of his novel *Rob Roy* carries a line from the poem. A stanza from the poem:

Heaven gave Rob Roy a daring heart

And wondrous length and strength of arm,

Nor craved he more to quell his foes,

Or keep his friends from harm.

For thou, although with some wild thoughts,
Wild Chieftain of a savage Clan,
Hadst this to boast of--thou didst love
The Liberty of Man. ''

Sir Walter Scott and Celtification

Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832) played the biggest part in the "cultural rehabilitation" of the Gaels. It was from a number of influences in his youth that Scott received a Highland, and more particularly a "neo-Jacobite" bias that would colour his work. He remembered as a child "detesting the name of Cumberland with more than infant hatred", and recalled hearing of "the cruelties exercised in the executions at Carlisle, and in the Highlands after the battle of Culloden." [12] Scott and his family were Episcopalians and he quite probably sympathized with the Non-juring element of the Jacobite movement. While admitting early in his literary career that he was largely ignorant of "Celtic manners", he stressed that "I have from my youth delighted in all the Highland traditions which I could pick up from old Jacobites who used to frequent my father's house", his father being an Edinburgh advocate who from time to time dealt with former Jacobites.[13] In addition to these impressions, Scott as a young man made a number of visits to the Highlands.

Scott made a tour of Highland Perthshire in 1793 during which he enjoyed the scenery and met a number of Highland

lairds, and from Abercrombie of Tullibody he received anecdotes of Rob Roy.[14] Scott was to build on these contacts with the Highland elite throughout his life. Scott was a Tory and a social climber (witness his mock feudal estate at Abbotsford); he believed that everything good and distinctive about Gaeldom was embodied by the chiefs and clan gentry, and the fact that they might be Eton-educated and permanently resident in London was immaterial, and such a perspective helps to explain Scott's tacit approval of emigration and the Clearances; chiefs such as the nearly-comical Alastair MacDonell of Glengarry were to become Scott's collaborators in his substitution of myth for truth that constituted the cultural rehabilitation of Gaeldom.

One early literary influence was of great importance, for Scott had been an enthusiastic reader of Macpherson's Ossian. "Their tales were for a long time so much of my delight that I could repeat without remorse whole Cantos of the one & Duans of the other," [15] but in time, "the tawdry repetitions of the Ossianic phraseology disgusted me rather sooner that might have been expected from my age," [16] explaining that "Ossian . . . has more charms for youth than for a more advanced stage." [17] On the question of the authenticity of Ossian, he wrote that "after making every allowance for the disadvantages of a literal translation & the possible debasement which those *now* collected may have suffered in the great & violent change which the Highlands have undergone since the researches of Macpherson" he concluded that "incalcuably the greater part" of Ossian was Macpherson's own creation.[18] But he clearly understood the

tenacity with which learned Gaels held to the belief that Ossian was authentic: "When once the Highlanders had adopted the poems of Ossian as an article of national faith you would far sooner have got them to disavow the Scriptures than to abandon a line of the contested tales." [19]

Nevertheless, the influence which Macpherson had on Romantic writers such as Scott, not only in matters of style (an arcane subject for historians) but subject matter as well cannot be underestimated. Ossian suggested to Scott that the Highlands and Islands could not be equalled as a Romantic setting, and only reinforced the persistent Lowland belief that Gaeldom in the days of clanship consisted of savagery, violence, heroism, some culture, but not much else -- a misconception that Scott himself did little to remedy.

"The Lady of the Lake" was Scott's third long poem and was published in 1810. He confided to his friend and correspondent Lady Abercorn in 1806 of a work in contemplation:

> This is a Highland romance of Love Magic and War founded upon the manners of our mountaineers with my stories about whom your Ladyship was so much interested. My great deficiency is that being born and bred not only a lowlander but a borderer I do not in the least understand the Gaelic language and am therefore much at a loss to find authentic materials for my undertaking. [20]

Whether Scott had really overcome this deficiency or not, "The Lady of the Lake" proved to be not only a critical but a commercial success, and ensured that Scott would return to a Highland theme in later works. The keys to this success lay in Scott's Romantic depiction of "Celtic manners", his accurate assumption that the reading public wanted "light and natural poetry, but which would stir the heart",[21] and perhaps most importantly, his description of the Trossachs, that safe and picturesque gateway to the Highlands. Anyone who doubts that Scott created the tourist industry in the Trossachs should consider the sentiments of Welsh tourist John Eddowes Bowman, who visited the area in 1825. "Of all the fairy scenes which Scotland had hitherto presented to our observation," he wrote, "the Trossachs and Loch Katrine must undoubtedly be set down as the most enchanting." He found the scene "just as it is described in the first Canto of the Lady of the Lake." He continued:

> Who that has a mind the least sensible to the charms of Nature and of Poetry, can fail, while rambling here, to bear testimony to the spirited fidelity of the picture which Sir W. Scott has drawn of it in that bewitching gem of poetry? Though the scenery is new and enchanting, we recognize it at every turn, by his luxurious touches, and when we attempt to describe it, it is his glowing language. [22]

In a letter to Scott, the Anglo-Irish writer Maria Edgeworth

explained the popular appeal of the poem. "The novelty of the Highland world as discovered to our view powerfully excites curiosity and interest," and although "it is all new to us it does not embarrass or perplex, or strain the attention. We never are harassed by doubts of the probability of any of these modes of life." While the readers themselves did not know these details of Highland life before reading the poem, "we are quite certain they did exist exactly as they are represented." [23]

In his poems and novels about the Highlands, Scott assumed that his readers knew little or nothing of the subject, which was wise considering that his works were not aimed specifically at the Scottish market, which was too small to support a writer of his ambition, but rather the entire British Empire, and by extension the rest of the English-speaking world. The notes which Scott included with his works, without which the average reader would have been lost, were based upon his researches and impressions and these often reveal what Scott himself thought about his subject. In Canto I, St. XVI of "The Lady of the Lake", the unnamed hero (who is later revealed to be James V) is hunting a stag in the Trossachs when he muses, "To meet with highland plunderers here / Were worse than loss of steed or deer." [24] In his notes to the poem, Scott explained simply that the clans "who inhabited the romantic regions in the neighbourhood of Loch Katrine, were, even until a late period, much addicted to predatory excursions upon their lowland neighbours." [25]

Despite the success enjoyed by "The Lady of the Lake", the poem was soon rendered somewhat obsolete as Byron's romantic poems not only perfected the genre but captured its market. Scott's response was to create his own genre. *Waverley*, published in 1814, is generally credited with being the first historical novel in the English language. It shares a number of elements with "The Lady of the Lake", such as a heroic Highland chief as a central character, the setting of just beyond the Highland line, and Highland-Lowland conflict, but whereas "The Lady of the Lake" is set in the 16th century, *Waverley* is centred on the Forty-Five, and involves one of Scott's favourite themes, historical change. In writing the novel Scott drew on the many Jacobite anecdotes he had received through the years, which he supplemented with printed sources, namely John Home's *History of the Rebellion in the year 1745* (London, 1802) and James Ray's *A Compleat History of the Rebellion* (London, 1746).[26]

The plot involves a young English officer in the Government army, Edward Waverley, who is sent to Scotland at the beginning of the Forty-Five. He meets a Jacobite laird in Lowland Perthshire, makes his way into the Highlands where he encounters a Highland chief, Fergus Mac-Ivor, his sister Flora, and their clan, and soon becomes a Jacobite himself, pledging his loyalty to the cause and to Charles Edward Stuart. The novel follows the course of the rebellion up to the Jacobite retreat at Derby and the subsequent skirmish at Clifton, when Waverley is separated from the army. As a result, the circumstances and result of the battle of

Culloden are described only at second hand, and the "pacification" that followed not at all -- Scott chose not to describe these events in detail. There is no romance in atrocity, to be sure, and while Scott had a regard for accuracy uncommon in fiction writers he was unwilling to let the truth spoil a good story. Scott had written several years before the publication of *Waverley*, "the time is now past when the theme (i.e. the Forty-Five) would have both danger and offense in it." [27]

However, Lorn Macintyre has suggested that for Scott to portray the more unseemly aspects of the battle such as the Duke of Cumberland's order of no quarter "would be offensive to Hanoverian prejudices which Scott himself to some extent shared." [28] In addition, for Scott to describe the battle in his characteristically painstaking manner, he may well have had to reveal the unpalatable fact that Cumberland's army included not only Scots but *Highlanders* (notably Campbells, Grants, and Munros) as well; to do this would have been to undermine the myth, as powerful in Scott's time as our own, that Jacobitism was simply a Scottish or a Highland cause. But *Waverley* had, and still has for some, great appeal, and enjoyed even more critical acclaim and commercial success than "The Lady of the Lake". A critic for the *Edinburgh Review* wrote in Nov. 1814:

> . . . one great source of the interest which the volumes before us undoubtedly possess, is to be sought in the suprise that is excited by discovering, that in our own country, and almost

> in our own age, manners and characters existed, and were conspicuous, which we had been accustomed to consider as belonging to remote antiquity, or extravagant romance. [29]

Byron's work notwithstanding, Scott returned to the long verse romance with "The Lord of the Isles", published in 1815. The poem involves power struggles and divided loyalties in the West Highlands and Hebrides in the years up to and including the Wars of Independence. The climax of "The Lord of the Isles" is a description of the battle of Bannockburn, which is both realistic (he acknowledged John Barbour's *The Brus* (c. 1375) as his source) and romanticized: Scott wished to convey the impression to his readers that Highlanders and Lowlanders, or "Celts" and "Saxons" as he may have preferred, joined forces to preserve Scottish independence and eject the foreign invader. This alleged partnership was an anachronism as the distinction between the two cultures had not yet emerged, but Scott's real purpose was to suggest that the Gaels had always been capable of patriotism, even before the raising of the Highland regiments. From canto VI, verse xxviii of the poem:

> Bruce, with the pilot's wary eye,
> The slackening of the storm could spy.
> "One effort more, and Scotland's free!
> Lord of the Isles, my trust in thee
> Is firm as Ailsa-rock;
> Rush on, with Highland sword and targe,

I, with my Carrick spearmen, charge:

Now, forward to the shock!"

At once the spears were forward thrown,

Against the sun the broadswords shone;

The pibroch lent its maddening tone . . . [30]

Scott's next work with a Highland theme was *Rob Roy*, published in 1818. The novel shares several elements with *Waverley*: a Highlander as a central character; Highland-Lowland conflict, which in *Rob Roy* is represented by the gentleman outlaw himself, and the setting. The story is largely set in the area around Loch Lomond, once again a part of the Highlands easily accessible from the south. It is in *Rob Roy* that Scott most successfully portrays the difference between Highland and Lowland. He describes Glasgow as the principal town of the west of Scotland which attracted trade not only from the immediate area but from the north as well, this demonstrated by the fact that "hordes of wild, shaggy, dwarfish cattle and ponies, conducted by Highlanders, as wild, as shaggy, and sometimes as dwarfish, as the animals they had in charge, often traversed the streets of Glasgow." [31] Scott describes the sight of (and reaction to) Highland drovers at the Glasgow markets:

> Strangers gazed with suprise on the antique and fantastic dress, and listened to the unknown and dissonant sounds of their language, while the mountaineers, armed even while engaged in this peaceful occupation with musket and pistol, sword,

> dagger, and target, started with astonishment on the articles of luxury of which they knew not the use . . . [32]

When writing *Rob Roy*, Scott no longer felt the need to supply his readers with innumerable details contrasting the two cultures; rather, he allowed his characters to express their particular loyalties and prejudices with their own voices. In doing so, Scott preserved a number of ideas that went to form the Lowlanders' overall opinion of the Highlands, particularly with respect to the state of law and order that existed there in Rob Roy's time. Frank Osbaldistone, the Englishman who narrates the story, is reproved by the Lowland magistrate Bailie Nicol Jarvie for his erroneous assumptions regarding the provision of law enforcement in the Highlands:

> . . . the truth is, that ye ken naething about our hill country, or Hielands, as we ca' them. They are clean anither set frae the like o' huz; there's nae bailie-courts amang them -- nae magistrates that dinna bear the sword in vain . . . But it's just the laird's command, and the loon maun loup; and the never another law hae they but the length o' their dirks -- the broadsword's pursuer, or plaintiff, as you Englishers ca' it, and the target is defender; the stoutest head bears langest out -- and there's a Hieland plea for ye. [33]

In explaining the appeal that crime has for the "uncivilized" Gaels, Bailie Jarvie states that there was not work for up to half of them, and that "the agriculture, the pasturage, the fisheries, and every species of honest industry about the country, cannot employ the one moiety of the population, let them work as lazily as they like, and they do work as if a pleugh or a spade burnt their fingers." [34] He tells Frank Osbaldistone of the overcrowding and scarcity that existed in Highland parishes, and while allowing for a proportion of those who "may make some little thing for themsells honestly in the Lowlands by shearing in harst, droving, hay-making, and the like", he said there remained "mony hundreds and thousands o' lang-legged Hieland gillies that will niether work nor want, and maun gang thigging and sorning on their acquaintance, or live by doing the laird's bidding, be't right or be't wrang." [35]

> And mair especially, mony hundreds o' them come down to the borders of the low country, where there's gear to grip, and live by stealing, reiving, lifting cows, and the like depredations! A thing deplorable in ony Christian country -- the mair especially, that they take pride in it, and reckon driving a spreagh a gallant, manly action, and mair befitting of pretty men (as sic reivers will ca' themsells) than to win a day's wage by ony honest thrift. [36]

The chiefs were as bad in this respect as their clansmen,

Bailie Jarvie asserts, "for if they dinna bid them gae reive and harry, the deil a bit they forbid them; and they shelter them, or let them shelter themsells, in their woods, and mountains, and strongholds, whenever the thing's done." [87] Each and every chief tried to maintain the greatest number of clansmen he could, or, which was the same thing, as many clansmen as could maintain themselves "in ony fashion, fair or foul." [88] It is quite believable that someone who lived in an area just south of the Highland line and who suffered the loss of cattle and other property at the hands of Gaels would think the whole of Gaeldom was a den of theives, and in reality these crimes were attributed to Highlanders in general. Unfortunately, Scott presented Bailie Nicol Jarvie as a reliable character and therefore his statements are to be taken as more or less accurate by the reader; in passsing on this misconception without disclaimer, Scott merely enshrined the myth that cattle stealing was an enterprise conducted by entire clans with the chiefs acting in a Mafia "Godfather" role.

The less-than-romantic truth was that such activities were carried out by the criminal element largely outwith the clan system, as the chiefs and clan gentry preferred legal (and more lucrative) means of obtaining additional income. But Scott left his reader in 1818 with the impression that the Gaels had been, until quite recently, . . .

> . . . wi' gun and pistol, dirk and dourlach, ready to disturb the peace o' the country whenever the laird likes; and that's the grievance of the

Hielands, whilk are, and hae been for this thousand years by-past, a bike o' the maist lawless unchristian limmer that ever disturbed a douce, quiet, Godfearing neighbourhood, like this o' ours in the west here. "

Scott returned to Highland subject matter with two short stories, "The Highland Widow" and "The Two Drovers", which were included in *The Chronicles of the Canongate* published in 1827-8. "The Highland Widow" is the story of Elspat, the old widow of a Jacobite and infamous cateran, MacTavish Mhor, who learns that her son, Hamish Bean, has through necessity enlisted with a Highland regiment destined for America. The widow is aghast that her son has joined the army of the "Saxons" and is intent on preventing his departure; Scott means her to represent the "old order" in the Highlands and all it stood for, such as Jacobitism, cattle-stealing, barbarism, etc. The widow was ignorant and isolated from the rest of the world to the extent that "she was quite unconsciousness of the great change which had taken place in the country around her, the substitution of civil order for military violence, and the strength gained by the law and its adherents over those who were called in Gaelic song, 'the stormy sons of the sword.'" [48]

In contrast, her son was well aware of the new state of affairs in the Highlands. When his mother reproves him for enlisting and urges him to become a cateran like his father, he replies,

> . . . how shall I convince you that you live in this land of our fathers, as if our fathers were yet living? When my father lived and fought, the great respected the man of the strong right hand, and the rich feared him. That is ended . . . the land is conquered -- its lights are quenched, -- Glengarry, Lochiel, Perth, Lord Lewis, all the high chiefs are dead or in exile -- We may mourn for it, but we cannot help it. Bonnet, broadsword, and sporran -- power, strength, and wealth, were all lost on Drummossie-muir. [41]

The widow manages to detain her son beyond the time he was to report for duty, and as a result, he is taken prisoner by his fellow Gaels and executed for desertion. Despite the faults of the story, such as the false, Macpherson's Ossianic-like English spoken by the characters, it is Scott's only attempt to portray life in the Highlands in the aftermath of the Forty-Five,[42] and his only story which is concerned exclusively with the common people in the Highlands as opposed to the doings of chiefs and clan gentry.

"The Two Drovers" is a study of national character and involves a dispute between friends that ends in tragedy. The "Celt" is represented by a Gael, Robin Oig, who is "as light and alert as one of the deer of his mountains";[43] the "Saxon" is represented by Henry Wakefield, "the model of Old England's merry yeomen". Friends from previous droves, they meet shortly after the Doune Fair and agree to travel

together, with their herds, to the cattle markets in England. While south of the border, an argument between the men, both jealous of their honour, develops into a feud, which results in Robin Oig killing Henry Wakefield. Robin Oig is taken prisoner, tried, and executed. Scott never makes it clear whether Robin Oig, a ,Gael, is to be taken to represent Scots as a whole, or if Henry Wakefield, a "Saxon", represents the Lowlands as well as England itself. The distinction is an artificial device but was believed to be true by the increasingly anglicized middle and upper classes in Scotland in the early 19th century. Perhaps Scott himself provided the answer in 1822 when he chose Highland Dress (itself an artificial device) to be put forward to George IV and the world as the national dress of Scotland.

The state visit by George IV to Scotland in 1822 was the first by a British monarch north of the border since 1650; no precedent existed for a royal visit since the Union. Walter Scott, the acknowledged expert on the nation's heritage, was the natural choice as Master of Ceremonies for the occasion, for he alone had the reputation for boldness and imagination required to give the event all the pomp and pageantry it seemed to merit. That he had those qualities was demonstrated when he spearheaded the efforts to locate the mysterious Honours of Scotland, and when these relics of Scottish nationhood were found in Edinburgh Castle in 1818 the waiting crowd was told of the discovery by a touch of the dramatic that only Scott could have planned, the raising of the royal standard.[44] A great deal of the pageantry

devised by Scott for the visit was what his son-in-law John Lockhart called "Sir Walter's Celtification of Scotland".[45] Using the trappings of Gaelic culture, mythical or simply concocted, Scott created a "plaided panorama" (again Lockhart's words), casting a powerful spell which presented Scotland as a picturesque, homogeneous place draped liberally in tartan.

