

Angus of the Hills and Callum the Seer of Shawbost
in "The 'Men' of the Lews" by Rev Norman C. Macfarlane, 1924

THE "MEN"

OF

THE LEWS

I'm sorry this is such a poor quality PDF. These are documents I copied for my own research in writing Island Spirituality, and this was an awkward book to copy from - indeed, part of it I copied from a pamphlet with identical text that was easier to handle. It will be easier to read if either printed, or if, in the View tab, you increase the zoom %.

BY THE

REV. NORMAN C. MACFARLANE,

JUNIPER GREEN, EDINBURGH.

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The Rev Macfarlane was clearly quite a character. Don't miss the brief biography of him in the Foreword in the middle of this PDF.

285-20922

THE "GAZETTE" OFFICE, STORNOWAY

1924

*Prologue + intro **

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PREFACE

THE "Men" in the Highlands were so named to distinguish them from the Ministers. They were prominent in the Religious Life of their community. They were Elders of the Church who often took the role of Lay Preachers. The Question Day was their field day. The Communion services in connection with celebrating the Lord's Supper extended from Thursday the Fast-Day to Monday the Thanksgiving-Day, in each parish. The services went on each day from early morning to night with intervals. The Friday was the Men's Day. The presiding Minister after the opening devotional service invited any Elder to rise and propose the Question. Usually an Elder belonging to the parish in which the Communion was held rose, read a verse or text from Scripture, and said he would like to hear the "Marks" of the true Believer, deducible from the verse read. The courtesy of the occasion was that all the speakers called on were visitors from other parishes. The presiding Minister "opened out" the text in a few choice impromptu words, and then invited speakers. He called aloud the name of the speaker he selected. He rose and often in a singularly able address, right off the reel, pictured the Real Christian in the qualities suggested by the text. When he sat down the presiding minister called another of the "Men" by name. He likewise gave his impromptu address. And so on, until the hours

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sped under the pleasing and helpful variety of a dozen speakers or more. The "Men" spoke out of rich experience. They as a rule spoke with surprising relevancy, and every one felt that the service was a festival. The "Question Day," as its name implies, was meant to be a self-searching season, in which every hearer examined his heart by the "marks" adduced. While this inward examination doubtless went on, there was at the same time a sweet glow on the face of the Congregation as the presiding Minister summed up and closed the holy Convocation. It is the speakers of those Fridays who came to be called "The Men." My own recollection of many of them is vivid. I have gathered from various sources materials embodied in the following sketches. There are two friends to whom I am most deeply indebted for help. The Rev. Neil M. Morrison of the United Free Church of Carloway, whose knowledge of the "Men" of his native parish of Lochs is wide and intimate and whose kindness in supplying me with facts is beyond my description. The Rev. John Macleod of the Free North Church, Inverness, who during his residence as a teacher in Stornoway drank deeply of the Spirit of the "Men of Lews" and who most generously gave me the notes he wrote of them. To these two friends my profound thanks.

The following sketches of the "Men" are only a fraction of the debt I owe to my native Island.

N. C. M.

10/3/24.

INTRODUCTION.

A BRITISH OFFICER who wrote a book on the Battle of the Marne decided to put the "Preface" not at the beginning but at the close of his book. Readers, he held, usually skipped the Introduction. This, printed in front of the Sketches, may be read after them. The "Men" have been a long recognised Order in the Highlands. It is interesting to trace its origin. Thomas Hog, the famous minister of Kiltearn, is regarded as its founder. He was born of humble parents in Tain in the year in which John Bunyan was born. He studied in Aberdeen and was ordained at Kiltearn. Archbishop Sharp hated him as his worst opponent, and banished him in the prelatric period to the Bass Rock dungeons for 28 years. During his ministry in Kiltearn Thomas Hog was noted for his faithful outspoken words to laird and peasant, and for his consuming zeal as a soul winner. The parish blossomed into spiritual beauty, and became known as the "Holy Land." Like Kidderminster under Richard Baxter's sera-

