The Rev. Dr. Blair's MSS.

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Source: *The Celtic Review*, Vol. 2, No. 6 (Oct., 1905), pp. 153-160

Published by:

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30070132>

Accessed: 30-11-2015 22:01 UTC

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Here too he got his cup about which so much is said in lays and stories.

It was made of gold or silver, and it was good for healing. *Cuach Fhinn*, 'Fionn's Cup,' we call it.

So after Fionn had been with the king of the giants for a long time, a long ship was got and loaded with gold, and he sailed to Glen Eilg. There a boat was sent ashore with the gold, and it was hidden in a cave. He had never been to Alba or to any other realm but Ireland till then, and when he landed he did not know where to go.

(To be continued.)

THE REV. DR. BLAIR'S MSS.

REV. A. MACLEAN SINCLAIR

THE Rev. Duncan Black Blair, D.D., was born at Strachur, in Cowal, Scotland, July 1, 1815. He began going to school at Inverscadle, in Ardgour, in 1823, and studied under John Finlayson, at Shiramore, in Badenoch, from 1828 to 1833. He entered the University of Edinburgh in 1834, but was laid up with influenza in Edinburgh for a few weeks in January 1837. In April 1838 he went to the Isle of Skye to act as tutor to the children of Malcolm Nicolson, in Ullinish. Through the summer he was attacked by typhus fever and confined to his bed for ten weeks. On September 13 we find him writing a song of praise for his recovery. On the 20th of the same month his sister Anna, who had been waiting on him in his sickness, died of the fever. He composed a very touching elegy about her on the 28th of the month. Owing to the debilitating effect of the fever on his constitution he had to remain at home with his father at Lublia, in Badenoch, for two years. He spent a good deal of this time studying and writing Gaelic poetry. Entering the Divinity Hall in Edinburgh in November 1840, he was

licensed to preach on May 1, 1844. He spent the greater part of 1845 in the Isle of Mull. He came to Pictou in May 1846, removed to Ontario in May 1847, and returned to Pictou in October 1848. In August 1850 he went to Scotland, and remained during the year. He married Mary, daughter of Captain Hector MacLean, of the 93rd Regiment, in August 1851, and came back to Pictou. His wife died June 6, 1882. She was a good-looking, sensible, and pious woman.

Dr. Blair had charge of the congregation of Barney's River and Blue Mountain, in the county of Pictou. He lived at Barney's River—*Abhainn Bhàrnaidh*—about five miles from the spot at which John Maclean, the Gaelic bard, composed his *Coille Ghruamach* in 1819. He could not, however, sing from his own experience the following lines:—

Cha 'n iognadh dhòmhsa ged tha mi brònach,
'S ann tha mo chòmhnuidh air cùl nam beann,
Am meadhon fàsaich air Abhainn Bhàrnaidh,
Gun dad a's fèarr na buntàta lom.

Dr. Blair died on the 4th of June 1893. He had lived in comfortable circumstances, was an excellent linguist, a good poet, and a devout man. As an accurate writer of Gaelic he had no superior. The Gaelic poems written by him—the titles of which I give in English—were as follows:—

In 1833.

	LINES
The vanity of earthly things	124

In 1837.

A song of praise after sickness	200
The Martyrs	308
The Last Judgment	512
A prayer to the Holy Spirit	108
A poem composed at Loch Laggan	40

In 1838.

A song of praise after a fever	90
A lament for his sister	184

	LINES
Death and the grave	72
Another lament for his sister	120
David's lament for Saul and Jonathan	72
A lament for Charles Urchart	240
The Dead in Sin	72
The Refuge for Sinners	112
A song of praise	108
Immanuel	1962

In 1839.

On Death	44
The Court of Death	270
The Believer's Song of Love	2096
Lament for Pliny Fisk	440
The Old Man and the Young Man	1200
A lament for John M'Master	184
Lines on Mrs. E. Rowe	208
Spiritual Meditation	1960
The Desires of the Soul after Christ	200
A journey to Arisaig	376
Lament of the Mull Women	2254

In 1842.

Lament for Rev. John Kennedy	666
Signs of the Times	189
The Foxes	780

In 1844.

Through Brae Laggan	80
Lament for Rev. John Finlayson	420

In 1848.

The Falls of Niagara	152
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In 1849.