By 1822, Gaeldom was a minority culture in the process of marginalisation. Yet within a short time, Scott invented for it a bogus tradition that was taken at the time (and still is) to be both ancient and representative of Scotland as a whole. This development would not have been possible without the conscious co-operation of the chiefs and clan gentry eager to deflect criticism concerning the treatment of their erstwhile clans. Perhaps the most persistent myth created for George IV's visit was that of the Highland Dress. Scott had decided that the kilt and all its accoutrements, by this time a highly stylized costume which bore little resemblence to the dress actually worn by Gaels in the days of clanship, was to be the national dress of Scots for the purpose of the visit, and planned a number of events for which its use was to be obligatory; for one such event, a Grand Ball, Scott decreed that with the exception of those in uniform, "no Gentleman is to be allowed to appear in any thing but the ancient Highland costume".[46] Scott's insistence on the matter of dress not only annoyed many Lowland gentlemen who were most assuredly not Gaels (but who complied anyway), but members of Highland gentry itself. Sir John Peter Grant of Rothiemurchas, father of

Elizabeth Grant, complained of "the whimsical affectation of a sort of highland costume," which he felt was worn "with about as much propriety in the conception and execution as if it had taken place in Paris or Brussels." [47]

Nevertheless, Scott had set the tone for the proceedings when he wrote to the Highland chiefs to procure their participation in a "gathering of the clans" he had planned, not only for the King's benefit but for all to see. He wrote to John Norman MacLeod, 24th chief of his clan, urging him to come to Edinburgh "and bring half-a-dozen or half-a-score of Clansmen, so as to look like an Island Chief as you are. Highlanders are what he will like most to see." [48] David Stewart of Garth, the old soldier whose recently published *Sketches of the Character, Manners, and Customs of the Highlanders of Scotland* had established him as an expert on the Highlands, was in charge of organizing the martial aspects of the pageantry. Garth was also in charge (or guilty) of planning and executing George IV's controversial albeit brief appearance in Highland Dress.

When the King, a large man by any standards, was presented in both kilt *and* stockings during a Levée (formal reception) at Holyroodhouse at which more than twelve hundred gentlemen were introduced to him in the space of seventy five minutes,[49] some were delighted while others were scandalized. "The greatest offense given by that expensive and unfortunate costume was not to aesthetic taste," John Prebble writes, "but to Lowland pride, and to the self-esteem of those Highland gentlemen who wished to distance

themselves as far as possible from the presumed savagery of their ancestors." [50] Prebble quotes James Stuart of Dunearn, who seemed to sum up the feelings of many who witnessed the spectacle.

> The King did not seem to move a muscle and we all asked ourselves when we came away, what had made us take so much trouble. He was dressed in tartan. Sir Walter had ridiculously made us appear a nation of Highlanders, and the bagpipe and the tartan was the order of the day. [51]

While the falseness of Scott's "Celtification" was apparent to many in 1822, the image of Scotland he created has persisted through to the present day, bolstered by among other things, Queen Victoria's neo-Jacobitism and the contributions made by Sir Harry Lauder in the field of light entertainment. Because Scott was the acknowledged preserver of Scotland's past, the myths he created were not only believed to be the truth but were also assumed to be rooted in antiquity. In putting forward the Highland Laddie as the archetypal Scot to the world, he not only reduced a country of rich cultural diversity to a one-dimensional caricature, but gave a false and highly sanitized vision of Gaeldom, where cold commercialism, and not a romantic feudalism, was the reality. Scott was as Edwin Muir described in his *Scott and Scotland*, "a sham bard of a sham nation."

Scott wrote about many aspects of Highland history such as clanship, the Forty-Five, conflict with the Lowlands, and

even the clan battle at Perth in 1396 in *The Fair Maid of Perth* (1828), but on the less-than-romantic topics of clearance, emigration, and the chiefs' abandonment of their hereditary responsibilities to their people, his readers remained ignorant. In order to ascertain Scott's views on the breakdown of the clan system and its causes, one must consult his letters. As these were not the official output of "the Author of Waverley", he could afford to express himself without causing public offense. To his friend and regular correspondent the Marchioness of Stafford, on whose estate the most radical "improvement" programme was attempted, he wrote in November 1811 that he had little doubt that her "patriotic attempts to combine industry with such reliques of ancient manners, as still dignify the highlanders who have the good fortune to be under your protection" would succeed, though perhaps not with "the rapidity that your philanthropy may anticipate." [52]

The Sutherland improvements, which involved the conversion of the interior of the estate to sheep walks and the decanting of the population to the coasts, were very controversial and led to accusations of greed and brutality. However, Scott believed the changes being undertaken in Sutherland were correct, and he reassured the Marchioness of Stafford of the benevolence of her actions.

> It has taken a generation to convert a race of feudal warriors (for such were highlanders previous to 1745) into a quiet and peaceable peasantry, and perhaps it may take as long to

introduce a spirit of action and persevering exertion necessary to animate them in their new profession. In the mean time, a new race is gradually arising who will be trained to those sentiments and habits which the present state of society requires, and which it is your ladyship's wish to introduce, and who will, in the course of twenty years, look back at the prejudices of their fathers, and with gratitude to their mistress who pursued their wellfare in spite of themselves. [53]

Scott's attitude towards the Clearances seems to have mellowed with the passing years, however. In a letter to Maria Edgeworth in July 1830 (in which he used the remarkable device of referring to chiefs and clan gentry as *H*ighlanders and the common Gaels as *h*ighlanders), he wrote, "I am sorry to say that the Highland Lairds like the Irish have in many instances run the reckless course you describe and I would to God that gibbeting one of them would be a warning to the rest." [54] Scott however told her that a Highland chief "is not and cannot be the man towards his vassalls which their fathers were before the year 1745", [55] explaining that "before that fatal year" a chief depended upon the number of his men he could raise, and calculated his wealth on that basis. The only time chiefs and clan gentry went to the Continent was to buy arms "against the grand effort". The outcome of the Forty-Five ended this system, he wrote, and the descendents of the Jacobite chiefs were restored "by the humanity of government but their ancient relation to their vassals could not and should not

be renewed," and if anything remained of "the old influence" it was reserved exclusively for the raising of men for the Highland regiments.[56]

When men were not needed for the army, Scott wrote, "the Chief or Laird naturally enough found the immense herds of society which loitered on his estate rather a curse than a blessing."[57] A single Lowland shepherd could offer ten times the rent for a place "which the highlanders a hundred perhaps in number" could pay, and after the conversion to sheep walks, "six shepherds and twelve dogs would often tenant the land which had maintained fifty families."[58] Scott was well qualified to make such statements concerning sheep farming. A Borderer, Scott came from a sheep owning family. Also, Scott's one-time friend and correspondent James Hogg, a shepherd himself, had toured the Highlands in 1803 and his account of his experiences there, which contained Hogg's views on the suitability and implications of sheep farming in the region, were communicated back to Scott in the form of letters.[59] In addition, Scott revealed to Maria Edgeworth that "Highland gentlemen are fond of *spaglin* as they call it a sort of showy vanity - they are desirous to keep abreast of the English in expense and maintain their own privileges of chieftainship besides."[60]

In light of these circumstances, he continued, the chiefs had no alternative but to convert their estates to sheep walks, despite the emigration that resulted; he added, "It is vain to abuse the gentlemen for this which is the inevitable consequence of a great change of things," but

"when the Highlander is driven on by a personal love of expense the change is attended with more ruinous circumstances and general distress." [91] When this was the case, he wrote, "the lands are bought on speculation often by men of Highland extraction or lowlanders who are kind enough to the people sometimes to speculatists who wish to make the most of their purchase." The latter situation was "difficult and dangerous" in the Highlands, as "there is a point beyond which the highlander cannot be driven. If an attempt is made to drive his cattle you must look for very lawless results. In return while they have anything they will submit to the hardest life rather than leave the glen." [92] He then referred Maria Edgeworth to the writings of the Earl of Selkirk, that entrepreneur of emigration in the early 19th century.

The cultural activities of the Highland Societies

Walter Scott was not the only would-be preserver of Gaelic culture. From the last quarter of the 18th century onwards, a considerable number of societies were formed in London, Edinburgh, and elsewhere to preserve and maintain the more "picturesque" aspects of Gaelic culture, a great stimulus being the increasing amount of attention paid to the Gaels as a result of the popularity of Ossian. While some of these were little more than social clubs that gave gentlemen of Highland extraction or not the opportunity of wearing Highland dress, others actively supported the Gaelic language through the collection and publishing of Gaelic material, as well as sponsoring piping competitions.

The Highland Society of London was formed in 1778 to preserve the dress, music, and "martial spirit" of the Gaels. It was composed of chiefs, clan gentry, and other interested parties resident in London, and among its immediate priorities was the encouragement of piping and the composition of Gaelic poetry. It arranged "gatherings" beginning with the Falkirk Tryst in October 1781 at which piping competitions were held; it tried for twenty years to recruit a MacCrimmon piper in an effort to establish a professorship in the bagpipe at a Scottish university, without success, and encouraged a system of musical notation for the pipes. [23]

The Society began also at the Falkirk Tryst of 1781 an annual Gaelic poetry competition on the fixed theme of the Gaelic language and the bagpipe. The first winner was the already established poet Duncan Bàn Macintyre (Donnachadh Bàn Mac-an-t-Saoir) (1724-1812), who went on to win the prize on five additional occasions by 1789. The English translation below of a verse from the winning poem of 1781 has Macintyre praising the work of the Society as well as making a laughable claim for the popularity of Gaelic south of the border.

London is full at present
of the activity of Highland friends
who are exalting Gaelic,
each day as it comes round;
and because of the excellence with which

the heroes make frequent use of it,
every man in England
would fain have it in their midst. [64]

The task which Macintyre took upon himself in composing a poem every year on the same topic (in order to augment his income as a member of Edinburgh's City Guard, a job he held for many years after leaving the Highlands in 1766), neatly mirrored the commercialization of estate management that was taking place in the Highlands. The artistic limitations imposed by the Society certainly affected an undeniably talented poet; in the opinion of a recent editor of Macintyre's poetry, "it is to be regretted that the subject was not changed: even Macintyre, with all his resources of vocabulary and metrical variations, finds it difficult to produce new ideas on the same topic, year after year. This may account for some obscurities in thought and language to be found in the poems." [65]

One stanza from Macintyre's unsuccessful entry for the competition of 1785 praises the valour of the Highland regiments, who fight in defence of "Gaelic, pipe, and flag", the latter presumably the Union Flag, while another comments on the recent disannexation of the forfeited estates and makes the absurd assertion that once the descendants of attainted Jacobites gained their estates, "no farmer will be in distress."

London is very highly encouraged
by the vigour of the gallant Gaels,

who gained respect wherever they were sought out-
those stalwart, handsome champions,
who are assuming real responsibility
for keeping the country powerful,
and have decreed that, for all time,
Gaelic, pipe, and flag shall be inviolable.

Each incident that befalls them
is more auspicious than the last;
the lands of which they were dispossessed
they have completely regained;
all who have rights will come into their heritage,
they are overlords of their own property;
the heirs will be well to do,
and no farmer will be in distress. [66]

The Highland Society of London played an important part in the belated legalization of the Highland Dress. A Society committee consisting of Gen. Fraser of Lovat, Lord Chief Baron Macdonald and others approached the MP and Pitt supporter the Marquess of Graham (later 3rd Duke of Montrose), who introduced the successful bill in 1782; this achievement was commemorated in a poem by Macintyre, "Song to the Highland Garb" (Oran do 'n eideadh Ghaidhealach), which won him the £5 prize offered by the Society on the subject of the "Glorious Restoration of the Highland Dress" in 1784.[67] The Society further expressed its concern for "the literature and language of the Gael" by subscribing to several collections of Gaelic poetry, resolving in 1788 to give 10gns. annually in support of Raining's School, the

SSPCK's Gaelic teacher training college in Inverness, and by making repeated attempts to establish a Chair in Gaelic and Celtic Literature at a Scottish university, but as with the similar initiative on piping, this too failed.[68]

Not suprisingly, the Highland Society of London became embroiled in the Ossianic controversy, and in 1779 wrote to James Macpherson expressing its wish that he publish the original Gaelic manuscripts he used in his translation of Ossian. Macpherson replied that he was ready to publish the poems as soon as an adequate fund was provided for printing the work "in an elegant manner". In 1782 Macpherson had given what Gaelic poems he had to the Society's secretary but these fragments contained no complete epic in them; two years later the fund established by the Society for the publication of the Gaelic originals received a further £1000 from "patriotic Highlanders" in India.[69] By this time Macpherson was heavily involved in Indian affairs (he had become an MP in 1780), and it was clear he was fast losing interest in the whole matter. Nothing more was heard from Macpherson, who died in 1796. His reluctance over three decades to publish the Gaelic manuscripts from which he allegedly translated should have been enough to convince everyone concerned that no such manuscripts existed. But the Highland Society of London made sure to take possession of Macpherson's papers, a task made easy by the fact that John Mackenzie, the Society's secretary at the time, was also the executor of Macpherson's estate.[70]

In 1805 the Highland Society of Scotland published the

results of its enquiry into the authenticity of Ossian, and in 1807 the Highland Society of London published what was purported to the original Gaelic Ossian with an introduction by Sir John Sinclair. These Gaelic poems were widely believed to be translated from Macpherson's English version and not originals at all, but yet the Society persevered; after the Battle of Waterloo the secretary of the Society was sent to France to find any ancient Celtic manuscripts in the colleges and libraries of Paris.[71]

The Highland Society of Scotland was founded in Edinburgh in 1784 by a group of prominent Improvers who had as their principal aim the economic improvement of the Highlands and Islands, but who were also resolved to "pay a proper attention to the preservation of the Language, Poetry, and Music of the Highlands".[72] In that same year a committee of the Society heard Duncan Bàn Macintyre sing his poem with the irresistable title, "On the Restitution of the Forfeited Estates".[73] The peak of the Society's cultural activities was from the end of the 18th century to around 1825, during which time it acted as a Gaelic "academy of letters", amassing a large collection of manuscripts, papers, and printed work; in the first few years of its existence the Society retained a bard, a piper, and a "Professor of Gaelic", as well as sponsoring Gaelic classes and generally supporting piping.[74] The most lasting legacies of the Highland Society of Scotland's cultural activities were those pertaining to its inquiry into the authenticity of Ossian, the results of which were published in 1805 (see above), and a Gaelic dictionary, launched by

Sir John Sinclair in 1806 and completed after interminable difficulties in 1828.[75]

The work of the Highland societies was important if only for the amount of Gaelic material they were able to collect; but one must question whether the considerable energy devoted by these societies to the Ossianic controversy might have been better spent helping to develop Gaelic into a language of industry and commerce, thereby ensuring for it a more secure future as well as countering its popular image as barbaric and obsolete and suited only to poetry.

The cult of the Forty-Five

Interest in the Highlands' past was not confined to the "genteel" society which read Scott's books and debated the authenticity of Ossian, but included those involved in "popular" culture as well. While the reputation of Robert Burns (1759-1796) rests mainly upon his Scots poetry, from 1787 to the end of his life he put a great deal of effort into songwriting and contributed around 250 songs partly or wholly of his own composition to two collections while collecting many more.[76] Supplying lyrics to familiar tunes or improving already existing songs, Burns used both Scots and English. However, this was not a purely antiquarian exercise, and when writing new songs he introduced new themes into the genre. One such theme was presenting the Gaels and their Jacobite activities in a favourable light - - indeed, Burns must have been one of the first Lowland songwriters who wrote about the Gaels in anything like a

favourable light.

But such a development could only have occurred near the end of the 18th century, when the political threat of Jacobitism was extinct even in the minds of the most paranoid of Whigs. Burns was a sentimental neo-Jacobite, and perhaps he gained this perspective during his tour of the Highlands in 1787, which included a visit to the Culloden battlefield. In his song "The Chevalier's Lament", written in English in March 1788, Burns expresses what he may or may not have believed to be the thoughts of Charles Edward Stewart during that man's self-preservation exercise in the months after the battle. The idea that the prince mourned the ruin of his "gallant" Highlanders more than his own ruin is not only romantic but quite absurd. The myth of "Bonnie Prince Charlie" was in the making. Two verses from the song:

> The deed that I dar'd, could it merit their malice,
> A king and a father to place on his throne?
> His right are these hills, and his right are those
> valleys,
> Where the wild beasts find shelter, tho I can find
> none!
>
> But 'tis not my suff'rings this wretched, forlorn-
> My brave gallant friends, 'Tis your ruin I mourn!
> Your faith prov'd so loyal in hot bloody trial,
> Alas, can I make it no better return? ''

Not all of Burns' Jacobite songs are to be implicated in the

creation of myth, however. "The Battle of Sherramuir" is ostensibly concerned with the battle of Sherriffmuir in the rebellion of 1715 which was inconclusive but marked the disintegration of the Jacobite effort. Burns admired the Jacobites' defiance of "Whigs and Covenant true blues" and perhaps saw a parallel between this and his own dispute with the ministers and elders of the Auld Licht persuasion in Ayrshire; for him, the Jacobites fought not for the restoration of rule by divine right but in a bold and direct challenge to established authority. William Wordsworth made a similiar connection in his poem "Rob Roy's Grave" (see above) some years later, but whereas Rob Roy and Burns (in his poems)· made successful responses to "the forces of oppression", the Jacobites had to be content with glorious defeat. A verse from "The Battle of Sherramuir":

But had ye seen the philibegs,
  And skyrin tartan trews, man;
When in the teeth they daur'd our Whigs,
  And Covenant true blues, man!
In lines extended lang and large,
When baignets o'erpower'd the targe,
  And thousands hasten'd to the charge,
Wi Highland wrath and frae the sheath,
Drew blades o death, till, out a breath,
  They fled like frightened daws, man! [78]

Scotland's most popular songwriter after Burns was Baroness Caroline (1766-1845), better known as Lady Nairne. Her songs appeared after Burns', and her devotion to Jacobitism

was far more passionate, as she came from a Jacobite background. Her most famous song, "Will ye no come back again?", is a plea for the return of Charles Edward Stuart and is typical of the sentimental myths that abound in her work. The rehabilitation of the effeminate "young pretender" who had endangered British civilization in 1745-6 into the "Bonnie Prince Charlie" who fought for Scotland was mirrored by the rehabilitation of the Gaels. A race formerly believed to be comprised of pagan barbarians whose delight in the theft of cattle was exceeded only by that provided by the indiscriminate slaughter of women and children, had become the faithful followers of the Prince and the resolute defenders of the Scottish nation. The real issues that surrounded the Forty-Five were forgotten, and Lady Nairne (among others, it must be said) were perhaps wilfully ignorant of the fact that while some of the clansmen who joined the rebellion may well have believed they were fighting for Scotland in some undefined way as well as for their chief, Charles Edward Stuart most certainly had a different agenda.

However, for Lady Nairne's Jacobite songs to have gained the enduring popularity they have enjoyed, myth had to replace truth. For example, a song commemorating Cameron of Lochiel's threat to burn the houses of those clansmen reluctant to join the cause would hardly have inspired much pathos. A song by Lady Nairne which involved the rehabilitation of Charles Edward Stuart and the Gaels is "My Bonnie Hieland Laddie", of which two verses are printed below.

Prince Charlie he's cum owre frae France,
In Scotland to proclaim his daddie;
May Heaven still his cause advance,
and shield him in his Hieland plaidie!

But tho' the Hieland folks are puir,
Yet their hearts are leal and steady;
And there's no ane amang them a',
That would betray their Hieland laddie. [79]

Lady Nairne's song "Charlie is my darling" carries a similar message. It emphasizes the military involvement of clansmen in the Forty-Five who fought for "Scotland's right", though what she meant by this is not revealed, and predictably, for "the young chevalier". With minor changes, the song could easily have sung the praises of the Gaels who fought and died in far greater numbers in British wars of colonization around the world. Two verses from the song.

Wi' Hieland bonnets on their heads,
And claymores bright and clear,
They came to fight for Scotland's right,
And the young chevalier.