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phic influence, Kiltearn adopted family worship in every home, and the voice of praise and prayer rose from baronial hall and humblest cottage. The parish of Uig in the Lews nearly a hundred years ago, under Alexander Macleod became similarly a veritable land of Beulah. One of the most remarkable converts in Kiltearn was known as "John Caird," a drunken tinker of the name of John Munro. He resembled in various ways the resplendent tinker of Elstow. The meetings and conferences instituted by Thomas Hog were kept going during Hog's banishment, by this gifted and consecrated lieutenant. It was these conferences that gave rise to the Order of the "Men." The conferences were a sort of close corporation for no one was admitted but communicants. In the Island of Lews there were monthly, sometimes quarterly, gatherings, known as the "Communicants' meeting." These were held as late as 30 years ago. I remember how the Rev. Donald John Martin used to say that their tendency latterly was towards self-righteousness and pride. At first when converts were keenly alive to the glory of spiritual fellowship there was no such danger. Humility and gratitude stamped every communicant. When the spiritual life is at its ebb, the unsightly things on the shores of the soul become

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exposed, but these are covered in the incoming tide. The light that rose on Kiltearn, rose also on contiguous parishes. One of these parishes was described as the "Nest of Thrushes," so sweet and melodious was its religious life. When called on to speak at their private conferences some of the "Men" showed remarkable and penetrating power in the meaning of Scripture. That naturally made ministers feel that the entire congregation which gathered for Communion seasons should share in the blessings drawn by the "Men" from the Wells of Truth. In three parishes at least, Rosskeen, Golspie and Rogart, the boys and girls who were drawn into the great revivals began conferences of their own, on the model of the communicants' meetings, and older people who overheard these children were amazed at their fresh and striking interpretation of verses of the Bible. The conferences among the men of experience grew. In one parish under the saintly Rev. John Balfour the conference was so big that he divided it in two, with ten sub-conferences. It is easy to see how the most gifted of the speakers at such meetings would be called to take part on what became the "Men's Day." During the reign of prelacy in Scotland when 350 ministers were driven from their pulpits it was the "Men" who kept the

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fires burning in the Highlands. Debts of gratitude are owing to their memory. Soon after Alexander Macleod came to the Lews in 1824 a mighty revival broke out. It was prepared for by the Gaelic schools which taught the people to read the Bible in their own language. When a race of gifted converts rose to spiritual manhood Mr Macleod introduced in the Lews what he had seen in his native county of Sutherland, and under him the "Men's Day" became a fixed and fruitful institution in the Island. The early crop of those Lews stalwarts included men of unique gifts and eminent piety. It is to keep sweetly green the memory of those "Men" that my sketches of them have been written, very imperfectly but affectionately.

N. C. M.

THE "MEN" OF LEWS.

I.—KENNETH ROSS.

NO country, it is said, looks its best on a map. The Lews answers up to that word. Not even to one who tramps the island does it reveal itself. One required to know its people. In them the Lews unfolded itself, loch and hill, moor and river. The "Men" of Lews were a choice generation.

The premier among the "Men" was Kenneth Ross. I do not remember ever seeing him. I was in the small-boyhood of Stornoway when he died, but his funeral in 1862 is a far-off glimmer in my memory. Everyone spoke of him in the superlative. I fancy that if he had been a soldier his breast would have blazed with jewelled orders. His own generation owed him an unpayable debt.

He was born at Crobeg, Lochs, in 1800, and converted under Finlay Cook's preaching. His brother was Allan Ross, a long-headed, wise man, who taught a school in his native parish. Allan and Kenneth were very different. Allan was a lawyer, shrewd, cautious, and safe—a very Parliamentarian for guiding and unravelling. Kenneth

other half was to go to the Gaelic Schools Society which dismissed him. There was a further provision that if any of the widow's share should be left over at her death, it also was to go to the Society that cashiered him. There was a rich grapy bloom about everything John Macleod did. He might well earn the title which was given to one who wove common things into exquisite verse, the title of the Beautiful Ropemaker. The common things of life he wove into loveliness. There was a note in John Macleod which was as sweet as the Lost Chord, only from John Macleod it never floated away until he and it reached heaven together.

IV.—ANGUS OF THE HILLS.

