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# CLAN CHATTAN ASSOCIATION

CHIEF:—THE MACKINTOSH OF MACKINTOSH.

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## ADDRESS

ON THE

# History of Clan Chattan

DELIVERED BY

CHS. FRASER MACKINTOSH, ESQ., F.S.A., SCOT.  
(One of the Honorary Presidents),

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATION, IN  
THE BLYTHSWOOD ROOMS, GLASGOW, ON  
THE EVENING OF THURSDAY,  
17TH OCT., 1895.

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Wm. Mackintosh, Esq., President, in the Chair.

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# Clan Chattan Association.

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THE first monthly meeting of the Clan Chattan Association for the session 1895-96 was held on Thursday night in the Blythwood Rooms, 155 West Regent Street, Glasgow. There was a large and representative attendance. Mr William Mackintosh, president, occupied the chair, and there were also on the platform:—Mr Charles Fraser-Mackintosh, F.S.A.Scot., ex-M.P. for Inverness Burghs; William Lambert Shaw, vice-president; John Mackay, editor *Celtic Monthly*; Messrs D. A. S. Mackintosh, Bertrohill; W. M. Simpson; Mal. Æ. MacBean, Pollokshields; John Mackintosh; A. J. Fergusson, C.A., Clan Fergusson; Thomas Noble; H. G. Gillespie; D. Maclachlan; D. P. Menzies, F.S.A.Scot., Clan Menzies; and Donald Shaw. Letters of apology were read by Mr W. G. Davidson, the secretary, from Mr Alex. M. Mackintosh, better known as Mr Mackintosh Shaw, the historian of the clan; Mr Alexander MacGregor, secretary of the Clan Gregor; Mr Cameron, treasurer of the Clan Cameron; Mr P. MacLeod, and Mr Edward MacBean.

The CHAIRMAN expressed the pleasure he felt in seeing so many present. The turnout showed

that the association was gaining ground, and that there was more interest being taken in its proceedings. Since last year they had been gradually increasing in a quiet sort of way without actually encroaching upon their neighbours. In the past year they had received between 40 and 50 new members, and their funds had also increased in a corresponding degree, and they considered that the association at present was in a flourishing condition. (Applause.) He gave an indication of their programme for the ensuing session, mentioning that the annual gathering would be held about the middle of December, and would probably be attended by the Chief, Mrs Mackintosh, and the young chief as well. (Applause.)

MR FRASER-MACKINTOSH said—Mr Chairman, members and friends of the Clan Chattan, I assure you that I appear before you with very great pleasure, although six days ago I did not know that I would be here, and thus have had no great time to prepare myself, and you must excuse me to-night if my remarks are somewhat lacking in succinctness. I hope that those who have come here to-night have come with an object in view—namely, to be instructed to some extent in the early history of the Clan Chattan. If you have come through curiosity I fear you will find the subject is of a dry nature, but for such as those who come for instruction you will, I think, hear something perhaps that you have not heard before. Now, the Clan Chattan is, or rather was, a very powerful confederation, and one of long standing, indeed of so long standing that it goes back to what I may call pre-historic times. I, for my own part, in the writings I have given to the world, have not gone beyond the historic period; I have left that for others, because when you do go beyond that period, no matter who the writers may be, or however eminent they are, they are merely speculating as to what was likely to be, having nothing authentic to support them in actual contemporary history or charter. I must,