They've left their bonnie Hieland hills,
Their wives and bairnies dear,
To draw the sword for Scotland's lord,
The young chevalier. [80]

Gaeldom and the fine arts

The appeal of Gaeldom as a subject for Romantic artists extended to composers of "serious" music as well. When Felix Mendelssohn (1809-47) visited Britain in 1829-30, it was very much a working holiday. In a letter written 23 June 1829 from London, Mendelssohn told his correspondent, "I have bought a ticket for a long trip and am setting out for Scotland, which I long to visit because I expect to compose a good deal there. The bagpipes and the echoes are said to be altogether strange." He found the metropolis less than inspiring, however: "There is no music in London, and the art itself is alien to the people." [81]

Mendelssohn's visit to the Hebrides and Staffa in particular resulted in the celebrated "Hebrides" Overture (Fingal's Cave) in 1830. It was in Fingal's Cave itself that Mendelssohn wrote the first twenty bars of the work, apparently with little subsequent amendment.[82] The abstract nature of orchestral music defies an easy analysis of the influences that affected its composition; however, according to a biographer, Mendelssohn was "a great reader, and literary associations with Ossian, Macpherson, and Fingal may have had their part to play" in the composing of the work. In his opinion, however, "this was fairly negligible. Wind, water and rocky beach directly shaped Felix Mendelssohn's 'Hebrides' overture." [83]

A more certain influence upon Mendelssohn was Walter Scott, to whom the composer and a travelling companion paid homage

at Abbotsford in 1830. They had a letter of introduction, but when they arrived Scott paid them scant attention -- he was ill and hard at work on a new edition of his novels in an attempt to clear his debts -- and they were shown the door after half an hour.[84] Mendelssohn's attempt to learn about Scott's musical preferences ended in failure, but he and his friend "might have been suprised by their discoveries, for the great novelist who was supplying half of Europe with musical subjects was himself entirely unmusical."[85]

An artist whose inspiration can be more easily traced is the painter Alexander Runciman (1736-1785). Runciman was an associate in Rome of the painter Gavin Hamilton who is said to have begun an alliance between painting and Scottish literature in the later 18th century,[86] and Runciman was to apply this theme in his most famous work, known as the *Hall of Ossian* (1772). Ossian was then at the height of its popularity and must have inspired Runciman and his friend Sir John Clerk who commissioned the painter to decorate the cupola of his hall at Penicuik in 1772. Despite the scepticism that surrounded Macpherson's poems, Runciman persevered and in time completed twelve large subjects which were not based upon actual scenes from Ossian but were interpreted rather more liberally. According to a modern critic, Runciman "gave full reign to the idea of the intensity and naturalness of ancient Gaelic poetry . . . as transmitted very imperfectly by MacPherson, rather than to any authentic manifestation of Gaelic culture."[87] In the opinion of a late 19th century critic who viewed the

paintings before they were destroyed by fire in 1899, the *Hall of Ossian* suffered from "too much violent action and heroic posing of the figures", but nevertheless, Runciman was said to have dreamt of rivalling the Michelangelo's painting of the Sistine Chapel at the Vatican.[88]

Paintings with Highland subject matter became common with the onset of the Romantic movement and remained popular well into the 19th century. Walter Scott's work, with its descriptions of scenic grandeur in the Highlands and Islands, was not only a spur to tourism in the area but also suggested that the characteristic land and seascape there was beautiful and atmospheric rather than ugly and sterile. In the opinion of one critic, "there is little doubt that the art received its greatest impetus" from Scott; the poem "Lady of the Lake" published in 1810 in particular "awakened such an enthusiasm for the Highlands that crowds flocked to enjoy the beautiful scenes" Scott had described.[89] The appeal of Highland scenery was not confined to Scots artists, however. The English Romantic painter J.M.W. Turner (1775-1851), who in the words of a critic was "especially attracted to the sublime scenery of mountains and to those river, lake, and coastal sites which would allow him to explore the broad and luminous effects of sky reflected in water",[90] was naturally enough drawn to the Highlands and toured the region during his visit to Scotland in 1815. A painting that resulted from the visit, "Loch Fyne, Argyllshire" (1815), depicts Highland fishing folk drawing in nets from the loch in the foreground, dwarfed by the scale of the mountains that surround them.

The acknowledged master of Highland landscape painting, Horatio MacCulloch (1805-1867), was most active in the 1850s and 1860s, and paintings such as "Highland Deer-Forest" (1856) and "Glencoe" (1864) encapsulate the appeal of Highland scenery as popularized by Scott, while Sir Edwin Landseer (1802-73) the popular painter of Highland scenes from the 1820s onwards, presented the Victorian ideal of the Highlands in such works as "The Monarch of the Glen" (1851) which depicts a not inaccurate picture of the Highlands without people, and "Rent Day in the Wilderness" (1868) which abounds in neo-Jacobite sentimentality.

Romantic perspectives: Anne Grant and Elizabeth Grant of Rothiemurchas

A woman whose ideas about the Highlands were very much influenced by Ossian and Romanticism in general was Anne Grant (1755-1838). A Lowlander born and bred, her life in the Highlands began when she married the minister of Laggan, on Speyside. As was common in her time, Anne Grant was an avid correspondent, and her letters were published by her son in book form, *Letters from the Mountains*, in 1806.[91] Her viewpoint was that of a "white settler", a perspective she first gained when as a young woman, her family lived among the Mohawk in America; the feelings she expressed for the Gaels were affectionate but condescending in the extreme, for she had no doubt of her cultural (and intellectual) superiority.

While the clan gentry in the area were on the way to adopting southern forms of gentility, she wrote in a lettter of June 1791, they were not particularly rich. However, "they have been mostly in the army, are socially and kindly disposed, and have more both of spirit and good-breeding than is usually met within people of their pitch." But she waxed most romantically on the common people: "I am very fond of the lower class of people; they have sentiment, serious habits, and a kind of natural courtesy," [52] but was under no delusion as to their sophistication. Concerning an outbreak of disease in Laggan in 1793, Anne Grant wrote that a certain young woman had recently died from what she put down to a fever, "yet every one insisted that her death was caused by grief for the loss of her brother" and recounted the tale of another young person with similar symptoms who was said by local people to be dying of love "though no mortal can say of whom. Thus primitive and romantic are the notions of our mountaineers." [53]

In a letter written in 1794, she related an episode in which her dairy maid claimed to have spoken to a cow, adding, "could you have believed that there existed manners and opinions so primitive as those which are still preserved in the parish of Laggan?" But the "quaint notions" of the people of Laggan were a constant joy to her; she wrote that "the lower class of Highlanders excel all other low classes, being possessed of a superior degree both of fancy and feeling," explaining that "their pastoral cares including more, both of leisure and variety, than falls to the lot of other peasants." [54] She remarked how in time

"we . . . adopt the habits and prejudices of those about us, even while we pity their ignorance, and fancy ourselves more enlightened," and admitted that she had learned "to rejoice at the birth of people's fifteenth child, and to listen to stories of apparitions and predictions." [55]

When recalling her life among the Gaels in a letter of February 1821, she asserted, "I am convinced there does not exist a person in decent station with a mind in any degree cultivated or capable of refinement who has had more intercourse with the lower classes" in the Highlands than herself; this was due to her assiduity "in learning the language of the country where my lot was thrown." She closely scrutinized those around her: "Long days have I knit my stocking or carried an infant from sheaf to sheaf, sitting and walking by turns on the harvest-field, attentively observing conversation which for the first years of my residence I was not supposed to understand." Anne Grant believed her ability to converse with the people in their native language made her popular, as "seldom a day passed that I did not find two or three petitioners in the kitchen respectfully entreating for advice, medicine, or some petty favour. Often I sat down with them, and led them to converse, captivated with the strength and beauty of their expressions in their native tongue." She added, "it would not be easy to make you comprehend how often the duties of a Highland housewife subject her to the necessity of communion with her inferiors." [56]

In a letter written in July 1795, Anne Grant described the

kind nature of the people of Laggan, which she attributed to their lack of intellectual sophistication. This kindness manifested itself even in hard times. People who had no means of supporting their children nevertheless "continue to rejoice at every addition, and consider the loss of offspring as the greatest misfortune that can possibly befall a family," she wrote, and since bad weather and what she described as "new modes of farming" had "improverished" the people, every poor tenant in the parish was supported in some way by his children.

> Without reasoning or reflecting, such hearts find the strongest and most pleasurable emotions excited, merely by the exercise of tender and laudable affections. Strangers to false refinement, and incapable, from want of cultivation, of that exalted enjoyment that arises from sentimental attachment grounded on intellectual excellence, the ties of nature, the "charities" of life, are the great sources of their comfort, and sweeten all their hardships. [97]

The simple qualities of the Gaels were not to be of much use in the changing conditions in the Highlands, according to Anne Grant. In a letter written in December 1792, she declared: "The only cause of complaint in Scotland is the rage for sheep-farming." The people who faced either migration or emigration as a result of the commercialization of estate management in the Highlands were unprepared for what lay ahead of them; Anne Grant wrote that they had

"neither language, money, nor education, to push their way anywhere else", although "they often possess feelings and principles that might almost rescue human nature from the reproach which false philosophy and false refinement have brought upon it." She defended those who had attempted to drive the newly-arrived Great Cheviot sheep out of Rossshire earlier that year; they were "driven to desperation by the iron hand of oppression", but nevertheless "acted under a sense of rectitude, touched no property, and injured no creature." [99]

In another letter, written in January 1793, Anne Grant expressed her belief that "the only real grievance Scotland labours under, originates with landholders." The new found wealth of the merchant class had led them "to contend with our gentry, in all the exterior elegancies of life. The latter seem stung with a jealous solicitude to preserve their wonted ascendency over their rivals." The landlords could only accomplish this, she explained, by greatly increasing their rents. As a result, "the ancient adherents of their families are displaced." Perhaps Anne Grant was not aware that the Highland chiefs and clan gentry vied not with the merchants but with their aristocratic counterparts in the south. The dispossessed clansmen were "accustomed to a life of devotion, simplicity, and frugality, and being bred to endure hunger, fatigue, and hardship, while following their cattle over the mountains, or navigating the stormy seas that surround their islands" were the "best resort of the state" when it encounters "difficulties", that is, war.[100] Critics of "improvement" that led to emigration

often argued that through such a policy, men that would otherwise be available for military service were lost to the country.

From her time spent in the Highlands, Anne Grant believed herself to be an expert on Gaelic culture and history, although her understanding of these subjects seemed to be largely derived from Macpherson's Ossian. In a letter written April 1802, she informs her correspondent that "in the progress of Highland society, there was a kind of intermediate state, to which a great deal of pleasing, fanciful poetry owes its origin." This was a "heroic age" which consisted hunting and warfare; Romance, a secondary pursuit, "gave scope to those pursuits that elevated the minds of the Highlanders into that sublime melancholy with which their love, their poetry, and their music were so strongly tinctured." But alas, this age was not to last . . .

> When their extravagant and restless knight-errantry had almost occasioned the extinction of the Fingalian race of heroes, a new tribe appeared, more industrious, and less enterprising. In short, the pastoral age commenced; and the first tenders of cattle were regarded by heroic bards and lovelorn maidens (who were of course musical and poetical) as a degenerate race, who had not spirit or ability to encounter the hazards and fatigues of a life of hunting. [100]

Anne Grant believed passionately in the authenticity of Ossian, which was the basis for her conception of the Highland past. In a letter written in September 1802, she attacked Malcolm Laing, whose *History of Scotland* carried an appendix which sought to expose Macpherson's deception. "Indeed," she wrote, "his etymologies, in which the whole strength of his detections lie, fall to the ground with a touch, like a house of cards, as I shall hereafter prove to your conviction." She then pledged to defend Ossian by writing "the Dissertation on Ossian's Poems, by which I shall live and die." [101]

Anne Grant herself wrote poems and songs on a Highland theme. One such song was composed in 1799 to commemorate the Gordon Highlanders' departure for Holland; in it, the "Highland Laddie" makes an appearance, ready to die for King and Country. A stanza from the song will suffice:

> Suppose, ah, suppose, that some cruel wound
> Should pierce your Highland Laddie,
> and all your hopes confound!
> The pipe would play a cheering march,
> the banners round him fly,
> The spirit of a Highland Chief would lighten in
> his eye.
> The pipe would play a cheering march,
> the banners round him fly,
> And for his king and country dear
> with pleasure he would die! [102]

Perhaps one reason for Anne Grant's sensitivity concerning the authenticity of Ossian was that some questioned the authenticity of *her* poems. It seemed that some of those who had read her poems doubted whether her depiction of idyllic scenes and the simple goodness of the Gaels could exist in an area which was well known for its deprivation. In a letter to her publisher of December 1802, Anne Grant made the following reply:

> Do not you be concerned about the people's imputing exaggeration to me, with regard to the Utopian scenes and Arcadian virtues of my Alpine regions. What would you have? You know I have always represented the country as wild and barren to the last degree, and the inhabitants living in a state of great poverty and hardship. When I describe particular glens and sylvan scenes as possessed of wild and singular beauties,--when I impute to the natives tenderness of sentiment, ardour of genius, and gentleness of manners beyond their equals in other countries,--every one that knows anything of them must know that these have always characterized them. [103]

A woman who shared some of Anne Grant's Romantic ideals but from a very different perspective was Elizabeth Grant of Rothiemurchas (1797-1885), whose *Memoirs of a Highland Lady* [104] provide a glimpse into the lives of an upper-class

Highland family in the early 19th century. Elizabeth Grant wrote her memoirs from 1845 to 1854 strictly for the perusal of her family, but these reminiscences derive their validity from her experiences during the first three decades of the century. Her family was typical of Highland gentry at the time; they were dedicated to Improvement and were fully assimilated with the rest of British aristocracy. Although quite anglicized, they retained a considerable attachment to their Highland "heritage". Elizabeth Grant and her siblings were raised in London, where her father pursued a legal and political career, and her brothers attended Eton. In their absence, the family estate of Rothiemurchas on Speyside had undergone improvements. Elizabeth Grant recalled her aunt's reaction to the changes made.

> She said the whole romance of the place was gone. She prophesied, and truly, that with the progress of knowledge all the old feudal affections would be overwhelmed, individuality of character would cease, manners would change, the highlands would become like the rest of the world, all that made life most charming there would fade away, little would be left of the olden time, and life there would become as uninteresting as in other little remarkable places. [105]

Elizabeth Grant experienced "culture shock" upon her return to Speyside in 1812. "We had been so long in England," she wrote, "that we had to learn our highland life again. The language, the ways, the style of the house, the visitors,

the interests, all were so entirely different from what had been latterly affecting us . . ." [106] Her recollections of life at Rothiemurchas have a strongly Romantic flavour to them, especially with regard to the relationship that existed between her family and the people living on the estate. Clanship was most certainly extinct by the period she described, yet she seemed enchanted by "the old feudal feelings" that the people showed to them, which she referred to as "Duchas" -- perhaps she did not know that the concept of *Dùthchas*, or trusteeship, was an integral part of the clan system that bound a chief to pursue the clan's interest and not simply his own. This fact was lost on her father Sir John Peter Grant when he converted Rothiemurchas to a sporting estate in 1827 to finance his debts. Nevertheless, these feelings contributed to Elizabeth Grant's enjoyment of her status.

> Such was our Highland home; objects of interest all round us, ourselves objects of attention all round, little princes and princesses in our Duchas, where the old feudal feelings get paraded all in their deep intensity. And the face of nature so beautiful -- rivers, lakes, burnies, fields, banks, braes, moors, woods, mountains, heather, the dark forest, wild animals, wild flowers, wild fruits; the picturesque inhabitants, the legends of our race, fairy tales, the raids of the Clans, haunted spots, the cairns of the murdered -- all and every thing that could touch the imagination, there abounded and acted as a

> charm on the children of the Chieftain who was so adored; for my father was the father of his people, loved for himself as well as for his name.[107]

Despite her Romantic predilections, Elizabeth Grant was extraordinarily frank about her family's expensive lifestyle and its effect on their finances. Her father returned to Scottish legal practice c. 1814-1815, and "the fees came in I know usefully, though certainly not in sufficient quantity to authorize our expensive way of living." They entertained often, and she admitted that "my dress and my Mother's must have cost a fortune, it all came from London"; her mother wore "velvet, satin, rich silks, costly furs and loads of expensive lace while the variety of my nets, gauzes, Roman pearl trimmings and French wreaths, with a few more substantial morning and dinner dresses must have helped to swell up the bills to some very large amount."[108]

The growing popularity of the Highlands as a playground for the rich was attested by Elizabeth Grant's recollection of a visit made around 1815-1816 by two "stupid specimens" from England, a merchant and a barrister whose sporting foray ended in failure "for they waited for the late breakfast, came in dress coats to it, and were so long afterwards fitting on all the astonishing variety of their sportsman accoutrements, the day was too advanced by the time they were completely equipped for the keepers to be able to take them to the best ground."[109] These sportsmen did not have to pay for their recreation, but such visits presaged the

eventual conversion of Rothiemurchas to a sporting estate in the late 1820s.

Elizabeth Grant was as honest in her opinion of Walter Scott and his work as she was about her family's finances. Concerning *Waverley*, she wrote, "I did not like it." In addition to her dislike of the novel's plot and style, she found "the whole idea given of the highlands so utterly at variance with truth." [110] She was hardly more charitable concerning Scott himself, and in her appraisal of him, she exhibited more than a little social snobbery but more importantly indicated that man's efforts to join the aristocracy were less than successful: "His family were all inferior. I have often thought that this was the reason of the insipidity of his ideal gentlemen and ladies -- he knew none better." [111] She much preferred David Stewart of Garth, whom she met around 1817-1818 when he was writing his book on the Highland regiments. He had been taken with her piano renditions of Highland military music, and gave her a copy of his book upon its completion. "He was a fine old soldier," she wrote, "though a little of a bore sometimes, so very enthusiastic about the deeds of his warrior country men." [112]

The Rothiemurchas estate saw another round of improvements in the period 1820-1823, which were undertaken by Elizabeth Grant's brother William. The haste with which these changes were made testifies to the extent to which the family depended more and more on the income provided by the estate. Her comment below that a woman would have proceeded with

more "delicacy" betrays her ignorance of the evictions carried out in 1785 by Marjorie, widow of the 14th chief of Glengarry, and those of her daughter, Elizabeth Chisholm of Strathglass, who evicted the majority of her tenants in 1801.[113] Perhaps the lack of enthusiasm shown by the people of the Rothiemurchas estate to these latest improvements showed that they were apprehensive about their future.