TO affix his clansmen's name to Angus would be the description by which posterity entirely forgets him! No one would recognise the converted simpleton of Uig under the title of Angus Macleod or Angus MacIennan, some say he was the one, some the other. But when "Aonghas-nam-beann" is mentioned, every Lewisman pricks his ear, for this name in this edited form has floated down as one of the outstanding of the Island. Angus was a child of the uplands in more senses than one. His father was a shepherd who rejoiced in his lonely hill-craft. On those hillsides of Uig his humble cottage stood, and there Angus was born. The whole parish knew him as "Angus-of-the-hills," and by that name he is affectionately enshrined in Lewismen's hearts all over the world.

His mental constitution was not of gun-metal. It was weak and of the wool-gathering order. People said he just mooned around. When the great Revival came to Uig it embraced Angus, and he was cast into the deepest spiritual concern. Then he went back to his native hills and spent days and nights there in prayer. Many men in Uig did the same. The hillsides were sanctuaries where prayer and confession and praise rose as

incense on the air. If ever there was a spot where the angels gathered as pendant spectators it was surely there. There is a Moorish legend that Heaven was built right over the deep blue sky of Andalusia. Lewismen felt as if heaven's foundations were in the mountains of Uig. The Rev. Alexander Macleod, the first evangelical minister of Lews, saw his preaching of the Cross bearing a vast harvest. On every side the careless became anxious, and hundreds were turned to the Lord. The whole parish became a temple, and worship its one occupation. "Aonghas-nam-beann" was one of the great trophies of Grace. His eyes, like Mary of Bethany's, became homes of silent prayer. His public prayers were a surprise and wonder. Every soul was arrested and thrilled as Angus poured out his spirit in language of the sweetest reverence. And there also exhaled from him a spirit of love and kindness that was a very perfume. Was it not Socrates who said he once saw a poor ragged man, and yet through every hole in his garment pride seemed to shine. Through every rift and hole in "Aonghas-nam-beann's" simpleton-nature there shone a beauty of heaven that captivated the parish. He started the new life and continued in it on an extraordinarily high level, and became as fixed as if melted into it in a liquid state. The regard and affection that were poured out on him were more than ordinary. It would require capitals to express it.

Mr Macleod, the minister, had so high a regard for Angus that he engaged a teacher to teach him

to read. The teacher could make nothing of him. His memory for the alphabet was hopeless. He could repeat A; with much labour he succeeded in adding B, but there was no room in his mind for a third letter. With effort after effort to get C in, he had to abandon the task. Angus met all endeavour to instruct him by affirming that he did not see Christ in these letters. To Angus, Christ was everything—all his desire and all his world. He would rather be out on the hillside with Christ than filling himself up with this kind of learning. To the hills he went after every vain lesson, and from these hills he returned with a shining face. His teacher tried him with counting on his fingers, but Angus got lost before he reached his fourth finger. It did indeed seem as if silliness had struck Angus on neck, hip, and shin, but spared his solar-plexus, for in spiritual things he was as sound and sane as any man in Uig.

On one occasion in Stornoway there met him a man who was gomeril enough to say to Angus, "Oh, aren't you the Uig fool?" Angus fell aboard of him with the reply, "The Bible says the fool is he who trusteth to his own heart," which the Stornoway man was evidently doing.

Angus applied to his minister for the privilege of sitting at the Lord's Table. The minister was the great evangelical Alexander Macleod, under whose preaching Angus was born again. The minister refused him this coveted privilege on the ground of intellectual incapacity. Mr Macleod,

who spoke with the authority of a dictator, aligned the entire Kirk Session behind him. They un-animously refused Angus's application. "May Heaven assoil them!" was the prayer of Angus's own heart. He felt for a moment as if they were slamming the door of heaven in his face, and he mourned as one rejected of God. But the grace that dwelt so richly in him triumphed, and he nestled all the closer in the Saviour's bosom. His childish simplicity exposed Angus to occasional slights, but this attitude of Mr Macleod and his Session was the "most unkindest cut of all." But a man with God is always in the majority, and Angus's sweetness and humility and love remained as vivid as the stripes in the rainbow. Izak Walton had urged his anglers to impale the frogs as if they loved them, and Mr Macleod and his elders would no doubt convey their stern decision in the most velvety way that was possible. But it was a severe decision. It felt like tearing out a live nerve. Although for a little his face was a study in the tragic, yet Angus threw frankincense on the flame and the atmosphere was of lilies and roses. In the eyes of the parish Angus shone the more radiantly. It looked as if a deposit of the rarest grace were precipitated on him, and his Christianity attained the rank of gilt-edged security to those who addicted themselves to comparing and valuing the Christian character of their neighbours.