Lament for Macdonald of Ferintosh	100
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In 1851.

Lines on Rev. Alexander M'Intyre	32
Farewell to Sutherlandshire	48
A love-song on Mary Maclean	40

In 1873.

	LINES
A lament for the old elders	52

From June 1882 to July 1887.

A lament for his wife	104
A song for a marriage	32
A lament for his daughter	72
Four songs in favour of the Crofters	200
A song on the Queen's Jubilee	80

D. B. Blair composed his first poem on January 11, 1833. It is on the vanity of earthly things, and contains one hundred and twenty-four lines. It shows that the author of it was a youth of serious thoughts and good sense, that he had a thorough knowledge of the nature of rhyme and the mode of constructing poems, and that he could write Gaelic with perfect accuracy. He composed his next poem—a song of praise for his recovery from sickness—on January 13, 1837. It was written in Edinburgh, and contains two hundred lines. This song, or hymn of thankfulness, shows beyond all doubt that the author of it was a true poet. It was really the beginning of his life as a man of song. The poet was at Iona, July 29, 1851, and wrote, not a poem in praise of Columba, but a love-song addressed to Mary Maclean, who became his wife about a month afterwards. This was the first secular poem ever written by him.

Dr. Blair's poems may be divided into sacred poems, laments, and secular poems or songs. There are seventeen sacred poems, eleven laments, and ten songs. The whole of the poems contain 16,650 lines. The most of the long sacred poems and several of the short ones are excellent productions, and should be published. Two of the elegies are also of a high order. The songs are all very good. The poems that are really valuable would make a volume of about four hundred pages.

Dr. Blair translated into Gaelic an Anti-Patronage Catechism in 1842, and a Church Catechism by Dr. M'Leod, of New York, in 1843. He translated the following compositions into Gaelic verse :—

Habakkuk's prayer, in 1837; Moses' hymn in the 15th chapter of Exodus, in 1837; the *Believer's Riddle* by Ralph Erskine, in 1839; the first three books of *Paradise Lost*, the Book of Psalms in long metre, a number of popular English hymns, in 1881; Clement of Alexandria's hymn in 1885; and the Book of Psalms in short metre. He began his translation of the Psalms into long metre about the beginning of October 1876, and finished it about the end of April 1878. He revised and rewrote it between July 27 and October 25, 1878. He began his translation of the Psalms into short metre in October 1889, and finished it on May 19, 1890. He read the Hebrew Bible almost as easily as he read the Gaelic or English Bible. His versions of the Psalms are probably as literal and smooth as any version can be.

Dr. Blair translated some of his own poems and the most of Dr. M'Gregor's hymns into English. He also wrote several poems in English. But by far the most valuable of his English writings is his *Grammar of the Gaelic Language*. This is an excellent work and should be published.

The following is Dr. Blair's translation of Clement of Alexandria's Hymn :—

LAOIDH

LE CLEMENT ALEXANDRIA

Thus' a ghlacas lothan fiadhaich,
'Chuireas srian 'nam beul,
Is tu Sgiath 'nan eun neo-fhaondrach
Nach téid claon 'nan réis.

Is tu Falmadair na h-òigridh
Gus an seòladh ceart;
Buachaille nan uan geal, fìor-ghlan,
Caoirich Rìgh nam feart.

Do chlann ionmhuinn shimplidh tionail,
Bheir iad moladh naomh
Do Chriosd le bilibh neo-chealgach,
Rìgh nan leanaban maoth.

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A Rìgh nan naomh, Fhocail neartmhoir,
 Mac an Athar Aird,
 Thus', a Riaghlair gliocais shiorruidh,
 'S tu 'm Fear-dion o chràdh :

Tha thu sona feadh nan saoghal,
 Shaor thu 'n cinne daonn' ;
 Iosa, Buachaille na greadhainn,
 'S tu 'm Fear-treabhaidh caomh.

Is tu Stiùir gach luinge 'shèolas,
 Srian na h-òigridh fhaoin ;
 Sgiath nan calman naomh a thriallas
 Anns an iarmailt chaoin.

Is tu Iasgair chlànn nan daoine,
 'Rinneadh saor leat féin ;
 Glacaidh tu na h-iasga geamnuidh
 As an fhainge bhréin,

A mhuir bhuaireasach ro shalach
 'Bhios ag at le tuinn ;
 Le biadh glan na beatha blasda
 Nì thu 'n tional cruinn.