> They were changed times to the highland idlers. The whole yard astir at five o'clock in the morning, himself perhaps the first to pull the bell, a certain task alloted to every one, hours fixed for this work, days set apart for that, method pursued, order enforced. It was hard up hill work, but even to tidiness and cleanliness it was accomplished in time. He overturned the old system a little too quickly, a woman would have gone about the requisite changes with more delicacy; the result, however, justified the means.[114]

The Grants of Rothiemurchas rose to the occasion provided by the visit of George IV to Edinburgh in 1822. Elizabeth stayed at home to care for her sick mother, but her father, brother, and two sisters made the trip. Her father was most certainly glad he did, nothwithstanding his comments on the lack of taste that attended the wearing of Highland dress (see above), for his timely presentation of a dozen bottles of Glenlivet whisky and fifty brace of ptarmigan to the King at Holyroodhouse was to be instrumental in his

appointment to an Indian judgeship in 1827, making possible his escape from the clutches of his many creditors. Elizabeth Grant's comment on the "Celtification" that marked the Visit was typical of that made by Scott's detractors. "A great mistake was made by the Stage Managers," she wrote, "one that offended all the southron ,Scots; the King wore at the Leveé the highland dress. I daresay he thought the country all highland, expected no fertile plains, did not know the difference between the Saxon and the Celt." [115]

She was altogether more tolerant of the Highland-derived fantasy provided by the Sobieski brothers, who paid a visit to Rothiemurchas c. 1825. They claimed to be the sons of the legitimate son of Charles Edward Stuart, by his wife Princess Louise Stolberg, and due to the current popularity for things Jacobite, the brothers were enthusiastically received by Highland gentry. The men cashed in on the tartan "frenzy" that followed in the wake of George IV's visit to Edinburgh in 1822 and claimed to possess special knowledge on tartans; in time they published *Vestiarium Scoticum* (1842) which was said to be based on a 16th century manuscript, and *The Costumes of the Clans* (1845), a work held in great esteem by tartan devotees.[116]

These claims earned them the wrath of Walter Scott, and together with their ill-received conversion to Roman Catholicism, it seemed that another dead-end controversy along the lines of Ossian was in the making. Their deception was a clever one but lacked the pernicious nature of Scott's "Celtification". As Elizabeth Grant described

the Sobieski brothers: "They always wore the Highland dress, kilt and belted plaid, looked melancholy, spoke at times mysteriously. The effect their pantomime produced was astonishing; they were *feted* to their heart's content; half the Clans actually believed in them; for several years they actually *reigned* in the north country." [117]

Elizabeth Grant's life in the Highlands was to come to an end in 1827 when her father lost his parliamentary seat and the protection it afforded from his creditors -- he was forced to flee to London and then abroad. "He never returned to his Duchas," she wrote. "When he drove away to catch the Coach that lovely summer morning, he looked for the last time on those beautiful scenes I do believe he dearly loved, most certainly was proud and vain of," but added, "he never valued his inheritance rightly." [118] When word came of his appointment as an Indian judge, the rest of the family prepared to leave. "There was a good deal to be done," she wrote, "for the house was to be left in a proper state to be let furnished with the shootings, a new and very profitable scheme for making money out of bare moors in the highlands. We were to take nothing with us but our wardrobes, all else was to be left for sale . . ." [119] Of the people living on the estate who would almost certainly be adversely affected by the conversion, Elizabeth Grant wrote nothing!

For some years following the Forty-Five, Gaeldom was not considered a subject suitable for artists. With the gradual realization that Jacobitism was truly spent as a political

force came the general attitude that while the Gaels required rehabilitation on a number of fronts, they no longer presented a threat to the British constitution. James Macpherson's Ossian, appearing in the early 1760s, not only established the Highlands and Islands as a matchless setting for writers and artists requiring a wild and primitive setting, but grafted "noble" onto the pre-existing "savage" image of the Gaels to those in the Lowlands and further afield; the reading public was fascinated by the notion that a tradition of epic poetry could exist in what was believed to be a backward and illiterate culture. The popularity Ossian had achieved lasted for decades, as did the controversy that surrounded it, and the use of Gaeldom as a literary subject became common with the advent of the Romantic movement.

Robert Burns' Jacobite songs portrayed the Gaels as both defenders of Scotland as well as anti-establishment heroes, and the latter theme was repeated by William Wordsworth in poetry inspired by his tour of 1803. In his writing on the theme of the Gaels as "noble savages" in a picturesque setting, in long poems and novels, Walter Scott created the image of the Highlands and Islands that exists in various quarters to the present day. His stage management of George IV's visit to Scotland in 1822 and the "Celtification" that attended it can be seen to have institutionalized this revolution in attitudes that had taken place since the 1740s. Scott's depiction of Gaeldom in turn inspired a range of artists from composers such as Felix Mendelssohn to painters such as J.M.W. Turner and

later Horatio MacCulloch and Sir Edwin Landseer.

As a rule, Romantic writers and artists who used the Highlands as a subject were interested solely in the era of clanship, when the Gaels' allegedly warlike and primitive nature were believed to be undiluted by outside (i.e. civilized) influences; they were unconcerned with the changes Gaeldom was undergoing as the result of the breakdown of the old order and made no reference to events there that were of a uniformly unromantic nature: the commercialization of estate management, clearance, emigration, and the chief's abandonment of hereditary duty that made these possible. Unfortunately, the lack of interest in the real issues that confronted Gaeldom as opposed to the idealized picture as portrayed by the Romanticists is demonstrated by some in the English literature field who have attempted to explain the development of writing on the Highlands with little or no reference to events there or in Scotland as a whole.

One such example will suffice. In the introduction to his thesis entitled "Improvement and Romance: the Scottish Highlands in British Writing after the Forty-Five", Peter Womack declares that when discussing texts "I haven't routinely taken into account the geographical origins of their authors. Highlanders, Lowlanders, English . . . all come into the picture, and while their place in it is obviously affected by their personal histories in the context of nation, region, class and sex, these determinations are always too complex to be reducible to

national tags, and often marginal to my interest in the writings anyway." [120] This statement is little comfort to one seeking, for example, the reason why the English, Lowland, and Highland literati each took distinctive stances in their opinions concerning the authenticity of Ossian. Womack's work, concerned with the treatment of the Gaels in British fiction and non-fiction during the era of Improvement and the myth-making that accompanied it, is genuinely useful at least in a bibliographical sense, but his unique spelling of "Bonny Prince Charlie" reveals that he is unfamiliar with the very myths he explores.

More helpful is Leah Leneman's recent article, "A New Role for a Lost Cause: Lowland Romanticisation of the Jacobite Highlander", in which she argues that the changing attitudes of Lowlanders toward Jacobitism and the identification of Gaeldom with that cause enabled the Lowlanders to include the Gaels in their concept of Scottishness. She writes, "Lowlanders may not have known anything about the Gaelic tradition, but it was their idealisation of Highland virtues and their appripriation of Highland accoutrements such as bagpipes, kilts, and tartans - not to mention the Stewart line of kings - which helped to create a new Scottish identity." [121]

Notes

1. *Report of the Committee of the Highland Society of Scotland, appointed to inquire into the nature and authenticity of the Poems of Ossian*, Henry Mackenzie, ed. (Edinburgh, 1805), pp. 68-69. Note from John Home to Henry Mackenzie.

2. Hugh Blair, *A Critical Dissertation on the Poems of Ossian, The Son of Fingal* (London, 1763).

3. *Report of the Highland Society of Scotland*, pp. 4-5.

4. Ibid, pp. 5-6.

5. James Macpherson, *Fragments of Ancient Poetry* (Edinburgh, 1760, reprinted 1979), p. 10.

6. James Boswell, *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides with Samuel Johnson, LL.D*, R. W. Chapman, ed. (Oxford, 1924, reprinted 1984), p. 322.

7. *The Companion to Gaelic Scotland*, D.S. Thomson, ed. (Oxford, 1983), p. 190.

8. John Robert Moore, "Wordsworth's Unacknowledged Debt to Macpherson's Ossian", *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, 40 (1925), pp. 362-78.

9. From Dorothy Wordsworth, *Recollections of a Tour to the Highlands of Scotland* (London, 1803) pp. 213-4.

10. Ibid, pp. 207-8.

11. Ibid, p. 229.

12. J.G. Lockhart, *Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott, Bart.* (Edinburgh, 1862), pp. 5-6.

13. *The Letters of Sir Walter Scott*, H.J.C. Grierson, ed. (London, 1932-36) eleven vols, I, p. 324.

14. Lorn M. Macintyre, "Walter Scott and the Highlands"

(Glasgow University Ph.D thesis 1976), two vols, I, p. 122.

15. Grierson, I, p. 319.

16. Lockhart, p. 11.

17. Grierson, I, p. 320.

18. Ibid, I, p. 321.

19. Ibid, I, p. 322.

20. Ibid, I, p. 303.

21. Macintyre, I, p. 139.

22. J. E. Bowman, *The Highlands and Islands: A Nineteenth Century Tour* (Gloucester, 1986), p. 81.

23. *The Life and Letters of Maria Edgeworth*, A.J.C. Hare, ed. (London, 1814), vol. I, pp. 226-31 (quoted from Macintyre, I, p. 320-1).

24. Sir Walter Scott, "The Lady of the Lake" (Edinburgh 1810), p. 21.

25. Ibid, p. 297.

26. Sir Walter Scott, *Waverley, or, 'Tis Sixty Years Since*, Claire Lamont, ed. (Oxford, 1986), p. xix.

27. Grierson, II, p. 37.

28. Macintyre, I, p. 329. However, Macintyre does point out that in his children's history of Scotland, *Tales of a Grandfather* (1830), Scott was more honest about the Duke of Cumberland's pacification programme.)

29. *Edinburgh Review*, Nov. 1814, p. 209.

30. Sir Walter Scott, "The Lord of the Isles" (Edinburgh, 1815, reprinted 1877), p. 211.

31. Sir Walter Scott, *Rob Roy* (Edinburgh, 1830), p. 24.

32. Ibid, pp. 24-25.

33. Ibid, pp. 124-5.

34. Ibid, p. 127.

35. Ibid, pp. 127-8.

36. Ibid, pp. 128-9.

37. Ibid, p. 129.

38. Ibid.

39. Ibid, p. 130.

40. Sir Walter Scott, *The Two Drovers and Other Stories*, Graham Tulloch, ed. (Oxford, 1987), p. 142.

41. Ibid, pp. 159-60.

42. The novel *Redgauntlet* is about a fictious Jacobite rebellion set in 1766 but is set in the Lowlands and England.

43. Ibid, p. 224.

44. John Prebble, *The King's Jaunt* (London, 1988), p. 11.

45. Ibid, p. 18.

46. Ibid, p. 103.

47. Elizabeth Grant of Rothiemurchas, *Memoirs of a Highland Lady* (Edinburgh, 1988) 2 vols, I, p. 166.

48. Prebble, p. 105.

49. Ibid, p. 263.

50. Ibid, p. 269.

51. Ibid.

52. Grierson, III, p. 23.

53. Ibid.

54. Ibid, XI, p. 377.

55. Ibid.

56. Ibid.

57. Ibid, XI, p. 379.

58. Ibid.

59. See the section on Hogg's visit to the Highlands in Chapter 3.

60. Ibid.

61. Ibid.

62. Ibid.

63. Alastair Campbell of Airds, Yr., *The Highland Society of London, 1778-1978* (London, 1978), p. 25.

64. *Songs of Duncan Bàn Macintyre*, Angus Macleod, ed. (Edinburgh, 1952), p. 273. The full title of the poem is "Ode to Gaelic and the Great Pipe in the year 1781" (Rann do 'n Ghaidhlig 's do 'n phiob-mhoir, 'sa' bhliahhna 1781).

65. Ibid, p. 512.

66. Ibid, pp. 293-5 "Ode to Gaelic and the Great Pipe in the Year 1785".

67. Campbell, pp. 7-9.

68. Ibid, p. 9.

69. Ibid, pp. 9-11.

70. Ibid, p. 11.

71. Ibid, p. 26.

72. *Prize Essays and Transactions of the Highland Society of Scotland*, vol. I (first series), Edinburgh, 1799), p. iii.

73. *Songs of Duncan Bàn Macintyre*, p. xxxi.

74. Ronald Black, "Highland Society of Scotland", *A Companion to Gaelic Scotland*, p. 121. Black expands on this topic in his article, "The Gaelic Academy: The cultural commitment of the Highland Society of Scotland", *Scottish Gaelic Studies*, XIV (2), pp. 1-38.

75. Ibid, p. 122.

76. T. Crawford, "Robert Burns", *A Companion to Scottish Culture*, David Daiches, ed. (Edinburgh, 1982), p. 48.

77. Robert Burns, *The Complete Works of Robert Burns* (Alloway, 1986), p. 322. The song is sung to the tune "Captain O'Kean".

78. Ibid, p. 394. The song is sung to the tune "Cameron Rant".

79. *Life and Songs of the Baroness Nairne with a memoir and poems of Caroline Oliphant the Younger*, Charles Rogers, ed. (Edinburgh 1905), pp. 201-2.

80. Ibid, p. 204.

81. Heinrich Eduard Jacob, *Felix Mendelssohn and his times* (London, 1959), p. 168.

82. Shima Kaufman, *Mendelssohn* (London, 1934), p. 113.

83. Jacob, p. 200.

84. Kaufman, ibid.

85. Jacob, p. 241.

86. J.D. Macmillan, "Painting, 1700-1900", *A Companion to Scottish Culture*, p. 274.

87. J.D. MacMillan, "Gaelic Art in Modern Times, *The Companion to Gaelic Scotland*, p. 12.

88. Robert Brydall, *Art in Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1889), p. 164.

89. Ibid, p. 219.

90. John Gage, "J.M.W Turner", *The Thames and Hudson Encyclopedia of British Art*, David Bindman, ed. (London, 1985), p. 271.

91. Anne Grant, *Letters from the Mountains* (London, 1806) two vols.

92. Ibid, I, p. 13.

93. Ibid, II, p. 55.

94. Ibid, II, p. 81.

95. Ibid.

96. From Alexander Macpherson, *Glimpses of Church and Social Life in the Highlands in olden times* (Edinburgh and

London, 1893) p. 106-7.

97. Anne Grant, II, p. 97.

98. Ibid, II, pp. 46-47.

99. Ibid, II, pp. 47-50.

100. Ibid, II, pp. 174-5. In light of Grant's affection for Ossian, it is interesting to note that James Macpherson was himself a Speyside man.

101. Ibid, II, p. 200.

102. Quoted in Macpherson, p. 77. The song is sung to the tune "The Blue- Bells of Scotland".

103. Anne Grant, Ibid, II, p. 223.

104. Elizabeth Grant of Rothiemurchas, *Memoirs of a Highland Lady* (Edinburgh, 1988) 2 vols.

105. Ibid, I, p. 98.

106. Ibid, I, p. 210.

107. Ibid, I, p. 223.

108. Ibid, II, p. 10.

109. Ibid, II, p. 36.

110. Ibid, II, p. 72.

111. Ibid, II, p. 73.

112. Ibid, II, pp. 79-79.

113. Alexander Mackenzie, *History of the Highland Clearances*, (Inverness, 1883), p. 285.

114. Elizabeth Grant, Ibid, II, p. 156.

115. Ibid, II, pp. 165-6.

116. J. Telfer Dunbar, *Highland Costume* (Edinburgh, 1977), pp. 34-35.

117. Elizabeth Grant, II, p. 187.

118. Ibid, II, p. 199.

119. Ibid, II, p. 200.

120. Peter Womack, "Improvement and Romance: the Scottish Highlands in British Writing after the Forty-Five" (Edinburgh University Ph.D thesis 1984), 2 vols, I, p. 8. Womack elaborates on this theme in his recent book, *Improvement and Romance: Constructing the Myth of the Highlands* (Basingstoke, 1988).

121. Leah Leneman, "A New Role for a Lost Cause: Lowland Romanticisation of the Jacobite Highlander", *Perspectives in Scottish Social History*, Leah Leneman, ed. (Aberdeen, 1988), p. 120.

Chapter 5 *Militarists*

It was chiefly due to the military participation of Jacobite clansmen in the Forty-Five that the popular image of Gaeldom reached its nadir in the 1740s. Yet in a relatively short time, the service of the Highland regiments in the British army completed the rehabilitation of the Gaels' image in the eyes of the rest of Britain. During the seventy years between the battles of Culloden and Waterloo, the common perception of the Gaels as bloodthirsty rebels bent upon the destruction of the British constitution had changed to the belief that they were among its staunchest defenders. This transformation in attitudes towards the Highland fighting man was made possible with the realization that his undoubted fighting abilities should be employed in the British interest. The first suggestion that Highland men be brought into the British service was made by John Campbell, the first Earl of Breadalbane, who proposed to William III in 1690 that they be used "to take up arms for your majesty in case of any insurrection at home, or invasion from abroad, or that your majesty think fit to use some of them in foreign parts." [1] The Government did raise two regiments from the Whig clans, and one of these, the Argyll regiment, was used against the MacDonalds of Glencoe in 1692.

The large scale recruitment of Highland soldiers was yet to come, but Breadalbane's proposal anticipated the future use of the Highland regiments: the "fencible" regiments would be used at home to defend against foreign invasion or to quell rebellions (notably in Ireland), while the "line"

regiments would be used in Continental wars as well as being sent to win and defend British colonies abroad. While many Highland men joined (or were pressed into) the navy, they were not formed into distinctly Highland units, as were soldiers; between the beginning of the Seven Years' War in 1756 and the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815, over 48,300 men were recruited from the Highlands and Islands to serve in twenty-three line regiments and twenty-six fencible regiments of the British army, not including the Black Watch, which first saw battle in 1743.[2] This figure is remarkable in light of the total population of the region, which rose from about a quarter of a million in 1755 to stand at around 350,000 in 1830.[3]

The first Highland line regiment of the British army was the 43rd (later 42nd "Royal Highland") Regiment, better known as the Black Watch, formed in 1739 with the addition of four companies to the original six independent companies raised in 1725 by General Wade to police the Highlands. Initially the regiment remained in Scotland. In his *History of the Scottish Regiments in the British Army* (1862) A. K. Murray recounts the words of an anonymous English historian who was evidently suprised to find men of the Black Watch exhibiting civilized behaviour:

> . . . to see these savages, from the officer to the commonest man, at their several meals, first stand up and pull off their bonnets, and then lift up their eyes in the most solemn and devout manner, and mutter something in their own

> gibberish, by way, I suppose, of saying grace, as if they had been so many Christians. [4]

The Black Watch was sent first to England and then to the Continent in the war with Spain. The mutiny of the regiment in 1743 has been described elsewhere,[5] but briefly, the men attempted to return to the Highlands upon deciding that with the Government's breaking of pledges over their terms of enlistment, the "contract" between themselves and the army was terminated. In the opinion of David Stewart of Garth, "it is impossible to reflect on this unfortunate affair without feelings of regret, whether we view it as an open violation of military discipline on the part of brave, honourable, and well meaning men, or as betraying an apparent want of faith on the part of government." Stewart (1772-1829) was an officer in the Black Watch and served in Flanders, the Caribbean, Minorca, the Peninsula, and Italy, and eventually retired due to his wounds; his *Sketches of the Character, Manners, and Present State of the Highlanders of Scotland* (1822) was the first history of the Highland regiments.

If anything, the mutiny had impressed upon the Government that Highland regiments should in future be ordered out of Britain soon after recruitment -- in short, they were not to be entrusted with arms at home. Stewart believed the mutiny had an effect upon the Gaels as well.

> The indelible impression which it made on the minds of the whole population of the Highlands,

laid the foundation of that distrust in their superiors, which was afterwards so much increased by various circumstances . . . and latterly still more confirmed by the mode of treatment by northern landholders towards their people. [6]

Later in 1743 the Black Watch joined the British army in Flanders, and their conduct there moved the Elector Palatine to thank George II "for the excellent behaviour of the regiment while in his territories, and for whose sake I will always pay a repect and regard to a Scotsman in future." [7] The Black Watch fought its first battle at Fontenoy, and while the British lost, the French commander Marshal Saxe said of the regiment: "These furies rushed in upon us with more violence than ever did a sea driven by a tempest." [8] At the beginning of the Forty-Five, the Black Watch was brought back to Britain and was stationed with other forces in the south of England, ostensibly to contest any French landing there, but clearly, the Government did not trust the men of the regiment to remain loyal in such a conflict; and while three companies newly-raised for the regiment were kept in Scotland to join the Government effort, a number of men from these companies switched to the Jacobite side at Prestonpans.

The question of trust was quite probably involved in the decision to station the Black Watch in Ireland in 1749, where it was to remain for the next six years. [9] Indeed, it was to become common policy to station Highland troops, especially those of the fencible regiments, in Ireland

rather than Scotland or England, and conversely, Irish regiments of the British army were stationed in Scotland -- the imperial principle of "divide and rule" was first tested at home.