Soon after this the Rev. Robert Finlayson had

a visit from three women who came to apply for Church membership. As was his custom, he asked what first led them to Christ. The first woman said that hearing "Aonghas-nam-beann" praying in a service at Uig opened her heart. The second woman said she was led to the Saviour through the first woman telling her about that wonderful prayer of Angus's at Uig.

Angus was much in request for public prayer. His gift was remarkable, and when he prayed it felt as if the heavens opened and the Bethel Ladder came down. He did not always respond when called. "Angus! you lead us in prayer," said the minister. "Oh, no, minister, I cannot to-day." "Certainly, Angus, you can and you will." "Not to-day, minister; I cannot do it." "Yes, rise, Angus, Jonah prayed when he was worse off than you. He prayed when he was in the whale's belly." "Ah! but I have the whale in mine to-day!" When Angus rose he was like a ship in the trade-winds, he sped on with unvarying triumph, with everything right aloft and aloft.

Herding cows was thought to be a simple service which Angus could easily fulfil. Again and again he failed. Once his father was angered by his letting the cattle into the corn, and he chased Angus with loud threatening. "Lord, cause my father to stumble" rose from the lips of the son, and sure enough down went the father, and Angus escaped. The minister entrusted Angus with his cows, and the same straying into the cornfield hap-

pened. When some one said to him, "Why, Angus, did you not pray that the cows might be kept from the corn?" he replied, with an injured look, "It would never do to put cows into the prayer." Praying for his father's stumble was not more spiritual than planting the cows in his request, but men whose residence was more distant than Angus' from the borderlands of sanity are often guilty of similar inequalities in their methods.

A lady once gave Angus a small purse of money. As he proceeded home an interesting dialogue arose. Angus told of it afterwards. A little man, said Angus, rose up in my inside and he began to speak. I could hear every word he said. "You love the money, Angus, more than you love Christ." "I do not. I tell you loud and clear I do not." "Yes, Angus, you do. Your thoughts are on the money." "Well, yes, I think of the money, but I think more of Christ." "Come, come, Angus, it won't do. You are an idolater. You are making an idol of the money." "Oh, bad little man in my inside, be quiet with you. I am not an idolater. Look at this—I am putting the money away in a hole in the dyke. I can do without the money till Monday, but I cannot do one hour without Christ." And so the little bad man in his inside was silenced.

Angus travelled as far as the Isle of Skye to attend a Communion there. That great minister of Skye, Rev. Roderick Macleod, heard of his

arrival and invited him to his manse. Mister Rory, as he was familiarly called, was in a teasing mood. "Angus, think of the grace conferred on you to-day in being seated here at my manse table." "Ah, minister," replied Angus, "think of the greater grace conferred on yourself when you invited poor me to sit at your board." This story has run through various editions, as stories of the kind usually do run, and in one edition it was at the table of Mr Lillingston of Balmacara House the incident occurred.

There were some respects in which Angus resembled the striking Cornishman, Billy Bray. Billy was told by a friend that the Lord whispered to him that he was to give a gift of clothes to Billy. "Here they are but I don't know if they will fit." "There is no fear as to the fit," said Billy, "for the Lord knows my exact measure." Angus once received a rigout of coat and vest and trousers, and he thanked his Heavenly Father in a way which made one think that the cutting-out took place in Heaven!