however, make a few remarks about the Clan Chattan, in what may be called prehistoric times. It is agreed by every one connected with the Clan, even by those who may be called the dissentients from the views of the general body, that about the reign of Malcolm Canmore, say between the year 1,000 and 1,100, there lived a person in Lochaber in Inverness-shire called Ghille Chattan Mhor. We are agreed upon that, but as to who that individual was, from whence he came, or over what people he ruled, and the extent of his possessions, are entirely matters of speculation. All I need say is this that the only certainty is that he was the proprietor, or at least that his descendants inherited, or came into possession of certain important lands in Lochaber which now belong to the Camerons of Lochiel, called Glen Luie and Loch Arkaig. Now, down to the year 1291, which in Scottish history I am sorry to say must be considered pre-historic times, because all our valuable charters were taken away by Edward First at his invasion and never restored to Scotland—I say as late as 1291 we are to a great extent groping in the dark as to many events that occurred in Scotland, and particularly so as regards a limited locality such as Lochaber. In 1291 there was a person of the house of Ghille Chattan, who had an only daughter called Eva, and Angus, the Mackintosh of that period, sixth in descent of his own house, and as I make it out, and as I believe most people agree, the seventh in descent from the Earl of Fife, the most ancient title in the Peerage of Scotland, did, according to such well known historians as Leslie, Buchanan, and others, by his marriage with Eva, acquire not only the lands of Glen Luie and Loch Arkaig, but also acquired the chieftainship of the Clan Chattan such as it was at the time. I used the words “such as it was” advisedly, because neither I nor any one can tell you over what tribe or tribes or peoples Ghille Chattan ruled. You are all aware that if you go back to a certain remote

period, the feudal law which was borrowed from the Continent did not prevail in Scotland nor in England. There was no such thing in the laws of succession in England, nor was there such a thing as feudal law or the feudal system among the Highlanders or the Lowlanders in Scotland until forced upon us by the example of other nations, after the English conquest. From the weakness of the central power, the Royal Writ did not run in all the dominions, and the expression is not unknown in modern times. The Royal Writ did not run, but it was necessary for the protection of the people who lived in these days, for the sake of defence and offence, that they should associate themselves, as I said, for mutual defence, and also for mutual warfare, according to the times and circumstances. In my own opinion the old race of Ghille Chattan were simply men who themselves, under the sway of the old Lords of Lochaber, had certain people under them associated for offence and defence. This was also the case in other localities, and when Angus Mackintosh married Eva he acquired not only the land, but as I have said the chieftainship of the Clan Chattan. No objection was raised by the people over whom Ghille Chattan ruled. It was received as a matter of course, for they saw they were bettering their position by having one so nearly related to the rising house of Macdonald as their future ruler. When we come to a later period and to authentic history, which can corroborate or give the actual facts of the case, we find the Mackintoshes styled Captains of Clan Chattan. There is no doubt that by the marriage of Eva with Angus Mackintosh it was an election, or a selection as you may chose to call it, of the people under Ghille Chattan's rule, and the acceptance of Mackintosh to be their Chief, because necessarily at an early period all rulers must have been elected. I am very strongly in favour of elective power as distinguished from hereditary power, which is only going back to our original laws.

No doubt after the English conquest the feudal law began to be applied with great rigour in England, and also in Scotland, so that with these captains who were originally elected as heads of clans, in course of time it became hereditary in their families, so long as the male representatives were qualified to fill the position. If a weak man, or a man of no character, or of no fighting powers happened to be the successor he was dispossessed and the next eligible person was selected, and numerous instances of this can be found in the history of most clans. I revert to the period of the marriage of Mackintosh with Eva. From that time our accounts are fairly authentic. What have we to rely upon? We have to rely in the first place on contemporary writers. We have to rely on documents signed by contemporaries who must be held to know what they were doing. We also find that in 1333 a deed was given—which has been mislaid, it is hoped not finally lost—to William the son of Eva, by Reginald Macdonald of the Isles confirming to him the rights that he inherited through his mother, not through his father, and this charter was confirmed by David II. All this deals with the very next stage after Eva and her husband. When we come down later I find that Mackintosh as Captain and Chief of the Clan Chattan was recognised by contemporaries for centuries, and is to this date in his crown charters. He is recognised as such by the laws of the land, and so called by John, Earl of Ross. The last who was acknowledged Earl of Ross and Lord of the Isles calls Duncan Mackintosh his beloved cousin, and gives him certain lands. James the Third in 1476 in the same terms called him Captain of the Clan Chattan. Then, a few years earlier, in 1467, the oldest of the Scottish Barons, Lord Forbes, in a document which is still in existence, enters into a bond of friendship between himself and the friends and supporters of his house on the one hand, Duncan Mackintosh, Chief and Captain of the Clan Chattan

