



Clan MacEwen

The Lennox Sept

A considerable sept of the clan settled early in Dumbartonshire, on the shores of Loch Lomond, and in the Lennox country, owning allegiance to the Stewart Earls of Lennox, who were descended from Bancho, Thane of Lochaber, the ancestor of the Royal line. As early as the tenth century the Scots occupied Strath-Clyde, and Gaelic was the language from Renfrew to Galloway for several centuries. It has left its impress still strong in personal and place names in that region. [Dr. Macbain in *The Transactions of the Inverness Gaelic Society*, Vol. xxi.] It is not astonishing therefore that Argyleshire Scots should at a later date migrate to the shores of the Clyde and to Galloway. Gaelic in time disappeared before the inroads of the Teutonic language in the districts bordering on the Highland line as it had done in the southern districts at an earlier period. The people in a few generations lost touch with the Highlands; they no longer spoke Gaelic, they were incorporated with the southern inhabitants, and in character and sentiment they became a Lowland people, although originally of pure Celtic descent.

The Lennox sept received grants of land in the district to which they gave their name. Between 1625 and 1680 there are at least four charters in which successive Dukes of Lennox and Richmond are served heirs in the lands of "MacKewin" and "McEwin," as the name was then written. [Report on the Public Records of Scotland.] But there is reason to believe their advent there was much earlier. According to tradition, this sept, under a chieftain of their own, sought the protection of Levenach, the Celtic Earl, in the fifteenth century. They are said to have joined the standard of Mary, under Lennox, and to have fought at Langside in 1568, where they received a banner which seems to have gone the way of many other ancient clan banners. They were a powerful race of men and a story used to be told in connection with an old stone coffin which at one time lay in the MacEwen burying-ground, that a man of the clan carried the coffin under one arm, and the lid under the other, from the loch to the churchyard of Luss. A descendant of one of these families, who died in 1898 at the age of seventy-eight, writing in 1885, after referring to these traditions, said: "These MacEwens certainly belonged to Dumbartonshire, on Loch Lomond, and had been there for many generations. The name in olden times was spelt with the a - McEwan - and there was a paper in the family tracing them back to the Battle of Langside, where they won their colours (the standard referred to) fighting for Queen Mary. All the old tombstones not claimed by families living in the parish were destroyed years ago, so there is no memorial left of this branch of the old MacEwen race."

Mr. Guthrie Smith, in his *History of Strathendrick*, has the following account of the Glenboig family: "In 1614 there was a charter granted by the Duke of Lennox to William Neaubog, alias Macewin, eldest son and heir of William Mackewin, alias Neaubog de Glenbog Wester. In 1691 the proprietor was James McAine, called in 1698 James Macewan. In the Valuation Roll of 1723 the following appears: 'John Williamson and Janet Ure, his spouse, their equal share of the five-merk lands of Wester Glenboig, L46 14s. 4d.; John Buchanan, maltman, and Jane Ure, his spouse, their equal half of the five-merk lands of Wester Glenboig, L46 14s. 4d.' These Williamsons (if, the first Williamson was not himself a William MacEwan who changed his name after the fashion of the time) appear to have succeeded the Macewans of Glenboig. The greater part of the lands of Wester Glenboig was afterwards acquired by Napier of Ballikinrain. But in 1796 there was a William MacEwan of Glenboig, writer in Edinburgh, who received a grant of arms at that date from the Lyon office. Netherton, the other division of the estate, is (1890) farmed by Mr. James Ewing (another form of the name), who belongs to a family who have long been tenants there."

There are numerous families and persons bearing the clan name at the present day in Dumbarton, Stirling, [The Stirlingshire branch is of considerable antiquity. Mr. R. MacEwen, Clifton, informs us that in his family burying-ground in St. Ninian's Churchyard, Stirling, a stone bears the date of 1614.] Clackmannan, Renfrew, Lanark, Ayr, on the banks of the Clyde, and in the surrounding districts. Mr. William McEwan, late M.P. for Central Edinburgh, the magnificent donor of the "McEwan Hall," belongs to a Clackmannan family. There have been in the past, and there are now, several Ewen and Ewing families of position and affluence in the Lennox country and the surrounding districts--the Ewens or Ewings of Craigtown and Keppock, of Glasgow, Levenfield, Ballikinrain, &c.