Angus was given to soliloquy. Many of his words fell on ears in the passing, and were rehearsed eagerly through the parish. Here is a specimen: "Oh, my Saviour, the Black One came to me to-day. He was going to trouble me. Fire was in his eye. I told him You were coming and I expected You soon. Oh, You should see how he took to his heels." On such occasions Angus brightened, and he *melodized*, as Thomas Hardy

would express it. There was one bit of soliloquizing that raised many a ripple of laughter. The banns of marriage were in his time all proclaimed in church. One day he was overheard going over *his own banns*. "There is a purpose of marriage between Aonghas — and Margaret —, etc." That doubtless was a tit-bit, but there were other sweeter and more refreshing morsels that helped many souls in their pilgrim way, morsels that were nectarous to the palate of the spiritually minded.

Although Angus was not one of those who spoke on Fridays of Communion, he ranked as one of the forces in the Island of Lews. His faith, his simplicity, his warmth of love gave him rank. He found God in everything. In the stiff finger he had, stiffened by stone-throwing, he traced God's loving dealing, and in everything else, as in it, he saw the mark of God clear as a mirror. He died two generations ago, but he lives in Lewis history as an ornament of divine grace.

V.—MURDO MACDONALD.

THIS early trophy of the Evangel lived first at Guershader, one of the suburbs of Stornoway, and latterly in the Bayhead or West End of the town. He was one of the first three converts in the Island. It was said that prior to 1820 Lews Christians and Icelandic snakes were in the same arithmetical category! No doubt there were men in whose heart dim stirrings were found, and they looked, with hands hooding their eyes, across the seas for Heaven's lamp-carriers. These came in the guise of Gaelic school teachers. It was while one of those teachers was reading Thomas Boston's "Fourfold State" to an audience in Stornoway that the Spirit began to move in Murdo Macdonald. There soon was planted in him a rudiment of divine knowledge, which grew rapidly, as the sowings of a late spring ripen under a sunshiny summer. He came to be known as "Morochie Mor-nan-gras." Those who formed the great trio of the first-fruits of the Gospel in Lews were "Kotreen-a-Thanghie" and John Mackay, and our subject, Murdo Macdonald. Their heads, the *Island has garlanded with immortelles*. All three were more than remarkable.

Murdo Macdonald was a weaver, and a thinker.

*The
Men
of Lewis Jan 1923*

Volume

Part 2

by the

Rev. NORMAN C. MACFARLANE

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FOREWORD

MORE than thirty years ago Rev. Norman Campbell Macfarlane, then Minister of St. Andrew's Church, Juniper Green, Edinburgh, contributed a series of articles to the "Stornoway Gazette" on the "men" of Lewis — the lay preachers, and elders, (and some saintly women too), who had been leaders in the great evangelical movement of the nineteenth century.

Mr Macfarlane was a native of Lewis. He knew personally many of the men of whom he wrote. The others he knew through local tradition, and the enquiries he made from those who had walked and talked with them.

After publication in the "Gazette," the articles were gathered together in a volume entitled "The Men of the Lews." It has long been out of print, and a new generation has grown up quite unfamiliar with much of the material Rev. Mr Macfarlane had gathered, and preserved, although still familiar with the names of these worthies who live on in the oral tradition of the Island churches.

Rev. Mr Macfarlane died in 1933, but his family has given permission for the republication of the articles in a series of paper-bound pamphlets, so that the cost can be kept down, and the story of the "men" brought within the reach of all. Many, however, will wish to have this precious record in a permanent form, and when the paper covered series has been completed, arrangements will be made for a small cloth-bound edition.

The last of the pamphlets will fittingly, contain a tribute to Rev. N. C. Macfarlane's own memory, but the first of them opened, as he would have wished, with his own Preface and Introduction to the original edition in which he explained the origin and function of the "men."

This pamphlet is the second in the series. Altogether there will be four.

leod, as in Mr Gladstone, something regnant, a solar light that commanded. He was careful of his personal appearance. Casually he had tea once at a friend's house. After the tea came a service in the school which he was to conduct. He said he must go home and shave before the service. The friend remonstrated and said it was utterly unnecessary. He was quite presentable. All in the house urged the same. But not all the king's horses and all the king's men could make him go to the schoolhouse unshaven. He said he could not enjoy a service if he did not honour it by perfect tidiness.