and his two brothers, and the Baron of Kilravock. Now, if the laws of the land, which must be held as the highest authorities, kings, nobles, and gentry, in successive ages, in their charters are found acknowledging the Mackintoshes as Captains and Chiefs of Clan Chattan, there cannot be the slightest doubt whatever of the truth. It has been alleged on the part of one of the septs of the Clan, which consists in all of some 16 tribes or families, that as long as a male descendant exists of the race of Ghille Chattan he is entitled to be Chief of the Clan Chattan, and nothing can deprive him of this position. Supposing it to be true, which I do not admit, the person who makes himself out the Chief of the Clan Chattan establishes himself heir male, and thereby Chief, is merely Chief of the Clan|Chattan which existed at the time of the father of Eva, of whose father we know nothing. I would consider it absurd and unintelligible on the part of any sensible person—others would say the same thing—that any man in his senses would by alleging himself heir male to a man who lived 700 years ago, and about whom nothing is known, assume a consequence and airs of superiority by this connection. What these pretenders wish is by starting at a remote period to absorb and gather in the different members of Clan Chattan who joined after the marriage and since, and under whom it may be stated that all the greatness and all the history and everything that was connected with their renown took place, because from the time of the marriage of Eva with Angus Mackintosh the Clan came into real historic importance. The Macgillivrays joined and became an important and valuable body. Then the Macbeans joined and the Macqueens, Shaws, and others. All these joined after the marriage, and it is that Clan built up under the Mackintoshes whom we and history know as the Clan Chattan, the real historic Clan Chattan who have distinguished themselves in every age from that period, beginning, I may say, I put it no earlier,

than the battle of Harlaw in 1411. We know that that was one of the greatest contests that ever took place in Scotland. It was a question then between the Highlands and the Lowlands, and Donald of Harlaw, who was married to the granddaughter of the old Earls of Ross, claimed the title of Ross disputed by the Crown. Almost every man of the Highlands went out to his support, and amongst his chief supporters were Mackintosh and Maclean. I don't wish to go back, but it is said that the Mackintoshes were at the battle of Bannockburn, and very likely they were. At the same time, as I have nothing very authentic to refer to, I do not specially dwell on the matter. Then to come down to 1745, the last great battle in Scotland, at which clanship got its death blow. In 1745 the then Chief of Clan Chattan held a commission in the Hanoverian Army—I w nt call it the Royal Army. Previously there had been a few companies raised under George the Second. He held a commission and so did Cluny of that day. When the rising of 1745 took place Mackintosh was, as I have just said, an officer in one of these Highland Companies and he did not rise to assist Prince Charles. I think the most charitable way to put it is that he considered it a breach of honour to leave the service to which he had pledged himself and gave his word. You know quite well that any officer who enters the service takes an oath of fidelity to the Government. Now, what is the history of the Chiefs since. The members of the family have distinguished themselves very greatly. Most of them have been brought up in the profession of arms. The next Chief who succeeded was Eneas, afterwards Sir Eneas Mackintosh. He was a long time in the 71st Highlanders. He served in America and was taken prisoner on his way home and confined as a prisoner in France for a considerable period, and I looked with great interest at some papers connected with his release