Highland regiments and the Seven Years' War

The first large-scale use of Highland soldiers in the British army came with the Seven Years' War, and the recruitment of the 78th Fraser's Highlanders in 1757 in particular set a precedent that others would follow. The regiment was raised and commanded by Simon Fraser (1726-82), the chief of the Frasers and son of Lord Lovat. Fraser led his father's clan to defeat in the Forty-Five, and while Lovat himself was executed and the Lovat estate was annexed to the Crown, Fraser managed to defect to the Government side. He shrewdly calculated that by recruiting badly needed men for the British army, he might win back his estate and rebuild his fortune. Regimental historians often cite the incentive of wearing the Highland dress and bearing arms (banned in 1747) that enlistment offered in explaining the ease with which Fraser gained his 1400 men, most of them Frasers, in such a short time. Less romantic perhaps but no less important was the coercion exerted in Fraser's behalf by the factors of the once-Jacobite estates, at the behest of the Commissioners for the Annexed Estates. In a letter to the factors dated 7 January 1757, the Commissioners told them that the King had ordered "a Body of Forces to be raised in the Highlands of Scotland", and as Lt. Col. Simon Fraser had asked the Treasury (ultimately responsible for

the annexed estates) for their co-operation in the recruitment process, the Commissioners ordered that "you do give your utmost aid and assistance towards the raising of said troops." [10]

The Annexed Estates Board was to use its power over its tenants to help those also disinherited in 1752 to follow Fraser's example by gaining respectability through raising men, especially for the British effort in the American War of Independence. The tenants and their dependents who were not recruited in this way often found themselves displaced to accommodate the demobilized soldiers and sailors whose resettlement was among the Board's chief functions. In 1774, the Lovat estate was restored to Simon Fraser (by then a major-general) for his service to the Crown, a full decade before the other estates were disannexed.

The 78th regiment played a crucial role in the British victories at Louisbourg, Nova Scotia, and the Heights of Abraham in Quebec in 1759, thus helping to secure immortality for Gen. James Wolfe. But alas, Wolfe was no friend of the Gaels. As a young officer Wolfe had fought the Jacobites at Culloden and took part in the pacification that followed, and while he respected the Highlanders' bravery in battle, he did not trust them nor did he have much regard for their lives. He once wrote of Highland soldiers: "They are hardy, intrepid, accustom'd to a rough Country, and no great mischief if they fall. How can you better employ a secret enemy than by making his end conducive to the common good?" [11] While stationed at Fort

Augustus in 1751, Wolfe devised a plan along the lines of the Glencoe massacre to eliminate any remaining residue of Jacobitism in the Highlands: he proposed that one his patrols be sent on a suicide mission to assassinate the chief of the Macphersons, believing that the resulting uproar would in turn justify the destruction of the entire clan and act as a warning to others.[12] Fortunately for the Macphersons, Wolfe was then but a major.

Notwithstanding previous efforts to recruit Gaels into the regiments of the British army, William Pitt (later Lord Chatham) claimed in a speech to the House of Commons in 1766 that he had been the first Government minister to discover the potential of the Highland regiments. He asserted that he had no prejudices regarding the Gaels. "I have no local attachments: it is indifferent to me, whether a man was rocked in his cradle on this side or that side of the Tweed. I sought for merit wherever it was to be found." "It is my boast," he continued, "that I was the first minister who looked for it, and I found it in the mountains of the north. I called it forth, and drew it into your service, a hardy and intrepid race of men! men, who, when left by your jealousy, became prey to the artifices of your enemies and had gone nigh to have overturned the state, in the war before last."

An important factor in the changing attitudes towards the Gaels was the emergent though not yet fashionable belief, here expressed by Pitt, that they were not solely responsible for the upheaval created by the Forty-Five.

Implicit in Pitt's argument was that Highland soldiers were loyal and trustworthy and therefore deserved respect; referring to the service of the Highland regiments in Seven Years' War, Pitt said, "these men, in the last war, were brought to combat on your side: they served with fidelity, as they fought with valour, and conquered for you in every part of the world." He condemned the remaining prejudices against the Gaels by declaring, "Detested be the national reflections against them! they are unjust, groundless, illiberal, unmanly." [13]

The Black Watch

When fighting broke out between French and British colonists in North America in 1756, the Black Watch formed part of the army sent there. When the regiment arrived in New York it attracted much attention, "particularly on the part of the Indians, who, on the march of the regiment to Albany, flocked from all quarters to see strangers, whom, from the singularity of their dress, they considered to be of the same extraction as themselves, and whom they therefore regarded as brothers." [14] In 1758 the regiment formed part of the force sent to attack the French fort of Ticonderoga on Lake Champlain. It was something of a suicide mission, and the losses of the British, especially those of the Black Watch, were great; the regiment lost over 650 officers and men. In consolation, however, the regiment was henceforth known as the "Royal" Highlanders.[15] The words of an eyewitness to the battle:

With a mixture of esteem, grief, and envy, I consider the great Scots Highlanders in the late bloody affair. Impatient for orders, they rushed forward to the entrenchments, which many of them actually mounted. They appeared like lions, breaking from their chains. Their intrepidity was rather animated than damped by seeing their comrades fall on every side. I have only to say of them, that they seemed more anxious to revenge the cause of their deceased friends, than careful to avoid the same. [16]

In October 1758 a second battalion of the Black Watch was raised at Perth and was soon on its way to the Caribbean to join the attack against Martinique, then under French control. The attack was unsuccessful, and the army was sent instead to make an attempt upon the island of Guadaloupe, also a French colony. The British fared better there, and after four months' fighting the island succumbed.[17] According to David Stewart of Garth, the mere sight of the Highlanders struck terror into the hearts of the enemy. He quoted from *Letters From Guadaloupe*:

By private accounts, it appears that the French had formed the most frightful and absurd notions of the "*Sauvages d' Ecosse*"; they believed that they would neither take nor give quarter, and that they were so nimble, that, as no man could catch them, so nobody could escape them; that no man had a chance against their broadswords; and that,

with a ferocity natural to savages, they made no prisoners, and spared neither man, woman, nor child: and as they were always in the front of every action in which they were engaged, it is probable that these notions had no small influence on the nerves of the militia, and perhaps regulars of Guadaloupe. [18]

The two battalions of the Black Watch were united in America during the early 1760s, and for the next few years were engaged in sporadic fighting with the "ancient possessors" of that country. When the regiment was ordered to Ireland (and not to Scotland) in the summer of 1767, it was praised in an article appearing in the *Virginia Gazette* newspaper. The article said the Black Watch had "since its arrival been distinguished for having undergone the most amazing fatigues, made long and frequent marches through an inhospitable country, bearing excessive heat and severe cold with an alacrity and cheerfulness, frequently encamping in deep snow [and] continually exposed in camp and in their marches to the alarms of a savage enemy, who in all their attempts were forced to fly." The article continued, "the freemen of this and the neighbouring provinces have most sincerely to thank them for that resolution and bravery with which they . . . defeated the enemy and insured us peace and security from a savage foe; and . . . they have our thanks for that decorum in behaviour which they maintained during their stay in this city." [19]

The Black Watch arrived in Cork in October 1767. Referring

to the regiment's earlier posting in Ireland of 1749-56, James Browne wrote, "the utmost cordiality existed between them and the inhabitants of the different districts where they were quartered; a circumstance the more remarkable, when it is considered that the military were generally embroiled in quarrels with the natives." Perhaps the "natives" found the Highlanders less objectionable than other British troops, for "upon the return of the regiment from America, after an absence of eleven years, applications were made from the towns and districts where they had been formerly quartered, to get them again stationed with them." While Browne conceded David Stewart of Garth's observation that a shared culture promoted friendly relations between the regiment and the people, he asserted that "nothing but the most exemplary good conduct could have overcome the natural repugnance of a people who, at that time, justly regarded the British soldiery as ready instruments of oppression." [20]

Some years later the Black Watch was to be given a similar task, but this time closer to home. In 1792 the entire regiment was ordered to Ross-shire to put down the disturbance caused when recently evicted men of the area drove out the sheep which had replaced them in the belief that they would then regain their land. The action was remarkable not merely for its naiveté but for the fact that no one was hurt and that no property (including the sheep) was damaged. The Black Watch was ordered to resolve a situation which in Stewart's words "occasioned little less alarm among the gentlemen of Ross than the Rebellion of

1745." [21] Fortunately, the affair had dissipated before the regiment's arrival; most relieved of all were the men of the Black Watch, because the regiment was largely recruited from Ross-shire, and many of the men would have had local connections. In Stewart's mind, the event could have had grave consequences had the Black Watch been ordered to attack the Ross-shire men.

> Happy, indeed, it was that the affair was concluded in this manner, as the necessity of turning their arms against their fathers, their brothers, and their friends, must have been in the last degree painful to the feelings of the soldiers, and dangerous to their discipline, --setting their duty to their King and country in opposition to filial affection and brotherly love and friendship. [22]

During the subsequent winter of 1792-3, the men of the Black Watch were in the words of Stewart "actively employed against the Lowlanders, who were rioting, and hanging, drowning, and burning the effigies of those they called their political oppressors." It is amusing to find Stewart referring to Lowlanders *en masse* in the same way others referred to Highlanders; more importantly, however, is that he saw Highland soldiers in general as an ideal counter-revolutionary asset. This belief, shared by others, originated in the idea that the "clannish" Gaels revered their "superiors" in a way that other people in Britain did not, and further, that they were intellectually inadequate

to grasp the abstract notions of liberty and equality that had spread with the French Revolution. Stewart was a Highland snob and he wrote scornfully of the agitation taking place in the south. "The inhabitants of Perth, Dundee, and some other towns amused themselves with planting the tree of liberty, dancing round it, and threatening vengeance on all who should oppose it. The regiment was hurried south as rapidly as it went north, and during the winter and spring, garrisoned the town of Dundee, and all the coast as far as Fort George." [23]

When the Black Watch was assembled at Montrose in April 1793 in preparation for the coming war with France, around 750 additional men were needed to bring the regiment to full strength. But according to Stewart,

> . . . the regimental recruiting parties were not successful. The late transactions in Ross-shire began to show their baneful influence. It was not now, as in 1756 and 1776, when the regiment was completed to more than 1100 men, in a few weeks, as quickly, indeed, as they could be collected from their distant districts. [24]

The rising fame of the Highland regiments

In time, the reputation of the Highland soldier as a loyal and courageous defender of British interests had grown to a point where even critics of the established order displayed pride in the glorious exploits of the Highland regiments.

In particular, those critical of the "improvements" undertaken on Highland estates would point to the service of the regiments in underlining the injustices suffered by the Gaels as a result of rising rents and evictions. The writer of the pamphlet *The Present Conduct of the Chieftains and Proprietors of Lands in the Highlands of Scotland, Towards their Clans and People* (1773) identified himself simply as "a Highlander", and interestingly, he dedicated his work to Sir James Adolphus Oughton, the English general and Gaelic learner who became Commander-in-Chief of North Britain in 1778. The writer argued that the landlords' conduct, i.e. the dramatic rent increases on their estates which forced many to leave their possessions, was not only "against their own personal and family interest" and "against religion, justice and humanity" but was injurious to the State as well. "The Highlanders are a hardy, active, spirited people," he wrote, "and have a natural genius for arms. Our officers in general are fond of them as soldiers." [25] In the recent war with France, he noted, Britain had no less than fourteen battalions of Highlanders in its service.

> They were often tried and proved, and were always found to be firm, and resolute, and trusty troops. Our commanders in different parts of the world, reposed the highest confidence in them, upon the most hazardous and hardy services, and never were disappointed by them. Nay, it may be truly said, that they had no inconsiderable share in making our most important conquests: The reduction of Louisburgh, Quebec, Crown Point, Montreal, Niagra,

and Fort du Quesne, the taking of Guadaloupe, the conquest of Martinico, and the Havanna, the plains of Germany, and our conquests in India, will all tell what assistance the government received from the Scots Highlanders. [26]

The writer questioned whether those Highland proprietors who raised rents beyond the ability of people to pay were in fact "friends to the constitution" when they were engaged in "breaking the spirits of those who have showed themselves so fit for supporting its honour? They are really, tho' unintentionally, undermining it." By their actions they drove the people to America, he argued, "perhaps to be some day dangerous to the mother country." A rebellion there could not be ruled out, for "our colonies in America are daily growing in power, wealth, and science." In any future conflict between the colonies and Britain, "the genius of the Highlander will fall in at once with the nature of the country, where all men are hunters, and bred to the use of arms." If the Gaels' emigration to America were allowed to continue as a result of the rent increases, the writer warned ominously, "they will make excellent partizans for the first enterprising genius that shall aspire to form an independent establishment in America. This prospect may be very distant but is not altogether imaginary." [27]

At the onset of the American War of Independence two years later, both sides went to considerable lengths to recruit Highland men. Their numbers in the colonies were considerable and increasing, and their reputation as

fearless soldiers was well established. Allan MacDonald of Kingsburgh (incidentally the husband of Flora Macdonald) conferred with the British governor of North Carolina on the raising of a battalion of "the good and faithful Highlanders" - there were a number of Highland settlements in North Carolina and MacDonald counted upon the recently settled MacLeods and MacDonalds.[28] The colonists in North Carolina were equally determined to enlist the help of the former clansmen. In a letter of 1 December 1775, the North Carolina delegates to the Continental Congress reported to the North Carolina Provincial Congress that "in our attention to military preparations we have not lost sight of a means of safety to be effected by the power of the pulpit, reasoning and persuasion."

> We know the respect which the Highlanders entertain for the clergy; they still feel the impressions of a religious education, and truths to them come with irresistable influence from the mouths of their spiritual pastors . . . The Continental Congress have thought proper to direct us to employ two pious clergymen to make a tour through North Carolina in order to remove the prejudices which the minds of the Highlanders may labor under with respect to the justice of the American controversy. [29]

This approach was inevitably hindered by the fact that John MacLeod, the one Gaelic-speaking minster in North Carolina, was a staunch loyalist.[30] Several months earlier, the

Provincial Congress of North Carolina appointed a deputation "to confer with the Gentlemen who have lately arrived from the Highlands in Scotland to settle in this Province," in order to give them the American perspective on "the Nature of our Unhappy Controversy with Great Britain, and to advise and urge them to unite with the other Inhabitants of America in defence of those rights which they derive from God and the Constitution." [31] According to the American historian J. P. Maclean, over 6500 Highlanders fought in the war on both sides,[32] the majority as soldiers of the Highland regiments of the British army. Following the war, Canada became the favoured destination of Highland emigrants, and while some prejudice towards Highlanders lingered in the United States due to their general adherence to the British cause, George Washington could write to one Robert Sinclair on 6 May 1792, telling him: "Your idea of bringing over Highlanders appears to be a good one. They are hardy, industrious people, and will, in time, become valuable citizens." [33]

Resistance to recruitment and the Militia Act

The seemingly bottomless pool of one-time clansmen for the line and fencible regiments of the British army was quickly evaporating by the 1790s. Heavy recruiting in the past, especially in the years 1757-61 for the Seven Years' War and 1775-78 for the American War of Independence, combined with the migration and emigration of the young and fit, meant that less men were available (or willing) than previously, notwithstanding the general increase in population in the

Highlands in the second half of the 18th century. The writer of a report on Gairloch to the Lord Lieutenant of Ross in 1798 testified to this fact: "Though this Parish be among the most extensive Parishes in the Highlands of Scotland, yet Recruiting parties being so frequent among us for years past, have left us but few young men; so that our Parish at this period chiefly consists of Children, women, and old men." [34] In addition, the old enticements offered to prospective recruits, those of serving under officers of their own name and the privilege of wearing Highland dress and bearing arms, had lost their appeal. The first Statistical Account contains evidence that the military ardour widely attributed to the Gaels was dissipating. In his description of the parish of Portree in 1794-5, schoolmaster Alexander Campbell wrote,

> Some spirited young men are fond of the military profession: but here, as likewise in the country, the generality seem to have lost that martial disposition which was so characteristic of their fathers. When any is enlisted for the service, his relations are, for some, time, inconsolable; and, in particular, the mothers, sisters, and wives, would rather have their respective relations to pass the most miserable and wretched life with themselves at home, than see them go into the army. [35]

Those men that did enlist would go without worry, Campbell wrote, "were it along with their chief, his connections or

dependents, with whom they are acquainted; and who, they are impressed with the idea, have a greater right to them, and would be more careful and tender of them." [66] Despite the assimilation of chiefs and clan gentry into the ranks of British aristocracy and the commercialization of estate management throughout the Highlands and Islands, many Gaels continued to believe that the hereditary duty of a chief to protect his clan from any threat was still in force. This belief encompassed the view that men serving in Highland regiments under officers of their own name would continue to receive protection.

Most chiefs merely exploited these sentiments for the purposes of recruitment, but at least one was concerned that his prestige in the Highlands might suffer if he were seen to abandon his men in foreign parts. Lt. Col. Norman MacLeod of Harris raised the second battalion of the Black Watch formed in 1780 and embarked with it to India in December of that year as its commander. When the Government decided in 1786 to send home the officers and non-commissioned officers of the battalion and draft the privates into other, non-Highland regiments also serving in India, MacLeod wrote to the commander-in-chief of the British forces there, Sir Eyre Coote, K. B., begging him to intervene. "I have to observe to Your Excellency," he wrote, "that it is the first time ever that this regiment was drafted, and that we were raised upon the idea of being exempted from that misfortune." He continued:

> My own Company are all of my own name and Clan,

and, if I return to Europe without them I shall be effectually banished from my own home, after having seduced them into a situation from which they thought themselves spared when they enlisted into the service. They are now much reduced, and being on a brisk and actual service, will be still more so before they can be drafted; their numbers will not then exceed 30 or 40 men. I must entreat Your Excellency to allow me to carry them home with me, that I may not forfeit my honour, credit, and influence in the Highlands, which have been exerted for His Majesty's service. [37]

In February 1797 a proposal was made at the instigation of William, Duke of York, for the enlistment of sixteen thousand men for a Highland corps "to be employed in Great Britain or Ireland in Case of Actual Invasion or Civil Commotion, or the imminent danger of both or either." The men would be recruited as clan levies to serve under their own chiefs into brigades "which are mutually attached from local situation or otherways, to one another, as well as to their Brigadier." How Campbells and Stewarts of Appin, never great friends at the best of times, were thought to feel "mutual affection" for each other escapes comprehension, but nevertheless the author claimed the plan was formed "upon the principles which seem calculated to obtain the unanimous approbation, and support of all ranks of people in the Highlands and to make it a popular measure." In explaining the logic of the plan the author assumed the old ties of clanship still existed.

The Highlanders have ever been, and still are warmly attached to their Chiefs, and Ancient Customs, particularly in regard to the Ranking and Marshalling the Clans. The present arrangement completely embraces these views; as each Clan forms a distinct Battalion commanded by their natural Chief or Leader, more or less in a number according to the strength of the Clan, whilst the dignity of the great Chiefs and proprietors is equally well supported each at the head of a Brigade. [38]

In times of war, the necessity of putting men into uniform must be balanced by the possible economic costs of labour shortages, but the plan's author had dealt with any objection on that point with his assertion, "from the ordinary vocations of the Highlanders in general, it is obvious that no equal number of men on any one district of the Kingdom can be employed with as little injury to agriculture and manufactures." As the contribution of Gaels to the British economy was minor to begin with, it was reasoned, the loss of their labour was of little worry. What made the raising of a Highland corps even more attractive, the author argued, was that,

> . . . at the moment they may be justly considered, the only considerable Body of Men, in the whole Kingdom who are as yet absolutely Strangers to the levelling and dangerous principles of the present

age, and therefore they may be safely trusted indiscriminately with the knowledge and use of arms.

