

THE MACNICOLS.

As there is no horse race, no divorce case, no pugilistic encounter, no political row, no election—in fact nothing of special interest to the civilized world—going on at the present time, a short letter concerning our ancestors may possibly find a few readers. Our forefathers could not work by steam, talk by lightning, run on wheels or give light by gas; but, in spite of these defects they had a great many excellencies.

According to tradition, the early Macnicoll's possessed the districts of Assyt, Coigeach, Eaderachyis and Durness. They were pure Highlanders and held these districts for a long time. As they were Kels, they were in the habit of fighting and getting killed. About 1375, A. D. their chief had only one daughter, Torquil Macleod, fourth of Lewis, coveted her father's lands, and perhaps herself. At his rate he married her and obtained the Macnicoll lands through her. Thus the Macnicolls came to be a landless clan.

According to the valuable MS. of 1467 John Macnicoll, Gain Mac-Neacail, was the representative of the old chiefs. He was the son of Ewer, son of John, son of Nicol, son of Aigi, son of Nealb, son of Nicol son of Gregill. He was the chief of his clan, but the Macleods had his lands.

From Ross-shire and Sutherlandshire the Macnicolls wandered to Skye and other places. From Skye some of them came to America.

According to O'Hart's first Pedigrees, vol. 1, page 292, Malcolm was the name of the chief of the macnicoll, or Nicholson's in 1615 or thereabouts. He lived in the Isle of Skye. He married Mary daughter of Macleod of Raasay, by whom he had two sons, John and Angus.

Angus, second son of Malcolm, had a son named Murdoch, who also lived in Skye, in the parish of Suizort. Murdoch had a son named Donald.

I look upon the foregoing statements as being substantially correct. For the statements which I am now about to make, I depend to some extent upon information which I picked up last night from a man who happened to call in to see me. I pumped him dry. He may collect more facts, but he has no more to give just now. Dinah Nicolson, Donhnall, MacMurchaidh, Mhic Aonguis, Mhic Chaluim, married Ann Martin, and had by her five children, Somerled, Dinah, Angus, Og, Arnichul and Margaret.

1. Somerled, or Samuel, had at least three children, Malcolm, Donald Ban and Ann. Malcolm was a merchant in Bearuadsal, Skye. Ann was married to Donald Lanoat in Uig.

2. Of Donald, second son of Donald, I know nothing.

3. Angus Og had two sons; John, a tailor in Kistal, and Alexander in Eire.

4. Arnichul, or Armiger, lived at Talla-nan-tighean in Uig. He married in 1794, Margaret MacKenzie, and had seven children by her; Murdoch, Donald, Somerled, Malcolm, Margaret Catherine and Rachel. Murdoch married first, Ganet MacLean, by whom he had five children; Malcolm, Donald, John, Margaret and Euphemia. He married, secondly, Isabel Beaton, by whom he had Arnichul and Donald Beg. Donald, second son of Murdoch came to P. E. Island in 1858, and on the ship James Gibb, which was commanded by Captain William Keag, and carried about 300 emigrants. Donald settled in Rose Valley or near that place, he married Ganet, daughter of Malcolm MacLean. Somerled and Malcolm, third and fourth sons of Arnichul, came to P. E. Island in 1841, and settled in Dundas. Margaret, eldest daughter of Arnichul was married to John MacLean in Uig, Catherine, to Donald Macleod; and Rachel, to No name McPherson.

5. Margaret, daughter of Donald Nicholson, was married to Donald McKay in Uig.

Macneacail or Macnicoll is the eldest and most correct form of the name. To correct Macnicoll into English the Mac was cut off from the beginning of the name, changed to son and tacked on to Nichol. Thus we get the name Nicolson, which is supposed to be good English for Macneacail or Nicol's son. The names Robertson, Matheson, Morison, and Farquharson are formed in the same manner. So is Johnson or MacKeen, MacGain.

In 1860 Donald Nicolson was minister of Kilmuir. In 1756 John Nicolson was minister of Portree. In 1761 Patrick Nicolson was minister of Kiltarlity. In 1762 James Nicolson was minister of Duirinish. In 1766 Donald Macnicoll was minister of Lismore. He was an able and learned man. I spell the name of these men as it is given in the Fasti Ecclesiae Scotticanae. When or why Nicolson was changed to Nicholson I do not know.

The translators of Gaelic names into English have not always been successful in their attempts. They have, for instance, converted Somhairle into Samuel, Pading into Peter, Fionnghal into Flora and Mor into Sarah. Somhairle is in English Somerled and means summer sailor. Samuel is a Hebrew name, and has no connection whatever with Somerled. Pading means patrician;

Peter means a rock and is a Gaelic Peadar. Fionnghal is from Fionnghuala and means fair shouldered. In English it is Finvola or Finyela. In old charters it is Finvola. Flora is a latin name and means flowers. The Gaelic of Flora would be Blathag, which, as the "th" is silent, is quite a pretty name. Mor means great and in English or rather in Latinized Gaelic, Mora Sara means princess. A. MACLEAN SINCLAIR.

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