on parole. The celebrated Benjamin Franklin, then the representative at the French Court, knew Mackintosh, and by his interest he was liberated. The present Chief is in every sense a soldier, and worthy to fill, as he does with honour, the place of head of the Clan Chattan. But I must go back for a little. After the marriage in 1291 the Clan began to increase by the addition of other people. Now, I know it is the feeling of the Chief, and I am glad to find it is the feeling of this Association, that the Clan Chattan feel much indebted to the support that was given by the different tribes composing it, some of whose names I have mentioned; and I should have mentioned the Farquharsons. The support that was given by the general body of the Clan tended very much to its greatness and renown. The Macphersons also helped very much to do so as long as they continued to follow. The reasons why they went off have been given by me and others elsewhere. Of course they never admit the accuracy themselves, but still the thing is incapable of contradiction. The Macphersons also held any land they had from the Earls of Huntly, afterwards the Dukes of Gordon. The Dukes of Gordon and the Mackintoshes and Clan Chattan were for ages at daggers drawn. The consequence was that in order to hurt the Mackintoshes and break the power of the Clan Chattan they manœuvred in order to get the Macphersons to leave the Clan, and they were only too successful in many respects. Although you hear a good deal about the Macphersons and about their great connection, and that they were so powerful one would think Badenoch was their exclusive property, yet as late as 1600 no Cluny owned an inch of property either in Badenoch or in Inverness-shire. The head of the Clan in 1600, Andrew Macpherson of Cluny, only held, as tenant at will, three ploughs, not equal to one davoch of the land of Badenoch—and Badenoch

extended to about sixty davochs. How can they state for a moment that they were influential people, who only in reality, as tenants, held three ploughs. I don't wish to give offence to Macphersons, and I have been charged in consequence of something I have written in a book, "The Macdonalds of Isla," that I have an ill-feeling to Campbells. I have been obliged, when dealing with bye-gone events, to make certain strong observations on certain events in the past history of the Campbells. But it is not to be supposed that I wish to pitch into the present Argylls, or that I have any ill-feeling towards the name of Campbell. I have many strong friends of that name, and I may say the same of the Macphersons ; but at the same time, when the latter come out of their own sphere and attempt to build a reputation which was founded and made by others, they must expect to hear disagreeables. I could say many severe things indeed which are very true. For instance, I might make some reference to what the Macphersons did when in a *quasi*-independent position, which hardly leads the Clan Chattan to thinking highly of them as leaders of men. What did they do with Lord Dundee about the time of the battle of Killiecrankie ? They were asked over and over again to join Lord Dundee, and they declined. Lord Dundee gave Duncan Macpherson of Cluny his bond for some 600 merks, an assignation of which bond I have copy. Yet they did not go out, and in 1691 the Commander at Ruthven says the Laird of Cluny was very forward in helping to reduce the rebels. What did they do in 1715 ? None of them went out as a distinctive body. The head of the Macphersons was an old man and on very bad terms with the next heir, and he would neither take the field himself nor allow his Clan, under Macpherson of Nuide, the next heir male, who was quite willing to go out, to fight for the Stuarts. All the appearance they made in 1715 was

that a few of the more fighting men among them—I am glad that even to this day there are a good number of fighting Macphersons—insisted on going out. What did these stalwarts do? They were actually obliged to serve under the Macgregors. What happened at the battle of Culloden? Perhaps it was not their fault, because the battle was rather hurriedly brought about and many were unable to be present; but when the poor Clan Chattan and Mackintoshes, under MacGillivray of Dunmaglass, were being swept down in hundreds—as we are told by the Provost of Inverness, that the brunt of the battle fell on the Clan Chattan—what were the Macphersons doing? They were supping their breakfast porridge at the place of Dalma-gerry, near Moy Hall, on their way to the battle. From this march they retired and dispersed, and have never been seen again in the field as a distinctive body unless on a recent ludicrous march in brakes and similar conveyances, unknown in former days. I have no wish to create ill-feeling, but at the same time your Association is a fact, and is based on the very broadest ground and accepted by every sept or tribe which was known by historians and others to be members of the Clan. They were all invited to join this Association, of which Captain Mackintosh is the worthy head, and of which Mr Davidson is the worthy secretary, and in which there are many other powerful office-bearers. It was not got up by Mackintosh or by those of the name of Mackintosh. It was got up by the Clan themselves. I think it is very hard—and I put it to you as reasonable men and women—that this Association, which was founded on the broadest principles, not with the intention of exalting anyone, or creating division, but for the purposes of carrying out the views embodied in your articles. I know that this Association has had good results. I know from one who employs very many workmen that when when he wants