They admire the Warlike exploits of their Ancestors to a degree of Enthusiasm and proud to see the ancient order of things restored, they will turn out with promptitude & alacrity. [39]

The 5th Duke of Argyll's reaction to the plan was typical of the chiefs. He wrote in a letter of 10 March 1797 to Henry Dundas (political manager of Scotland for the Tory government), "I cannot encourage any attempt of that sort, especially as I think that in place of assisting the service, I would have the contrary effect, by raising suspicions in the minds of the people, and perhaps making them refuse to inroll under the Volunteer Act." [40] The plan would have had its attrations for Dundas, who thought of reviving the clan system (as if this were actually possible) to boost regimental recruitment. In a letter to Walter Ogilvy of Clova dated 22 February 1797, Dundas wrote that although laws were passed "for restraining the Spirit of Clanship in the Highlands of Scotland, the system might be justifiable by the recent Circmstances which gave rise to that Policy." It had been his opinion for many years "that those reasons, whatever they were, have ceased, and that much Good, in place of mischief may in various occasions arise from such a Connection among Persons of the same family and Name." [41]

But while the Duke of York's fanciful plan was abandoned, the desire remained for a force in addition to the already established line and fencible regiments that could to suppress civil disturbances as well as defend the country against French invasion. The Militia Act was passed in July 1797 and provided for the compulsory enlistment of men chosen by ballot from parish records.[42] The measure was fiercely resisted in the Lowlands, culminating with the killing of eleven recalcitrant miners in Tranent, East Lothian by English dragoons. Resistance in the Highlands to the Militia Act soon came in Perthshire, when the authorities' fear that radical "incendiaries" from the Lowlands would contaminate the innocent Gaels with notions of democracy was realized in the form of Angus Cameron and James Menzies, two Highlanders from Glasgow. Their well-organized resistance was eventually put down by force,[43] and although the Gaels' detestation of compulsory military service was apparent for all to see, the provisions of the Militia Act remained intact.

Further evidence that the "warlike nature" of the Gaels was fast dying out can be found in comments supplied to the first Statistical Account in 1791 by the Rev. Charles Stewart of the united parish of Strachur and Stralachlan, on Loch Fyne. The Rev. Stewart reported that within the past thirty years, especially since the introduction of sheep farming, a number of men from the parish had become sailors, "but it appears, that necessity, and not choice, has been the cause." Every time that two, three, or more farms were converted into a single sheep walk, "12 or 16 tenants, with

their families, were thrown out of their usual line of employment." However, he wrote, "the sea opened its arms to the young and active." [44] From the time sheep farming began, "a very great change is observable in the people." Before then, "they showed no predilection for a seafaring life," but instead, "their sentiments were generally warlike. Round every fire-side, the entertainment of the evening was rehearsing tales of former times, the actions of brave men, the warlike feats of their ancestors."

> By such a conversation, the young mind, fired with the spirit of great examples, eagerly panted after an opportunity of being signalized, by surmounting difficulties, by encountering dangers. Attachment to the chief, and a jealousy of his honour, were reckoned primary virtues. When the chief, or any of his family stepped forward to serve in the army, all the young men readily followed him, as their fathers had done on previous occasions. [45]

The Rev. Stewart cited as examples of this eagerness to enlist, the first raising of the Black Watch and in particular when two members of the local clan gentry, Ardkinglass and Strachur, were made officers in Lord Loudon's regiment in 1745. He pointed out that although it was not then customary for an officer's commission to depend upon his raising a certain quota of men, the two had no difficulty recruiting the requisite numbers, but exclaimed, "how different the sentiments of the people in 1778!" In that year, the clan gentry of Argyllshire had stepped

forward to raise men for the planned Western Fencible Regiment, but despite the fact that the men of the parish "had an express promise from Government, that they should not be called out of the Kingdom, nor even into England, excepting in case of an invasion, the heritors were obliged to bribe them high." [46] But by the 1790s, there were apparently few men left to recruit.

> The district is now thinned of its inhabitants. The people have been forced to leave their native hills. Such as have gone have changed their manners, and the old spirit of the Highlander is extinguished in those that remain. The sheep have banished the people. [47]

It was not of course sheep but the chiefs and leading clan gentry who had "banished" the people. However, as the Rev. Stewart related, "a military spirit prevails much among the gentlemen; but their lands give them so much more rent by stocking them with sheep, that they cannot withstand the gain." [48] The new breeds of sheep being introduced in the Highlands required the best of grazings and winter pastures, and as such were incompatible with the rearing of black cattle and the traditional system of agriculture based on the township, but nevertheless, landlords were determined to keep people somewhere on their estates to facilitate military recruitment. The reorganization of Highland estates along commercial lines, combined with the need to raise men for the regiments, so necessary for the Highland gentry's integration with the British aristocracy, led

proprietors to promote congestion in the newly-created crofting communities as a matter of policy to gain recruits.[49]

When the Militia Act was brought into effect in 1797, it was resisted in Argyllshire despite the great arbitrary power held by the Argyll estate over its tenants. Neil Douglas, a Relief Synod lay preacher who toured parts of Argyllshire in the summer and autumn of 1797, wrote of meeting "a number of poor people, both men and women, who were going of foot to Inverary, about their sons, whose names had been given in for the militia."

> Their anxiety and distress of mind were visible in their very looks. They lamented the loss of such an opportunity of hearing sermon, and especially the occasion of their journey. The day fixed for their appearance was at hand, and they found it inconvenient to go sooner, and impossible longer to delay. They much dreaded their sons would be sent abroad when raised, and would not believe their clergy, or Gentlemen, asserting the contrary; having been so often deceived by fair promises when levies were formerly made. [50]

Douglas tried to persuade the people that "they had no cause of alarm, that there was no such thing intended in the present case." He commented, "it is an unhappy state of society when the lower orders lose all confidence in the word of their superiors, and are apt to suspect every

measure which they recommend." However, he clearly understood the resentment caused by the Militia Act: "The many levies of young men from the Highlands in all our wars, few of whom return; and the visual mode of raising them, have made impressions that will not soon or easily be forgotten." [51]

If people from traditional Campbell lands were unhappy with the Militia Act, those living in places more recently acquired by the House of Argyll were even less pleased. The Duke of Argyll wrote in a letter of October 1797 to the chamberlain (or steward) of Mull, that "while almost every person able to bear arms is turning out in one shape or other in the service of the country, I cannot but greatly blame the people of Icolmkill [Iona] for refusing to allow their sons to go into the militia," which he described as "a service so mild and at the same time so necessary for the protection of ourselves and our property." The Duke resolved that,

> . . . as a mark of my displeasure I desire that Archd. McInnes and his son, Hugh McDonald and Donald McKillop, all of that island, who were concerned in beating and abusing Hector McPhail, employed to take up the lists of young men for the militia, be removed from their possessions at Whitsunday next, as I will suffer no person to remain upon my property who does not respect and obey the laws, and let it be understood that whoever harbours any of these persons in the

island after that time will be served in the same way. [52]

Alastair MacDonell and the Glengarry Fencibles

Diana M. Henderson has written, "To raise any regiment the prime mover had to have influence, ambition and financial backing . . . it is in the area of recruiting that the Highland Regiments were unique." [53] The great majority of senior officers in the regiments were Highland gentry and used their power as landlords to procure the necessary recruits; essentially, tenants gave up their sons for military service in exchange for promises that they would not be evicted. However, for a chief to recruit men for a regiment from an estate upon which evictions had already taken place was a different task altogether, as was demonstrated by Alastair Ranaldson MacDonell of Glengarry's efforts to lead the men of his name in a fencible regiment. The 12th chief of Glengarry had unwisely rallied to the Jacobite cause with 600 men in 1745, and in 1777, 750 MacDonells were recruited into the 76th (Macdonald) Regiment to join the British effort against the American colonists. [54]

The people of Glengarry were struggling to pay recently increased rents when the first sheep farmer arrived from the Borders in 1782, and evictions were begun in 1785 by Marjory, the wife of Duncan MacDonell, the 14th chief, when 500 people were cleared to accommodate a sheep farm on Loch Quoich. [55] Marjory Grant MacDonell, the daughter of Sir Ludovick Grant of Dalvey, is credited with being the impetus

behind the "improvement" of Glengarry; she must have set an example for her daughter Elizabeth, who married William Chisholm of Chisholm in 1795 and managed the estate of *her* ailing husband. Under Elizabeth Chisholm's direction, much of Strathglass was cleared to make way for sheep farms, and the displaced people emigrated to Nova Scotia.[56] A similar policy was followed by her brother, Alistair Ranaldson MacDonell of Glengarry, the 15th chief.

The idea of raising a Highland regiment composed of Roman Catholics first originated with a young priest stationed in Badenoch, Father Alexander MacDonell. Upon learning in 1792 that a large number of Barra Catholics bound for America had been marooned and left destitute in Greenock when their emigrant ship was disabled in a gale, he went to Glasgow and managed to procure manufacturing work for some 600 of them. When war broke out with France in 1794, the manufacturers were unable to export to the Continent, and the Barra people (among others) were made redundant. Their situation was grim indeed; most of them could speak only Gaelic, and they received a great deal of sectarian abuse from the people of the city. Father MacDonell then devised a plan for raising a regiment of Catholic Highlanders with his own chief, Alastair MacDonell of Glengarry, as colonel.[57] He wrote to the Earl of Fife explaining his proposal, and the earl expressed his reservations concerning the religious complexion of such a regiment to Henry Dundas:

> All the Roman Catholicks here I believe are Jesuits, the preasts had 'till lately some

allowance from forreign Societys, that is now at an end, they must therefore have their support intirely on keeping poor people in a state of ignorance and disunion, which I have always considered as a great misfortune. I humbly think the arming a distinct Roman Catholick Regt. a very dangerous measure, tho' allowing them to enlist in a Protestant corps is a very different matter. [88]

Although MacDonell was not entrusted with his own regiment, the hundred men he raised from his estate for a company of the Strathspey Fencibles were gladly accepted by Sir James Grant, who was raising the regiment. He was to regret MacDonell's gift, however, for the company was to play a prominent part in the mutiny of the regiment at Linlithgow in March 1794 over plans to send it to England in violation of assurances given at the time of recruitment.[89] MacDonell's lackadaisical attitude towards the mutiny did not endear him to many, but the Government's need of soldiers was overwhelming; as soon as recruiting restrictions for Catholics were abandoned, MacDonell was given permission to raise men for his own fencible regiment. He went to Glengarry and began his efforts at Loch Quoich and Loch Garry, and according to John Prebble, "some young men took to the high braes to escape his urgent drums and others came in unwillingly, forced into service by threats of eviction against their kindred." [90] The numbers thus recruited must have been insufficient, for MacDonell was soon agitating for the transfer of the Glengarry company of the Strathspey Fencibles to his own regiment. Grant was

understandably happy to be free of the men, provided MacDonell either replace them or pay compensation.

MacDonell believed the men were his by right, and petitioned Henry Dundas in a letter of 27 October 1794. He told Dundas, "I brought about a hundred men into the Grant Fencibles, *all* my own Tenants Sons who follow'd me from mere attachment" and no one should be suprised "if I should have every inclination to have as many of them or any others out of that Regt. as would choose to follow me to the number permitted by Government." He argued that this would be "the *means* not only of *compleating* my Regt. but also of *disciplining* my Regt. in a very short time." [61] Dundas approved the transfer, and MacDonell thanked him in a letter dated 9 November, reminding him of the special attachment the Glengarry men had for him as their chief, and added, "to convince you of the attachment of those men to me, & their willingness to enter on a more extensive Service" he enclosed a copy of a letter "I had from them a few days ago, from Stranrar where they are at present station'd." [62]

In the letter, dated 27 October 1794, the men acknowledged that the Government had given its permission to soldiers of the Strathspey Fencibles to join other regiments, and told MacDonell that "it is our most earnest desire and ardent wish to follow you to any part of the earth his Majesty may order you to lead us." They sought "no Bounty or any other recompense from Government but the satisfaction of being under your Banners and sharing with you every danger in the service of our King and Country as it was our attachment to

you alone that made us forsake our friends and families." The men admitted that they had not been ill-treated by their officers but stated somewhat poignantly, "our minds can never be content separated from you; our fore Fathers pertained to your fore Fathers and we wish to pertain to you that we may in like manner receive protection from you." What followed was a plea for a renewal of the reciprocal obligations of clanship; although they had not sought any terms upon their enlistment in his company of the Strathspey Fencibles, as he was not yet age,

> . . . we hope now that you are your own master and have it in your power that our aged parents our wives and Children and such of our friends as depend upon us should have something for our sake during our absence and if we chance to return home ourselves that we may know where to betake ourselves indeed expect to enjoy those possessions which our ancestors so long enjoyed under your ancestors though now in the hands of Strangers . . . [63]

Aware that commercial interest and not kinship was now the primary factor governing estate management, the men promised to pay "as high Rent as any of your Lowland Sheepherds ever gave" and further undertook that all would "become bound for anyone whose circumstances may afford you room to mistrust." The letter went on to repeat the men's attachment to MacDonell and was signed by the men of the company.[64] According to James Browne, "this offer was very acceptable

to the government, as it formed a precedent to all Fencible corps raised after this period." [55]

In November 1794 MacDonell proposed to Henry Dundas that he be allowed to recruit for his regiment from amongst the Highlanders in Glasgow, MacDonells as well as others, aided by the MacDonell Society, one of the numerous Highland societies that existed in Lowland cities, and also promised the cooperation of the MacInnes Society.[56] A fierce critic of the plan was John Dunlop, the Lord Provost of Glasgow. Dunlop regarded with horror the prospect of a predominantly Catholic Highland regiment commanded by MacDonell that would most likely be stationed in his city. He wrote to the third Duke of Portland, then Home Secretary, and told him that he had "no hesitation in giving my opinion, that Col. McDonell's proposals ought not to be listened to."

> There have been many doubts, about the propriety of his conduct on several occasions, especially at Linlithgow, and at Paisley, and whatever his construction may admit of, it cannot be denied to have been that of a hotheaded, weak, young Man - I should be very sorry to see a person of this description or indeed any man whatever, have an armed Corps in this City, which would in all probability, look up to their Chieftain, rather than to the Magistrates, and which indeed, from the tenor of his proposals would be entirely under his command; an idea absurd in the highest degree. [57]

Dunlop doubted whether the "people in Business" referred to in the MacDonell Society would be able to leave their homes "for any length of time", but the root of his objection to the proposal came from the state of revolutionary fervour believed to exist in Glasgow. "There are four or five people here who come from Glengarrys Country," he wrote. "They are infernal Democrats, and very likely they may have put this nonsense in his head, either with a view to deceive him with respect to their Loyalty, thinking the matter would go no further, or with a worse intention."

> There are not three men of the name of McDonald, that as Depute Lieutenant, I would entrust with Arms, and as to the McInnis's, they are still less respectable - upon the whole I should think the short answer to Col McDonell ought be, that Government wished to arm people of respectability only, and that in Glasgow, only men of that description, and of sound principles . . . [68]

John Dunlop's warning was evidently ignored for MacDonell was allowed to recruit in Glasgow, and he finally received the MacDonell company from the Strathspey Fencibles in December 1794. However, MacDonell was enraged that any of his remaining tenants should refuse to join his regiment, and accordingly, he wrote to his agent in Inverness in a letter dated 27 November 1794:

> Enclosed you have a list of small tenants

belonging to my Knoydart property -- their leases being expired by Whitsunday first -- and having refused to serve me, I am fully determined to warn them out, and turn them off my property, without loss of time; and as this is the first order of the kind I have given you since I came of age, I have only to add that your punctuality and expedition on the present occasion will be marked by me. "

The new Glengarry (British Highland) Fencible Regiment was sent to Guernsey where it served until 1798, when it was sent to Ireland to be used along with other Highland regiments in suppressing the rebellion against British rule. For a "fencible" regiment, it certainly was stationed far from home -- the Government's distrust of Highland regiments was still evident. The regiment returned to Glengarry for disbandment in 1802. MacDonell's ostentatious lifestyle had left him some £80,000 in debt, sixteen times the annual rent he received from his tenants, and much of the land he had promised to the returning soldiers had already been leased to Lowland shepherds.[78] The future for the men of the Glengarry Fencibles and their families appeared bleak indeed, and the regiment's chaplain, the same Father Alexander MacDonell who had first proposed the raising of the regiment, procured grants of land in Canada, and the majority of the disbanded soldiers and their families followed him.

The priest was appointed vicar apostolic of Upper Canada in

1810 and became Bishop of Kingston (Canada) in 1826. The MacDonells called their new home Glengarry, each family naming its possession after the name of their farm in the Highlands, and during the war with the United States in 1812-15, according to James Browne, "they gave a proof [that] their allegiance to their sovereign was not impaired in their adopted country, by enrolling themselves along with other emigrants and the sons of emigrants, in a corps for the defence of the province, under the old designation of Glengarry Fencibles." [71]

MacDonell was apparently offended by their apparent desertion,[72] but his fame is due to his flamboyant manner rather than the loyalty he inspired from his clansmen. Said to be the model for Fergus MacIvor of Scott's *Waverley*, he evidently enjoyed the trappings of chiefship. He was always accompanied by a retinue of henchmen, gillies, pipers and bards, and in 1815 he created The Society of True Highlanders, which was allegedly "a pure Highland Society in support of the Dress, Language, Music and Characteristics of our illustrious and ancient race in the Highlands and Isles of Scotland, with their genuine descendents wherever they may be . . . " [73] and in 1822 he sent a detachment of his remaining tenants to Edinburgh for the visit of George IV.[74] The chief also held his own Highland Games, and at one such event three cows were dismembered in a show of strength.[75] However, the departure of the men of the Glengarry Fencibles and their families did not affect the success of the "improvements" undertaken on the Glengarry estate, and rents increased from £700 in 1786 at the beginning of the

evictions to between £6000 and £7000 in 1825.[76]

The Sutherland estate and the 93rd Highlanders

The proprietors of the Sutherland estate were to have different difficulties in raising men for the Highland regiments, but the task was relatively straightforward while something remained of the old ties of clanship. The first Sutherland Fencibles were raised in 1759 by Lord Sutherland, and were disbanded after the Peace of Paris in 1763. When the suggestion was made in 1769 that a second fencible corps be raised, the thirteen-year-old Countess gave the reply, "I have no objection to raising a Sutherland Regiment; I am sorry I cannot command it myself."[77] It was disbanded in 1783. The third Sutherland Fencibles were raised by Lt. Col. William Wemyss, a cousin of the countess and nephew of the last Earl of Sutherland, in 1793 to serve in Ireland, as were the Reay Fencibles, also raised from men on the estate. While the Sutherland Fencible Regiment was involved in the suppression of the rebellion of 1798, an event transpired that would sour relations between the Sutherlanders and Wemyss. At one point during the rebellion, the regiment was marching in the middle of a column which came upon a stream. While the other regiments marched straight through the water, the Sutherlanders broke ranks to use stepping stones; as a result, "the rear of the Column was much retarded." The men believed the officers were at fault, but when the column next came to a river, Wemyss ordered the Sutherlanders to wade through the water while the rest of the column used a bridge.[78]

The third fencible regiment was disbanded in January 1799, but by the summer of that year the decision had been made to raise a regiment of the line from Sutherland, which unlike the fencibles would serve outwith the British Isles. However, the response from the members of the disbanded Sutherland Fencibles and the general population at large, was poor. By July the Countess (now the Marchioness of Stafford) was worried, and hinted in a letter to factor John Fraser that a list of "defaulters" be kept.[78]

In September and October of 1799, the Sutherland estate manager Colin Mackenzie together with Wemyss and Fraser took a tour of the estate. Mackenzie wanted to discover the causes of the poor response to the recruitment of the new 93rd regiment and a means by which to remedy the situation. He suspected the men had been "contaminated" by revolutionary ideas during their time in Glasgow and Ireland, and believed they had a strong dislike of Wemyss (now a Major-General) which had arisen as a result of his humiliation of the fencibles during the "stepping stones" incident in Ireland; he wrote to the Marchioness expressing his fears:

> I imagine that the Men of the late Fencibles who came home were the root of the business. Some of them I believe had imbibed in the South, particularly at Glasgow and also perhaps in Ireland, Crude and undigested Notions quite inapplicable to a Country like Sutherland which I

dare say tainted some of their Neighbours here; and many or most of the Old Regiment (I mean the last) had conceived a foolish and absurd prejudice against General Wemyss of which I believe they are now ashamed . . . [80]

Mackenzie also considered the estate's tacksmen to be a hindrance to recruiting, and was suspicious of their enquiries concerning their farms.[81] In a letter to the tacksmen dated 23 September 1799, Mackenzie requested a list of the names of all men on their farms "whose age and size qualify them to be soldiers", and asked the tacksmen to indicate ahy man whose circumstance "seems to you to afford them grounds for exemption, and to each of these names I beg of you to annex the precise circumstance on which you ground your opinion." Secondly he requested a list of those men who had already enlisted, and thirdly, a list of . . .