His was a singularly tuneful soul. He was nearly all his life a precentor, and his leading of the praise made people take the stoppers out of their ears. His voice was full of colour. He had a quick, true ear. He once heard one of Sankey's hymns sung. From that moment it sang itself within his ear and on his tongue. He was constantly humming or singing, and he made the air around him melodious. He seldom visited the sombre fields of Ecclesiastes where such pessimists as read Scripture luxuriate, but the Song of Solomon was his canticle, and the majestic passages of Isaiah he chanted in a metre of his own. He was a real poet, but did not commit to paper any of the makings of his mind. His son Murdo inherited the poetic gift, and he produced the popular anthem of the Lews — "Eilean-a-fhraoich". In the early years before his teens, this well-known son gave signs of the divine afflatus, and the Catechist could say as Thackeray said of his daughter's first literary production, "It moistened my paternal spectacles."

When the union of the Churches was in the air, he stood up for it with unflinching verve, and said of some who went to an anti-Union gathering in the Schoolhouse that if they had gone to that school in their earlier life they would not be found going there now! He stood as on an Alp and saw clearly and far. He had a kind of pleasure in bringing to earth those who walked on high stilts.

At the age of 25 he married Anne Morrison, of Gravir, sister of Hector Morrison, elder, one of the Gravir trio. Her refined appearance rises to my eye. She was a bit of Dresden china, and was the happy mother of eight sons and three daughters. His son John died in early youth, and I remember the strange rumour that the Corp Cre found in a burn in Lochs was meant to represent him. So recently as 50 years ago, and less, was the Corp Cre, which was studded all over with pins, an article of creed in some of the slower Lews minds. Catechist Macleod died in January, 1898, having attained the age of 87. His mental faculties had never come to autumn sere and yellow. His visits in the houses of Lochs left a preciousness that lingered until he came again. He was a great catechist and a great man, the sort that St. Paul would often have mentioned in his despatches from the front. Lewismen never cease to be proud of having known and heard this distinguished son of their island.

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Callum: The Seer of Shawbost

THE Lews had "Men" of great spiritual stature, but this son of the Island towered over all the others in the gift of prophecy. He was born at Shawbost, on the west side of the island, and lived there all his fourscore years. It is 60 years since he died, but his fame has never died. His name was Malcolm Maclean. He bore his father's name, and was locally known as Callum Mhic Callum. But in his own parish, and all over the Lews, he was best recognised as "Callum Mor ne-hurnigh". His prayerfulness was the wonder of the community. He rose long before dawn, that, like his Lord, he might hold Communion with God. He never sat longer than half-an-hour in any company, however delightful the company might be. He must out to see his Heavenly Father's Face. The lure of prayer was stronger than all the pleasures of holy converse with fellow-believers. God's presence was to him the most captivating of all fascinations. He rivalled King Saul in physical stature, and as Norman Morrison (a Lewsman who wields a silver pen) says, "he was strikingly handsome, and of magnetic personality." MacRath Mor, referring to his deep humility, used to say of Callum, "I never knew so big a man who was so little."

This remarkable man could not read, but his memory held long Scripture chapters to the last letter, and when he spoke to the "Question", the light he threw on verses in the Bible opened people's eyes with wonder. In public prayer his language was of unusual beauty. The late Rev. Malcolm Macphail, of Kilmartin, who often heard him, and who wrote a short sketch of him, said "it was full toned, idiomatic, classical Gaelic," and, as Norman Morrison puts it, "he clothed the elusive and the invisible in garments of splendour." He carried every detail to his Heavenly Father, and was on terms of extraordinary friendship with God. Some people thought his gift of prophecy verged on the uncanny, but there is no mystery at all about it in a soul of such sweet simplicity and faith as his, merged, as it continually was, in heart to heart communion with God. "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?" In that prayerfulness in which he was constantly steeped, his mind became a sensitised plate on which pictures from Heaven were easily and immediately made. When he came back from prayer one could