workmen he gives preference to those in the first instance, recommended through the Secretary; and when you see a society doing such work I think, in the place of obstacles or petty assumptions being raised, I say that all such ought to be put down. We ought to put our foot down and say that we will go steadily on in our own proper course. Many a thing might be said, because the question is a very large one indeed. We have what we may call bogus parties coming forward and making unnecessary claims. I would like to make a further reference to the Macpherson claim. As I said before they claim that they are the Clan Chattan and that Cluny is the Chief, that he is the male descendant of the old Clan Chattan. Now, there is a work which is very well known to all people who are interested in family matters, called "Burke's History of the Landed Gentry." That is a book that is looked up to for authentic pedigrees of different families. Cluny states that he is the representative of Ghillie Chattan. He states that he is a descendant of Ewen or Kenneth—I forget at this moment—who was a parson in Kingussie, and that goes back as far as 1173, but the elder brother having died this parson applied to the Pope and got a dispensation to marry, did marry and had children. Now I want to see that dispensation, for really I don't believe in it. Why would the holder of a benefice give up his safe and sound pecuniary position for an imaginary chieftaincy over the tenancy of three ploughs of land, which as late as 1600 was all Cluny of the day possessed. By this pedigree Cluny is descended from the son of a parson. The old name of the Macphersons in Gaelic was Mac Vurich, the son of Murdoch. I asked them to produce that dispensation, for if they describe themselves as the son of a parson or priest, which he was in those days, they don't show themselves in a very distinguished light. I have been surprised that they call themselves the son of a parson, really a priest at that time. I say

that the greatest opprobrium that one calls another in a Roman Catholic country, such as Scotland then was, is to call any one the son of a priest, and I should think Macvurich the bard and others would be shocked at the designation. Further, in the Macpherson genealogy there is a long genealogy given of all the different heads of Macphersons from the priest downwards. Now, I am sorry to say that this pedigree is false and fabricated in a great number of essential particulars. Even as late as the battle of Glenlivet, in 1594, the name of the chief of the Macpherson's is erroneously given John, for no other reason apparently than that the name of a John Macpherson is given as one of those who get a remission from Aldqueynachan. Whenever a Macpherson is found of old he is pounced upon and made to figure in the Cluny pedigree. I would ask any person here to be satisfied in their own minds what they are about. Are they going to back up claims which I stated before are incapable of proof? One of the greatest authorities of this century upon Highland matters was Mr Donald Gregory, whose well-known work on the Western Highlands is well known. Mr Donald Gregory had looked into this matter, and had written to the present Mackintosh's father from which I will give you an extract:—"I can imagine no case stronger or better supported by an incontrovertible array of facts—not theories or opinions, which in a question of this kind are totally inapplicable—than yours. Nor on the other hand can I imagine one weaker, worse supported by facts, and resting more exclusively on vague assertions than that of my friend Cluny." He wrote that in 1836. I will not say much against Skene, but I am compelled to say this that when a very young man the late Mr Skene wrote a book called "The Highlands and Highlanders" in which he strongly backed up Cluny's claim. Mr Skene became a very old man and lived long enough to know there