Aodhaire nan caorach reusant',
 A Rìgh threin 'tha naomh,
 Stiùir do chlànn gun chron 'nan gluasad,
 Cuairtich iad gach taobh.

A cheum Chrìosd, a shlighe neamhaidh,
 'Fhocail threin, bhith-bhuain,
 Aois nach tomhais linnean siorruidh,
 'Sholuis fhior nach truail ;

'Thobair trocair o 'n tig feartan,
 'Bheir dhuinn neart gu feum,
 Iosa, Chrìosd, thoir beatha dhoibh-san,
 A ta seinn cliu Dhé.

Bainne neamhaidh, milis, blasda,
 Chiochan glan nan gràs
 Thig à broilleach bean-na-bainne,
 Gliocas naomh o 'n àird.

Beathaichear le sin na ciochrain,
 Lionaidh iad am beul
 Le lòn spioradail ro chùbhraidh,
 'Bhios mar dhrùchd nan speur.

A nis thigeamaid mar òg chlann
 'Thabhairt gloir do'n Triath;
 D' ar Rìgh, Iosa, seinnear cliu leinn,
 Iobairt chubhraidh fhial.

Iocamaid cis naomh gun ghearan
 Do'n Fhear-theagaisg mhor,
 Gun cheilg molamaid le chèile
 Leanabh treun na glòir.

A chòisir na sìthe mairinn,
 Sibhse ghineil Chrìosd,
 A naomh shluaigh le chèile seinnibh
 Molaibh Dia na sìth.

The following literal translation of the hymn I copy from Coxe's edition of the Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. ii. p. 296 :—
 'Bridle of untamed colts, Wing of unwandering birds, sure Helm of babes, Shepherd of royal lambs, assemble thy simple children to praise holily, to hymn guilelessly with innocent mouths, Christ the Guide of children. O King of saints, all-subduing Word of the most high Father, Ruler of wisdom, Support of sorrows, that rejoicest in the ages, Jesus, Saviour of the human race, Shepherd, Husbandman, Helm, Bridle, Heavenly Wing of the all-holy flock, Fisher of men who are saved, catching the chaste fishes with sweet life from the hateful wave of a sea of vices. Guide us, Shepherd of rational sheep, guide unharmed children, O Holy King, O footsteps of Christ, O heavenly Way, perennial Word, immeasurable Age, Eternal Light, Fount of Mercy, Performer of virtue; noble is the life of those who hymn God, O Christ Jesus, heavenly milk of the sweet breasts of the graces of the Bride, pressed out of thy wisdom. Babes nourished with tender mouths, filled with the dewy spirit of the rational pap, let us sing together simple praises, true hymns to Christ our King, holy fee for the teaching of life; let us sing in

simplicity the powerful child. O choir of peace, the Christ-begotten, O chaste people, let us sing together the God of peace.'

The measure used by Dr. Blair runs as follows in English :—

Pass me not, O gentle Saviour,
Hear my humble cry ;
While on others Thou are calling,
Do not pass me by ;

Let me at a throne of mercy
Find a sweet relief ;
Kneeling there in deep contrition,
Help my unbelief.

Clement of Alexandria composed his hymn about A.D. 200.

As an example of Dr. Blair's rhymed version of the Psalms, Ps. cxxvii. in long metre is here given :—

1. 'N luchd-togail saothraichidh gun fheum
Mur tog Iehobhah féin an tigh ;
'S faoin obair an luchd-faire fòs,
Mur gleidh Iehobhah 'm baile stigh.
2. Is dìomhain duibh bhi 'g éirigh moch,
Us anmoch bhi ri caithris bhuain,
Ag itheadh aran bròin us aire ;
Mar sin da sheircein bheir e suain.
3. 'S e Dia bheir toradh bronn mar dhuais,
Mar oighreachd luachmhoir bheir e clann.
4. Bidh mic na h-òig' mar shaighdibh geur
An làmhan gaisgich thréin gach am.
5. Is sona 'n duine sin gu bràth
A lionas làn a dhòrlach dhuibh ;
Sa gheata labhraidh iad gun sgàth
R' an naimhdibh dh'easbhuidh nàire gnùis.

Dr. Blair always writes, not *'us*, *a's*, or even *is*, but *us*.