> . . . the remainder; being persons who have hitherto declined to enlist tho' in your own opinion they are called on to come forward in the service of their Country. As to the last class I know I need not enforce the propriety of your making them feel and understand that unless they immediately alter their course they are not to expect any favour or indugence or be permitted to remain on the Sutherland Estate any more than the Countess's own immediate tenants who are in the same predicament. [82]

According to R.J. Adam, the difficulties involved in the raising of the 93rd Sutherland Highlanders in 1799 "played a considerable part in turning the minds of the proprietors and managers towards changes in the arrangement of the estate. In addition, measures were adopted to aid recruitment which themselves produced considerble complications for the future." [93]

The 93rd regiment was finally embodied at Inverness in August 1800 and for the next two years served in Scotland, Ireland, and the Channel Islands. The good behaviour evidently displayed by the Sutherlanders earned them considerable, albeit condescending, praise. The *Digest of Service, 1800* explained the exemplary conduct of the 93rd:

> For in such a regiment not only did each individual feel accountable for his own character but in some degree responsible for the conduct of his comrades; and, as in order to increase wholesome rivalship between the different companies of the battalions they were at first classified by parishes, an arrangement which naturally excited the greatest emulation, it followed that each soldier became speedily convinced that by behaving ill he should not only be covered with personal disgrace, but would in some measure bring dishonour upon the parish to which he, in common with all his comrades in the same company with himself, belonged. [94]

In 1802, the 93rd was about to be disbanded, and 50-60 men had already been discharged, when the countermanding of Gen. Wemyss's orders forced him to recruit in Sutherland to make up the difference. The estate's policy of 1799 that promised land in return for service was not to be renewed; Colin Mackenzie wrote to the new factor David Campbell in November 1802 telling him to not "include any promise of farms etc.". [65] In 1804-05 the estate did nothing more than "recommend" regiments to the men and threaten not to give new leases to tenants who gave recruits to other regiments. No further attempts were ever made to raise a regiment from the Sutherland estate alone.[66]

The 93rd regiment was included in a force sent in 1805 to attack the Dutch colony at the Cape of Good Hope. Thirty-five men of the regiment drowned when their landing boat was overturned, but the 93rd soon saw its first battle and won its first battle honour.[67] The Sutherlanders were also first in the advance on the Dutch stronghold, and according to David Stewart of Garth, when they received the order to attack,

> . . . the charge was so impetuous, and apparently so irresistable, that the enemy, appalled and panic-struck, fired the last volley in a manner without aim or effect, gave way at all points, and fled in great confusion, having sustained a loss of more than 600 men killed and wounded, while that of the British was only 10 killed, and 191 wounded. [68]

The regiment was to remain at the Cape for the next eight years but soon after the fighting was over, the Sutherlanders were, according to Stewart, "anxious to enjoy the advantages of religious instruction agreeably to the tenets of their national church", and accordingly formed themselves into a congregation, appointed elders, and paid a stipend "to a clergyman of the Church of Scotland, and had Divine service performed agreeably to the ritual of the Established Church." [88]

The author of a 20th century history of the Sutherland regiments includes a quotation from Donald MacLeod's *Gloomy Memories of the Highlands* (1840-1) in explaining the "piety" of the soldiers: "the Highlander . . . was taught to revere parents and ancestors, to be faithful to trust, to despise danger, to be respectful to superiors, to fear God and honour the King." [89] Alas, military historians are as oblivious to social issues as social historians are to military issues. Any further mention of *Gloomy Memories* would have disclosed some unsavoury truths about the situation back in Sutherland; referring to the human cost of the large-scale "improvement" of the Sutherland estate, undertaken while the 93rd was stationed in southern Africa, MacLeod wrote,

> . . . the children and nearest relations of those who sustained the honour of the British name in many a bloody field were ruined, trampled upon, dispersed, and compelled to seek an asylum across

the Atlantic; while those who remained from inability to emigrate, deprived of all the comforts of life, became paupers - beggars - a disgrace to the nation whose freedom and honour many of them had maintained by their honour and cemented with their blood. [1]

In an episode that occurred during the evictions of 1811, the Sutherland estate managers responded to an imagined rebellion by requesting that a military force be sent from Fort George. Accordingly, the 21st Regiment of Foot, an Irish regiment, was ordered to Sutherland "by forced marches, night and day, a distance of fifty miles, with artillery, and cart-loads of ammunition." Upon their arrival, some of the Irish soldiers reportedly declared that they "would now have revenge on the Sutherlanders for the carnage of their countrymen at Tarahill and Ballynamuck",[2] but the expected "rebellion" never materialized. It was no mistake that the British military establishment chose to use Irish Gaels to suppress Scottish Gaels (and vice versa) in this way, and the comment of the Irish soldiers confirms that such a divide-and-rule strategy was working. Had the 93rd regiment been available for the task, however, the Government would not have dared to send it to Sutherland to act as the strong arm of frightened estate managers, as the Black Watch had been ordered to do in Ross-shire in 1792.

The 93rd regiment was eventually sent back to Britain (but not to Scotland) and the behaviour of the Sutherlanders upon their arrival at Plymouth in August 1814 must have startled

the inhabitants. Instead of spending their pay in the "taverns and gin-shops" of the port as did other new arrivals, Stewart reported, "the soldiers of Sutherland were seen in booksellers' shops, supplying themselves with Bibles, and such books and tracts as they required." [93] The people of Plymouth would probably have been similarly charmed by the knowledge that during the regiment's short stay there, "upwards of £500 were lodged in one banking-house, to be remitted to Sutherland, exclusive of many sums sent home through the post-office and by officers. Some of these sums exceeded £20 from an individual soldier." [94] Taken out of context, the sight of soldiers sending money to relations rather than spending it on drink might seem picturesque, but considering the dire situation of the people of Sutherland, the action of the men can be seen in its true light. As for the soldiers' pursuit of religion instead of intoxication, the people of Plymouth might have been very suprised to discover that by that time, an increasing number of Gaels (soldiers included) were evangelical Presbyterians of the first order who would have viewed the prospect of spending any time in a Plymouth "gin-shop" with considerable horror.

Within a month of its arrival at Plymouth, the regiment was on its way across the Atlantic, first to Jamaica and then to join the attack against New Orleans, which took place on 8 January 1815. The battle went badly wrong for the British side, and the 93rd regiment, which as usual formed the front line, suffered greatly -- around 500 Sutherlanders were killed.[95] An American officer present at the battle

described the conduct of the 93rd:

> Whatever was the name of that regiment they were the most suprising instance of cool determined bravery and undaunted courage I ever heard of, standing in the midst of a most destructive fire, firm and immovable as a brick wall. [96]

The Sutherlanders had been reluctant to join the 93rd when it was first raised in 1799, well before the reorganization of the Sutherland estate. As men of the 93rd were nearing the end of their term of service in 1816, the *Military Register* reported that they had refused to re-enlist in the regiment, giving as their reason the evictions in Sutherland, specificly those in Strathnaver, and requested to be re-mustered in regiments raised in Argyll and Ross.[97] This discontent in the regiment was not demonstrated at New Orleans, however. Stewart pointed out that although many Gaels had emigrated to America, "there was not an instance of desertion; nor did one of those who were left behind, wounded or prisoners, forget their allegiance, and remain in that country, at the same time that desertions from the British army were but too frequent." Stewart continued, "men like these do credit to the peasantry of their country, and contribute to raise the national character." If this was so, he argued, "the removal of so many of the people from their ancient seats, *where they acquired those habits and principles*, may be considered a public loss of no common magnitude." [98]

Stewart was worried that with the changes affected by the Sutherland estate (which involved the removal of the population from the interior of Sutherland to stations along the coast to make way for sheep walks) whether the people could "resume their ancient character and principles, which, according to the reports of those employed by the proprietors, have been so deplorably broken down and deteriorated." [99] This alleged "deterioration" may well have been a propaganda ploy on the part of the estate management to deflect criticism from themselves. However, Stewart believed the reports and declared them "entirely unknown till the recent change in the condition of the people, and the introduction of a new system, and every way opposite to the probity, religious and domestic habits of the same people," referring to the men of the 93rd regiment, "when placed in situations and in societies where there was more danger of losing, than chance of acquiring, such valuable traits."

> It is only when parents and heads of families in the Highlands are moral, happy, and contented, that they can instil sound principles into their children, who, in their intercourse with the world, may once more become what the men of Sutherland have already been, -- "an honourable example, worthy the imitation of all." [100]

Assessing the Highland soldier

Stewart attributed the Gaels' talent for war to their

"peculiar character and distinctive manners" which "naturally originated" from their rugged surroundings. The Romantic notion of "national character" held that the people of a given country or region displayed common qualities, and from these could be deduced the psychology of the place. Sir Walter Scott subscribed to this idea and many of his poems, novels, and short stories are concerned with the allegedly warlike nature of Gaeldom, and his short story *The Two Drovers* in particular appears to have been influenced by Stewart's analysis. He wrote,

> The ideas and employments, which their seclusion from the world rendered habitual, --the familiar contemplation of the most sublime objects of nature, --the habit of concentrating their affections within the narrow precincts of their own glens, or the limited circle of their own kinsmen, --and the necessity of union and self-dependence in all difficulties and dangers, combined to form a peculiar and original character. A certain romantic sentiment, the offspring of deep and cherished feeling, strong attachment to their country and kindred, and a consequent disdain of submission to strangers, formed the character of independence; while an habitual contempt of danger was nourished by their solitary musings, of which the honour of their clan, and of long descent from brave and warlike ancestors, formed the frequent theme. [101]

Stewart believed the formation of the "military character" of the Highland soldier was influenced by harsh living conditions in the Highlands: "Nursed in poverty, he acquired a hardihood which enabled him to sustain severe privations," and "as the simplicity of his life gave vigour to his body, so it fortified his mind." Thus resolute in mind and body, the Highland soldier was taught "to consider courage as the most honourable virtue, cowardice the most disgraceful failing; to venerate and obey his chief, and to devote himself for his native country and clan; and thus prepared to be a soldier, he was ready to follow wherever honour and duty called him." As every man held these principles, and regarding "any disgrace he might bring on his clan and district as the cruellest misfortune," the individual soldier had "a peculiar motive to exertion." [102] He was annoyed that many based their attitudes towards Highland soldiers upon stories illustrating the "barbarity" of their ancestors. The true character of the Highlanders ought to be judged by their actions and not by "collecting anecdotes two and three hundred years old, and giving them as specimens of what was supposed to have occurred within the fifty years preceeding the Rebellion of 1745." In that rebellion, he asked rhetorically, "did they display any blood-thirsty atrocity?" [103]

In her recent book *Highland Soldier 1820-1920*, Diana M. Henderson describes the two currently prevailing views on the use of Highland soldiers. The first holds that the Government set out "not only to disarm the Highlands but to depopulate them, draining the manpower permanently to an

army destined for foreign stations and wars, where it would inevitably be ravaged by disease and battles", and that the men of the Highland regiments "were frequently abused, abandoned and betrayed by a distant and unfeeling Government, who made no attempt to understand their Highland culture and motivation." [104] This perspective is argued passionately, and not unpersuasively, by John Prebble in his book *Mutiny* (1975).

A second perspective, one subscribed to by Henderson, maintains that the recruitment of large numbers of Highland men for service in the British army was not only inevitable but desirable; that clanship was no longer a "realistic" system in the light of serious overpopulation in the Highlands, and military service "saved many from starvation and restored the credibility of the Highlander as the loyal fighting man." The argument that military service was somehow salubrious for Highland men because it saved many of them from starving at home is bizarre -- Henderson must be unaware of the experience of the soldiers of the 78th (Seaforth) Highlanders. In 1781 the regiment embarked for India with 973 rank and file. Scurvy broke out en route, and by the time the 78th reached Madras, 247 men were dead, and of the 726 survivors only 369 were fit for service.[105]

In addition, Henderson writes that as Britain was almost continuously at war between 1725 and 1800, the Government could not tolerate "a rebellious and potentially open Northern flank", which according to her was "a view supported by English, Lowland Scots and even Highlanders."

Instead, British military service gave the Gaels a "realistic outlet" for their natural fighting abilities, and no other British regiments recruited at home were similarly indulged with regard to uniform (i.e. the kilt). Completing her description of this perspective, Henderson relates the belief that in "fighting under their own officers to whom many men had a personal relationship, the Highland regiments formed an élite, proud of their service, second to none and would have greeted any suggestion of abuse with anger and disdain." [106] This sentimental view wilfully ignores the coercive nature of military recruitment and the cynical use of Highland soldiers to put down revolts in Ireland or as "cannon fodder" in foreign wars, at the same time promises of land rights in return for service were casually discarded by those recruiting the men. Even before the end of the Napoleonic Wars, it was not any vestigal ties of clanship but rather sheer necessity that made young men in the Highlands enlist in a regiment. In his *General View of the Agriculture of the Counties of Ross and Cromarty* (1813), Sir George Steuart MacKenzie wrote that "it is notorious that the inhabitants [of the Highlands] have a strong aversion to a military life." He recounted that although a battalion of the 78th (Seaforth) Highlanders (commanded by his brother-in-law) was raised in a short time, "this was not owing by any means to the spirit of the people. Indeed some bands of young Highlanders who went to join the regiment, declared, rather indiscreetly perhaps, that they had enlisted merely to save their parents from being turned out of their farms." [107]

The mortality rate of Highland soldiers was very high, and losses in battle were worse in defeat, such as those suffered by the Black Watch at Ticonderoga and the 93rd regiment at New Orleans. During the course of the Napoleonic wars, many Highland regiments lost the majority of their men. One badly weakened regiment was the 79th (Cameron) Highlanders, raised in 1793 with a complement of around one thousand. By 1809 it had lost 737 officers and men killed in battle or from wounds, disease, or accident.[108] However, it was during the Napoleonic wars that the transformation in attitudes towards the Highland fighting man was made complete. The belief that the Gaels were a disloyal, savage and warlike race at the disposal of foreign powers was banished forever. Replacing it was the belief that the Highland soldier was religious, sober and well behaved in peace, loyal to the end, and utterly fearless in battle. The Highland regiments were showered with affection and praise in the swell of self-congratulation that followed the victory at Waterloo. In its reporting of the fighting of 17 June 1815, *The Times* referred to "the brave Highlanders",[109] a great change indeed from 1745-6. In recognition of their conduct in battle, three Highland regiments, the Black Watch, the 79th (Cameron) Highlanders and the 92nd (Gordon) Highlanders, received the battle honour, "Waterloo", a highly coveted prize in military circles.

The previous year (1814) had seen the publication of the novel *Waverley*, in which Sir Walter Scott created a romantic vision of the Gaels as a race of fierce and fearless

warriors whose only failing was a misplaced loyalty to a deserving though hopeless cause. It seemed to many that in the seventy or so years between the battles of Culloden and Waterloo, the Gaels' talent for war had at last been redirected towards the British national interest. For some, the rehabilitation of the Highland soldier had already taken place, and this change was celebrated in the song "The Highland Character" by Sir Harry Erskine, a Black Watch officer. Acccording to tradition, the words are translated from a Gaelic composition by a soldier of the Black Watch.

In the garb of old Gaul, wi' the fire of old Rome,
From the heath cover'd mountains of Scotia we
come,
Where the Romans endeavour'd our country to gain,
But our ancestors fought, and they fought not in
vain.

Such our love of liberty, our country, and
ancestors,
That, like our ancestors of old, we stand by
Freedom's cause;
We'll bravely fight, like heroes bold, for honour
and applause,
And defy the French, with all their art, to alter
our Laws. [110]

The rehabilitation of the Highland soldier took place in just over sixty years. Whereas an English officer at the time of the Forty-Five would have regarded him with hatred

and dread, by the 1820s a commission in a Highland regiment was a much sought after prize. Henderson relates that one Thomas Creevey MP wrote in his diary on 26th March 1828: "We have an event in our Family. Fergy [Sir Ronald Ferguson] has got a regiment - a tip top crack one - one of those beautiful Highland Regiments ,that were at Brussels, Quatre Bras and Waterloo." [11] The Gaels' experience of gaining a measure of "respectability" through military service was later shared by ex-slaves and their descendents in the United States; and the long and distinguished service of the Highland regiments earned the "Hielan' laddie" a place in the folklore of the British empire, thereby setting an example for Sikhs and Gurkhas, other conquered races of "warlike" character that joined the British cause.

Notes

1. *Proposals Concerning the Highlanders* (1690), quoted in John Prebble, *Mutiny* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1975), p. 21.

2. A.I. MacInnes, "Scottish Gaeldom: The First Phase of Clearance", *People and Society in Scotland, 1760-1830* (Edinburgh, 1988), p. 83. MacInnes derives this figure from statistics contained in J. Browne, *History of the Highlands and the Highland Clans*, IV (Glasgow, 1832), pp. 123-384. Although no existent work deals exclusively with Highland sailors, John Knox discusses the subject in his *View of the British Empire* (London, 1785).

3. Ibid, p. 74.

4. A.K. Murray, *History of the Scottish Regiments in the British Army* (Glasgow, 1862), p. 253.

5. John Prebble, *Mutiny*, pp. 13-87.

6. David Stewart of Garth, *Sketches of the Character, Manners, and Present State of the Highlanders of Scotland: with details of the military service of the Highland Regiments* (Edinburgh, 1822) 2 vols, I, pp. 243-4.

7. Murray, p. 253.

8. Ibid, p. 254.

9. Ibid, pp. 254-5.

10. SRO E.727/61/2.

11. Quoted in Prebble, p. 94.

12. Ibid.

13. *Hansard's* Parliamentary History 1766 (London, 1813), XVI, p. 98; quoted in Diana M. Henderson,

Highland Soldier (Edinburgh, 1989), p. 12.

14. James Browne, *A History of the Highlands and of the Highland Clans* (Glasgow, 1838) 4 vols, IV, p. 155.

15. Murray, p. 256.

16. Ibid.

17. Ibid, p. 257.

18. Stewart, I, p. 303.

19. Michael Brander, *The Scottish Highlanders and their Regiments* (London, 1971), p. 164 (from the *Virginia Gazette*, 30 July 1767).