read Paradise Regained in his face. Murdo Morrison, Thule, Edinburgh, once told me that he remembered Callum praying at family worship in his father's house on North Beach, in Stornoway. That house faced the handsome pile of Stornoway Castle, then occupied by Sir James Matheson. Callum's petition was "Lord, show mercy to the man who lives in the big stone-cairn over by." That was a sample of the arresting forms in which his prayers abounded. His usual address to God was: "O Thou of Everlasting Love." His own soul was fragrant with the love in which he browsed day by day. The whole countryside retailed instances of Callum's foretelling, many of which are still remembered. Once there was a fishing boat which failed to return when the others were driven home. Anxiety sprang into the hearts of the waiting friends. There was, after long expectation, no appearance of the boat. At length they went to the Seer. He said the boat would arrive safely at 12 o'clock tomorrow. The morrow came, and the village crowded down to the shore to welcome the boat. Eyes were eager in scanning the horizon, but no boat! A man ran to the house of the Seer and said: "It is 12 and there is no sight of the boat." His answer simply was, "Your time must be wrong. It's not 12 in Heaven yet." The man had scarcely got to the waiting company on the shore when the boat rounded a headland, and the crew were landed amid a chorus of thanksgivings. Another tale of the sea was of a Shawbost boat which had been fishing near the mainland. A terrific storm came on, and intense anxiety was in every heart in the village. The relatives were plunged into keen anguish by the tragic news that the boat had drifted on to the Lews coast in a water-logged state. There was no doubt about the boat. It was perfectly clear and certain that it was the Shawbost boat, and it was natural to think that crew were all washed overboard. Callum heard of the melancholy news and assured the village that while the boat did drift the crew were safe, and they would see them all by and by. One poor widow, whose only son was one of the crew, was prostrate with grief and moaned sadly, "Oh Callum, are you sure he's safe?" "Yes, perfectly sure, unless something has happened since I left the hill two hours ago. It turned out that a ship bound for Leith rescued the crew from their boat, that the fishing boat itself broke away, and that in the raging seas it was not possible for the ship to catch it up again. The crew were landed at Leith, and, in due time, arrived at Shawbost.

Once he met a friend travelling through Shawbost to the village of Bragar. Callum asked him his errand. "I'm on my way to see my daughter who is dying of the terrible fever that is carrying off so many people in Bragar." In his mind he saw her dead and buried, over a dozen times on that sad day. "Your daughter is not dying and will not die at this time." "But I was told she was sinking beyond all hope, and that I must hurry if I wished to see her alive."

"Your daughter will win through," was Malcolm's answer. She had been in the balance and death had evidently set his mark on her, but she recovered and is alive today, and enjoying the nation's bounty in the shape of the Old Age Pension.

Callum had a horse which usually grazed on the village common. One day a woman passing along saw Callum on the common as if he had been looking for his horse. She went to him and said she saw the horse feeding on the other side of the knoll. "Woman, why did you trouble me, I was not looking for my horse. I was looking at a company of angels who were carrying the soul of a child from Arnol up to Heaven." That evening news reached Shawbost of a child's death in the village of Arnol. It had happened at the hour that Callum had the vision. Once he called on the Gaelic school teacher whose fees, so far as fees went, were in the shape of peats for fuel. There were no peats brought him lately. His supply was exhausted, and there was no fire that day. He apologised to Callum for the lack of fire to welcome him and to boil the kettle. "Never fear said Callum, you'll have peats within an hour." It is said that the teacher subjected this utterance to the "merciless test" of pulling out his watch and placing it on the table. True to the prediction a woman appeared within an hour with a creel of peats on her back for the teacher. The fire was made and soon the house was bright with glow and praise.

When that well known Lewsman, the Rev. Nicol Nicolson (who was minister at Garve, afterwards at his native village of Shawbost and now at Strathconon) was a boy of 14 he was struck by Callum's assurance that he would be a preacher of the Gospel, and added that he would have to suffer for his faithfulness to his principles. The which, it is believed, Nicol Nicolson has done. Once, while busy getting his corn into the barn, Callum asked a boy who was idly passing by to help him, and he would pay him for his work. The boy agreed and worked with a will. When the job was finished he asked for payment. "I'll pray for you, my boy, that is the best payment I can offer you." The boy was disappointed, and said, "Never again will I do one stroke of work for you." "Oh boy, go home and be thankful. When I am in my grave you will know the value of this payment and rejoice that it is not copper that you received for this that you have done for me." The boy is now an old respected elder, and from his own lips this story was given to Norman Morrison.