was a great demand for this book and for a second edition, but he never agreed to it. He was afraid to do it, because he knew his book was so full of errors, and he declined to re-publish it. I may say that Mr Skene in his old age wrote a history of his own family. I recollect when reading it at the time it came out, I thought it was a very poor production for a man like him. It very strongly hurt the representative of the family. Mr Skene of Skene utterly demolished the correctness of the book and showed that Skene was utterly incapable of grasping the history of his family, so that you must take *cum grano salis* much of what you hear of Skene as an authority. There is also another matter I may mention. Mr Skene, when a young man, was sent to Badenoch to learn Gaelic and fell in with the clergyman of the parish, Dr Mackintosh Mackay. Dr Mackintosh Mackay had some ill feeling against the Mackintosh of the day and he was at the bottom of starting these assumptions. They got a hold when a youth, with the ground ready, of the late Ewen Macpherson of Cluny, a man who was a very fine fellow, with the manners of a grand seigneur, but at the same time a vain weak man. They pushed Cluny to make a number of charges and to keep up a style as a chief which his circumstances did not permit of, and the end was that the man who succeeded to 100,000 acres died with something like 40,000. The remainder had been lost by a vain man in keeping up a position that he had no right to. I think from the way old Cluny treated Mackintosh's grandfather when Mackintosh succeeded to the estate in 1827 that he must have been pushed by Dr Mackintosh Mackay and other busybodies to induce him to write Mackintosh before he had time to settle down after coming across from America, and find fault with him for taking the title of Captain of the Clan Chattan. Writing on Nov., 1827, Cluny says to Mackintosh—"In so far as you have assumed the title of Captain

of the Clan Chattan you have laid on me the necessity of vindicating my own right to that designation." I believe the Macphersons are now disposed to relinquish the claim to the Captaincy, and limit their claim that Cluny is Chief. Angus Mackintosh took the trouble to send Cluny, or offer to send him, a number of documents showing his descent and his written proofs, but Cluny replied to this by his letter dated 24th January, 1828, in which he repudiates all writs and documents. He says "In your former letter you alluded to bonds and charters as sufficient proofs of your right to the title in question. These of themselves I conceive to be no proofs whatever." His position and that of his tribe is that they are far above all such. Sufficient for him and them is to cry "God is great, while Cluny is His prophet." He puts forward what may be called a bogus claim, supported by a still more bogus descent. Will he stand by that, or will the most staunch of his supporters stand by the pedigree that now stands in the name of Macpherson of Cluny in Burke's book, edition 1894? It will take little time to show that the genealogy is absurd and false. About the title of Captain, or Chief, of the Clan Chattan, there is no doubt that there is no difference in reality between captain and chief, except this, that a chief had only people of the same name and he was chief of the tribe, but when you come to the Clan Chattan where he had a number of tribes with their own independent chieftains, he was the Captain and leader of the whole Clan. He, no doubt, originally held the title of Captain, but in course of time the word chief being used by others came to be used by the Mackintoshes. I hold them to be perfectly synonymous. There is no distinction between the one and the other only that I think captain the most honourable, because it shows he is not only a leader of a single tribe but the leader of a number of tribes. I may mention there is no word in the Gaelic for the word chief, being

comparatively a modern term. There is no word in the Gaelic to denote precisely the word chief. The words then used by Mackintosh and the others in his position as Captain of the Clan Chattan are the words "Ard Ceann Clann Chattan." That really signifies the "great or upper head" of the clan, so that the word chief has, in my opinion, no superiority whatever over captain. There was, for instance, the Captain of the Clan Ranald, because there were numbers of people under him besides Macdonalds. The Camerons were first captains because they had the Macmillans and the Macphees who were even stronger than the Camerons themselves. The Macphees, Kennedys, and Macmillans, &c., were the original inhabitants of the land which is now owned by Cameron of Lochiel. There is no distinction, except that I hold captain is if anything of a higher rank. I will now conclude, thanking you most heartily for the very careful hearing you have given to a somewhat intricate statement.

At the close of the address Mr Fraser-Mackintosh stated that, with the chairman's permission, he would answer any pertinent question on the part of any of the audience, but none being made the speaker was awarded a very hearty vote of thanks. A musical entertainment followed.