20. Browne, IV, p. 154.

21. Stewart, I, p. 393.

22. Ibid, I, p. 394.

23. Ibid, I, pp. 394-5.

24. Ibid, I, p. 395.

25. Anonymous, *The Present Conduct of the Chieftains and Proprietors of Lands in the Highlands of Scotland, Towards their Clans and People, considered impartially* (1773), p. 5.

26. Ibid, p. 6.

27. Ibid, p. 7.

28. J.P. Maclean, *Settlements of Scotch Highlanders in America prior to the peace of 1783, together with notices of Highland Regiments and Biographical sketches* (Cleveland, Ohio, 1900), pp. 115-6.

29. Ibid, p. 116.

30. Ibid.

31. Ibid, p. 117.

32. Ibid, p. 376.

33. Ibid, from [?] Spark, *Writings of Washington,*

XII, p. 304.

34. SRO GD 46/6/45 Seaforth Papers: returns to the Lord Lieutenant of Ross, 13/2 to 19/7 1798.

35. *The Statistical Account of Scotland, 1791-99 edited by sir John Sinclair*, D.J. Withrington and I.R.Grant, eds. (reprinted Wakefield, 1973-83), 20 vols, XX, p. 204 (parish of Portree).

36. Ibid.

37. Frank Adam, *The Clans, Septs and Regiments of the Scottish Highlands* (Edinburgh, 1934), pp. 307-8. The men were not drafted into other regiments, but were formed into the 73rd (Perthshire) Highlanders, which remained in India until ordered home in 1805. However, those men who were still fit for service after 25 years of duty and wanted to remain in India were given a bounty, and according to Adam, "so many accepted the offer that few came home." (Ibid, p. 308.)

38. SRO GD 46/6/34 Seaforth Papers (1797).

39. Ibid.

40. SRO GD 51/1/670/2 Melville Castle Muniments: letter from Duke of Argyll to Henry Dundas, 10 March 1797.

41. SRO GD 16/34/355.

42. Prebble, *Mutiny*, p. 401.

43. Ibid, pp. 402-32.

44. *The Statistical Account of Scotland, 1791-99*, VIII, p. 416 (united parish of Strachur and Stralachlan).

45. Ibid, VIII, p. 417.

46. Ibid.

47. Ibid, VIII, pp. 417-8.

48. Ibid, VIII, p. 418.

49. See MacInnes, pp. 70-90.

50. Neil Douglas, *Journal of a Mission to part of the Highlands of Scotland, in summer and harvest 1797, by appointment of The Relief Synod, in a series of letters to a friend, designed to shew The State of Religion in that country, and The claim the inhabitants have on the compassion of fellow Christians* (Edinburgh, 1799), pp. 102-3.

51. Ibid, p. 103.

52. *Argyll Estate Instructions, 1771-1805*, E.R. Cregeen, ed. (Edinburgh, 1964), p. 195.

53. Henderson, p. 6.

54. Alexander MacKenzie, *The History of the Highland Clearances* (Inverness, 1883, reprinted 1986), pp. 265-6.

55. Charles Fraser-Mackintosh, *Antiquarian Notes* (Inverness, 1897), pp. 126-7.

56. Mackenzie, p. 284-6.

57. Rev. Father MacDonell, "The Glengarry Fencibles", *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness*, XXVI (1910), pp. 342-4.

58. SRO GD 51/1/831 Melville Castle Muniments: letter from Lord Fife to Henry Dundas, 7 October 1794.

59. See Prebble, *Mutiny*, pp. 289-318.

60. Prebble, p. 360.

61. SRO GD 51/1/844/1 Melville Castle Muniments: letters from A. MacDonell of Glengarry to Henry Dundas, October-November 1794.

62. SRO GD 51/1/844/2.

63. SRO GD 51/1/844/3.

64. Ibid.

65. James Browne, *A History of the Highlands and of the Highland Clans* (London, 1848), IV, p. 380.

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Conclusion

It was during the Jacobite rebellion of 1745-6 that attitudes towards Gaels were at their most negative. The Gaels were then perceived to be bloodthirsty savages who under the guidance of hostile powers were bent upon the destruction of the British way of life. The Highland Jacobites received some indication of their unpopularity during their advance into England. James Johnstone (better known as "the Chevalier de Johnstone"), Charles Edward Stuart's aide-de-camp during the Forty-Five, wrote in his memoirs that "the fright of the English" at their presence "was inconceivable, and to a degree that seemed as if their heads were turned altogether." He went on to relate the horror of an Englishwoman upon learning that Donald Cameron of Lochiel was to be quartered in her house. According to Johnstone, the poor soul appealed to Lochiel, "supplicating him with hands joined, and with a flood of tears, to take away her life, but to spare those of her little children." The chief was understandably bewildered at the woman's plea, and demanded whether "she was mad, and to explain herself. She replied that every one said that the Highlanders ate children, and made them their ordinary food." ' The anti-Highland hysteria evident in England was largely produced through Government propaganda, and as the people there knew nearly nothing about the Gaels, such rumours were taken as truth. In the Lowlands, however, hatred of the Gaels was well established and needed no encouragement from London.

While the defeat of the Jacobites at Culloden spelled the end of their cause, Lowland and English commentators believed the Gaels to be inherently rebellious and made the establishment of "law and order" in the Highlands and Islands their highest priority. The Government agent (believed to be Edmund Bruce) who produced a report on the political situation in the Highlands in 1750 declared that it was "evident to all men of common understanding" that "the Disaffected and Savage Highlanders need to be Bridled and kept in awe by Garrisons and Standing forces 'till the present Generation wears out," and that "those unhappy deluded people will still Continue Savages if nothing else is done to recover them from their Ignorance and Barbarity seems as Evident." [2] When it became clear to even the most paranoid that Jacobitism was indeed a spent force, attention turned towards "rehabilitating" the Gaels. This process involved the "improvement" of the Highland economy and the "civilization" of the people.

Evidence that those charged with rehabilitating the Gaels believed the processes of "improvement" and "civilization" to be inextricibly linked comes from a report by the Rev. John Walker, sent by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1765 to inquire into the religious state of the Highlands. By that time, the Gaels were no longer thought to be under the sway of France or Spain but Walker believed that if they were "lost" to the Roman Catholics, all attempts to reform them would fail. In the Catholic districts of Gaeldom, he asserted, "not only the morals and manners of the People, but the very soil, is more rude and

uncultivated." He explained that "the Popish inhabitants are as tenacious of the old customs, as they are of the old Religion," and argued that without the better provision of schools in particular, "it is scarce to be expected, that the state of the Country is ever to be much altered for the better, or that Religion, Industry, and civilized manners, are ever to make considerable progress." [3] While Walker argued that the Gaels were industrious when pursuing their best interests, most improvement schemes took no account of the human population of the Highlands and Islands as potential beneficiaries.

"Improvement" entailed such measures as the introduction of trades and manufactures, the encouragement of fisheries, the building of roads and bridges, the establishment of towns and villages, and crucially, the modernization of agricultural practices. The Annexed Estates Board (composed largely of Edinburgh lawyers) was the main interventionist agency in the Highlands in the years following the Forty-Five and sought through the exemplary management of the estates of attainted Jacobites to introduce improved communications and agricultural practices and to instill the Lowland/English values of "industry" and "loyalty" into the hearts and minds of its tenants. Following the disannexation of the forfeited estates in 1784, the London-based British Fisheries Society became the most prominent outside agency charged with bringing prosperity to the region, but its efforts were misdirected and ultimately no more successful than those of the Annexed Estates Board. When such schemes failed, for a host of reasons, the

obstinacy and backwardness of the Gaels was usually blamed.

Whig ideology stressed the need to replace traditional relationships with modern (i.e. commercial) ones, and Whig polemicists argued that this change would "free" the Gaels from the allegedly tyrannical power of their chiefs, who were said to keep their people in "slavish dependence". For their part, the chiefs were to be absolved from the responsibilities of hereditary trusteeship or *Duthchas* that bound them to pursue the interests of their clans as well as their own. They and other clan gentry were to exploit the legalistic concept of *Oighreachd* which gave them rights as proprietors to operate their estates along the lines of commercial enterprise. The selling of tacks to the highest bidder (notably in Argyll from 1737) pointed the way forward; and the emergence in the 1780s of the Highland Society of Scotland as an influential forum for the exchange of ideas on Improvement reflected the growing preference of Highland proprietors for capital-intensive enterprises such as sheep-farming to more diversified, non-agricultural projects.

The overthrow of communal agriculture based on the traditional township or *bàile* that marked the first phase of Clearance began in the 1730s and was more or less complete in the years following the Napoleonic Wars; this process was the factor behind the creation of crofting communities on marginal land which sought to derive their incomes variously from kelp manufacture, fishing, quarrying, and illicit distilling, supplemented by season migration to the

Lowlands for work. The vulnerability of the crofting communities to market forces was made evident with the post-1815 recession that came with the end of the war economy. The recession also exposed the folly of many chiefs and clan gentry who had opted to exploit their estates for short-term profits to subsidise conspicuous expenditure rather than taking a balanced approach to the use of human and landed resources, and who found themselves in a perilous financial situation as a result. [4] The fall in agricultural prices, together with the near-collapse of prices for kelp and black cattle, resulted in the accumulation of rent arrears, leading to evictions and ultimately to the bankruptcies of a number of proprietors, thus marking the general breakdown of the Highland economy [5] and setting the stage for the second phase of Clearance from the 1830s.

This period saw the migration of large numbers of Gaels to the Lowlands in search of waged labour. Migrants from the relatively prosperous southern and eastern Highlands generally opted for permanent relocation to the growing industrial towns, especially in the west; while those from the islands and the west coast, where crofting communities were becoming more and more common, preferred seasonal migration to the rural Lowlands to take part in harvesting or fishing ancilliary work, thereby enabling the north-west "to support a much larger population than could have survived from indigenous resources." [6] This process began in the later 18th century but intensified with the economic difficulties faced by many as a result of rent arrears and

falling prices after 1815. Migration, whether permanent or temporary, had social as well as economic implications. Not only were increasing numbers of Gaels becoming bilingual, but their presence in the Lowlands, for the purposes of employment and not for cattle-stealing or rebellion as in former times, undoubtedly made them appear less "foreign" in Lowland eyes and helped to break down old antagonisms. Thus it can be seen that impersonal economic forces played a part in the ongoing rehabilitation of the Highlander.

The success of all schemes to bring the Gaels into the mainstream of British society were believed to rely upon the rehabilitation of the Gaelic character. Before the Forty-Five, relatively little interest was shown in the religious state of the Gaels. However, in order to ensure that hostile powers could never again use the clans to attack the British state, increased efforts were made in the years after 1746 to eliminate Roman Catholicism and non-juring Episcopacy in the Highlands and to spread the hegemony of the English language and the established kirk to all parts. To bring this change about, external agencies sought to bring about the moral and spiritual transformation of the Gaels. This task was in the 18th century left for the most part to the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge. The Society was a Lowland-based body which sought to spread literacy (therefore salvation) in the Highlands and Islands through the operation of ambulatory schools, and the attitudes held by its officials towards those they would "civilize" can be taken as a barometer of contemporary Lowland thinking towards the Gaels. While the

SSPCK's unrealistic English-only policy was abandoned in 1767, its efforts were hampered by prejudice as much as through a lack of resources.

Nevertheless, by the early 19th century, Gaels were in increasing numbers embracing the tenets of evangelical religion. This change was brought about not through the efforts of the traditional interventionist agencies but rather through the work of local lay preachers known as *Na Daoine*, evangelical poets, and the Gaelic school societies. The success of these elements at "civilizing" the Gaels came through their adoption of the Gaelic language as a medium for gaining converts, but would not have been possible without the confusion and despair that attended the overthrow of clanship. In addition to facilitating the spread of evangelicalism throughout Gaeldom, education had another (though not unintended) result; as the secretary of the Committee for Destitute Highlanders wrote in 1837, "Highlanders when educated become migrants." [7]

Changing attitudes towards the Gaels were documented in the accounts of travellers to the Highlands, who only felt safe to venture there once the clans had been "tamed". Most 18th century accounts were written from a Whig perspective and condemned the Gaels for their lack of sophistication while wholeheartedly approving of the "improvements" being undertaken upon Highland estates. Samuel Johnson's account of his tour of 1773 is a notable exception; however, his ill-informed remarks regarding the Gaelic language were seized upon by critics (and still are) while his strident

attack on those improvements which resulted in evictions and emigration were conveniently ignored. Interestingly, later critics of the landlords' conduct were English as well, notably Sarah Murray and Robert Southey. But in the main, most travellers after Johnson were concerned with discovering the "noble savage" portrayed first by James Macpherson and later by Walter Scott. The "principal object" of J.E. Bowman's tour of 1825 to the remote parts of the Highlands was shared by many: to search out "their wild and romantic scenery, and the traces of primitive manners which might still remain among their simple and secluded inhabitants." [8]

Ossian has been seen primarily as a precursor to the Romantic movement to such an extent that it is often excluded from discussions of the Scottish Enlightenment. But Macpherson should not be considered as separate and distinct from that movement, nor was he alone in his interest in Scotland's history, however transmogrified. William Robertson's *History of Scotland* (1759) represented an entirely more rational approach and demonstrated that the forward-thinking literati were beginning to see the study of the past as a natural extention of their interest in human nature. According to a recent writer, "Ossian was a herald of the Romantic movement. For readers who were not entirely satisfied by the prevailing attitudes of the Scottish Enlightenment, Ossian offered an emotional and imaginative release." [9] Despite that, confirmed Scottish sceptics like David Hume wanted to believe in the authenticity of Macpherson's translations, "more [so] than it is possible

for any Englishman of letters,"[10] but their interest in history was purely theoretical - they did not believe the past had many advantages to their "enlightened" present.

The considerable interest in the Highlands that resulted from the popularity (and controversy) of Ossian combined with the growing interest in antiquities to form the impetus behind the cultural activities of the Highland Societies of London and Scotland. The first quarter of the 19th century, which saw the full flowering of the Romantic movement, was not accidently the height of the Highland Society of Scotland's cultural involvement, when it acted as "a Gaelic academy of letters." [11] The "rational" approach to history as typified by the Scottish Enlightenment and the more recent antiquarian movement came together in the work of Walter Scott. He lived at a time when interest in the past was no longer an innocent pastime or a mere academic exercise. The French Revolution and its repercussions elsewhere had seemed to many to herald a new age of chaos and social unheaval, and Scott's historical novels were seen across Europe as a rediscovery of past glories. While Scott followed in the footsteps of the Enlightenment literati in supporting the oligarchy of the landed elite, [12] reformers were increasingly looking to the past for examples of stable, harmonious, and above all ordered societies.

To embark upon reform was to be heading into the unknown, and a new understanding of historical processes was thought to be crucial in bringing about rational change and averting anarchy. If anything, Scott's fiction (especially

relating to the Highlands) is concerned about historical change, but he would have no truck with reform. His letters to the *Edinburgh Weekly Journal* under the pseudonym "Somnambulus" in 1819 predicted that anarchy that would inevitably follow reform, which instead of being "the cause of enlightened progress" would become "a nightmare founded in collective madness." [13] For T.C. Smout, Scott "is not and does not want to be a realist dealing with living people in the Scotland of his day. There is, underlying all his art, a nostalgia for the Scottish past that seems to say that that which is Scottish and that which is past must therefore be admirable." [14]

By choosing to ignore the decidedly unromantic history of the Gaels after the Forty-Five, Scott did nothing to inform public opinion of the traumatic changes that were taking place throughout Gaeldom. But as the man chiefly responsible for the "rediscovery" of Scotland's past, he was put in charge of orchestrating the visit of George IV to Edinburgh in 1822. He decided upon a Highland theme for the occasion, during which the myths he had created about the Gaels became institutionalized. Not only was the elaborate costume of "Highland dress" established as the national dress of all Scotsmen, but on a more pernicious level, Scott created a "plaided panorama" which to this day has bound perceptions of Scottish culture in a tartan straightjacket. His success in perpetrating this deception relied upon the assistance of a Highland élite eager to assume any role other than that of greedy proprietor, as well as that rendered by their Lowland counterparts, who clutched at

anything even remotely Scottish with the realization that their North British approach to "respectability" had failed.

Scott's first novel, *Waverley*, was published in 1814 and was a landmark in the rehabilitation of the Highlander. The book set forth the Gaels as a race of fearless warriors whose involvement in the Forty-Five resulted not from barbarity but loyalty to a romantic albeit hopeless cause. As it was the participation of the Jacobite clans in the Forty-Five that largely accounted for their poor reputation, so too was it in the redirection of the Gaels' undoubted fighting abilities in the interests of the British Empire that their rehabilitation was completed. The service of tens of thousands of Highland men in the British imperial service was the critical factor in the rehabilitation of the Highlanders.

The idea that Gaels were "loyal" would have been thought absurd in 1745-6, but in the seventy years between the battles of Culloden and Waterloo (the latter marking the height of the Highland regiments' fame), over 50,000 men were recruited by their chiefs-cum-landlords into the Highland line and fencible regiments of the British army. In that time, the Gaels had gone from being the most feared and detested people in Britain, considered to be a threat to law and order and the British constitution, to being seen as among the chief preservers of these very things. William Pitt "boasted" to the House of Commons in 1766 that he had been the first to look to the Highlands for soldiers, and "they served with fidelity, as they fought with valour, and

conquered for you in every part of the world." Nevertheless, Pitt felt compelled to counter the persistent prejudices against the Gaels: "Detested be the national relections against them! they are unjust, groundless, illiberal, unmanly." [15]

Because the Gaels' contribution to the defence of Britain was so conspicuous, their advocates could pull the patriotic heartstrings of those positioned to take action on a number of fronts. In 1773 an anonymous essayist charged that Highland proprietors acted against the best interests of the State by raising rents and thus forcing the people to emigrate. He pointed out that in the Seven Years' War, Britain had fourteen battalions of Highlanders in her service: "they were often tried and proved, and were always found to be firm, and resolute, and trusty troops. Our commanders in different parts of the world reposed the highest confidence in them." But the chiefs' actions drove the people to America, and once there "the genius of the Highlander will fall in at once with the nature of the country, where all men are hunters, and bred to the use of arms . . . perhaps to be some day dangerous to the mother country." [16] Conversely, an early prize essayist of the Highland Society of Scotland, Dr James Anderson, could argue in 1785 that notwithstanding existing prejudices against the Highlands, the exemplary conduct of the Highland regiments in the American War of Independence had meant that "the region now had a well-founded claim to national attention" with regard to Improvement. [17]

Far from being regarded as dangerous, by the end of the 18th century Gaels were seen in official circles to be an ideal counter revolutionary asset. The proposer of a plan in 1797 to create a Highland Corps to be used in case of invasion "or Civil Commotion" asserted that "at the moment, they may be justly considered, the only considerable Body of Men, in the whole Kingdom who are as yet absolutely Strangers to the levelling and dangerous principles of the present age, and they may be safely trusted indiscriminately with the knowledge and use of arms." [18] But the engineer Thomas Telford warned in a report to the Government in 1802 that unless it prevented landlords from converting their estates to sheep walks, "that Race of People which has of late Years maintained so honourable a share in the Operations of our Armies and Navies will then be no more." [19]

In an age when loyalty to King and Country was not assumed but had to be proved, the Gaels had done so in a way that left no doubters. The Whig polemicists who argued in the aftermath of the Forty-Five for the transformation of a race of barbarous rebels into loyal and God-fearing British subjects would have been pleased. By the 1820s the Highlands and Islands constituted a peaceful but distressed internal colony, favoured by tourists and artists and productive of wool, mutton, emigrants, but to a decreasing extent, soldiers.

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