Callum was a collector of the Sustentation Fund, and a most successful one. Many people gave gladly, but some gave out of fear. They were afraid of his prayers and of his prophecies. One man refused out and out to give anything to the fund. Callum pitied him and felt for him and said: "Oh man! this is great folly. You will rue it. For this refusal you will lose one of your stirks," and so it

came to pass. This was entirely different from the threat of Burns to the fellow who crossed him. "Man, I'll mak' a poem o' ye." There was nothing of personal anger in Callum over the refusal. On his collecting rounds he came to a woman whose only cow was very ill. She was in great distress. She said, "This is all the money I have in the house, I would like to give it to you, but I also feel that I ought to buy something with it to help the poor cow." "You give the money to the Lord's cause, and He will look after the cow. I think I may promise you that the cow will recover." She gave him all she had. *He spent that night in prayer, but got no assurance or any message concerning the widow's cow.* He was in deep trouble and hastened along to John Maciver, his fellow villager, to enlist his help in prayer. "What will the woman say if the cow dies? I have asked her to give the money to the Lord's cause and He would look after the cow. What will the village say if the cow dies? Come, friend, let us unite to pray for the cow." John Maciver and the Seer joined in earnest prayer for the cow, and the animal began to mend. When the story of these two saints and the cow reached the Household of Faith in Carloway there was some merriment over the place of honour which the cow obtained in the Court of Heaven!

To the Seer Satan was a stern reality. He saw Satan, and the picture frightened him. Malcolm Maclean was too much a trader with Heaven to be left untempted. Often the devil was at his heels, and he often trembled. "When he is on my track I run across to that great saint, John Maciver and Satan leaves me. I cannot manage him, but John Maciver can." No doubt John Maciver would return the compliment. *He also was too eminent a soul to be let off.* Catriona Thangaigh gathered into a Gaelic verse four of the high spiritual nobilities of Lews in which John Maciver and the Seer are rolled together in one line:

"Ian Smith a Bragar,
A Barvhais Ian MacAoidh,
MacIomhair 's Callum Sheabost,
Bu tearc an leithid ann."

A recollection of John Mackay of Barvas is given in a story of Callum's about a bedfellow. This bedfellow turned his back on Callum and fell to sleep at once. Callum, who was childlike in simplicity, said next morning to his host that "Grace fled from the bed when his bedfellow came in." When I sleep with John Mackay of Barvas he clasps me to his bosom with his warm arms as a mother her child, but this man turned coldly away from me, and fell to snoring! Oh, John Mackay, what a nest of love your bosom always is for Callum MacCallum" John Mackay was a very St. John for overflowing love. Callum's remarks about sermons had the salt of keen wit. Asked what he thought of the sermon that morning, he

said: "The preacher did not get beyond the harbour headlands." That was his characterisation of a shallow preacher who hugged the shore when the deep sea was a little way out. What did you think of that colleged minister that we had last Sabbath? "Ah! our own cock (the uncolleged lay preacher, Kenneth Ross) crows far bonnier." How did you like the Rev. So and So? "Och for him. He never lifted the latch to enter my door." "But was your house fit for the minister to enter?" "Fit! Why the Holy Spirit dwells in it, and surely it's fit for the minister."

A youth once sat on a Shawbost grave clapping it reverentially and affectionately. When asked by a friend whose grave it was, he said it was Callum's. Callum had some time before said to a friend — "Your wife will die first, then you, and you will be buried here. I shall die shortly after you, and be buried there." All which happened.

In his old age friends in Stornoway clubbed together to support this dear saint, and they made all arrangements for a paid attendant to give her undivided care to him in his closing days. The sky was in glow as his sun sank redly in the west. How easy and natural the translation to Heaven of this unique man of God! There is a beautiful headstone at his grave in the memory of every *Lewsman whose thoughts go back to the saints of the Island.* This paper is meant to be one of those headstones, and how imperfect the inscription!