

THE ÆOLIAN HARP.

BY MRS. ARDY.

Harp of soft melody, when silent sitting,
I strive to lift my thoughts from wordly things,
I love to hear the gales of evening fitting
In low awakening murmur o'er thy strings.

No hand is nigh—again the breezes tremble,
Imparting to thy heavenly music birth;
Would that my feeble heart could thee resemble,
Yielding no answer to the spells of earth!

Would that, by human lures and hearts unshaken,
My spirit thus from thralldom could arise;
Resist the power of man its depth to waken,
And only give its breathings to the skies.

FLORA MACDONALD.

BY ALLAN CUNNINGHAM.

During the visit of George the Fourth to Scotland, in the year 1822, men of all clans and tartans, from mainland and isle, hurried to Edinburgh to see their royal visitor—offer him service, or render homage for their lands according to the spirit of ancient tenures. The king, on the third day of his arrival, exhausted by prolonged visits, and the civilities of etiquette, saw the sun go down, and the moon get up, with something like pleasure; and imagined that the toils of royalty were done for the day. The hope was formed but to be disappointed. A strange voice was heard in sharp altercation with the lord in waiting, saying, "I have come from a distant isle, and the king will see Donald Maclean; for he has something to show him that he would not miss the look of for the best diamond in his crown." The king and Sir Walter Scott, who was his majesty's chief man during his stay, exchanged looks and smiles; it was but a wave of the hand, and the islander stood in the apartment.

He was in full costume, wore a bonnet and plume, great breadth of tartan, carried a handsome dirk at his belt, and held in his hand a small instrument of chased silver, resembling a harp, with the strings of which he seemed familiar.

"Ha! Maclean," exclaimed Sir Walter, recognising the stranger at once; "who so welcome as Donald of the harp? Your majesty has heard all kinds of music since your coming, but none in sweetness to rival that of my brother Makkar here, whose touch, like that of Glasgerion,

"Can harp a fish out of the water,
And water out of a stone."

"Your praise suits the lowlander rather than the highlander new," said Maclean, bowing to the far-famed minstrel. "I brought my harp but as a comrade from whom I am unwilling to part; not to help me with my message, which is plain and prosaic."

"Out with thy tale, then," said his majesty, with something akin to impatience in his tone; "I expected poetry, from this preamble."

"The highlander dropped his harp, and producing a piece of oak from the folds of his plaid, held it up, and said, "This bit of oak, black, you see, as ink, as hard as iron, and as salt as a slice of Lot's wife, bears a strange story with it. It once formed part of as gallant a fleet as ever breasted brine: there were brave soldiers, and proven leaders on board; with half the strength and talent of a mighty kingdom; yet it was attacked, and stricken, and scattered: what the battle spared, the tempest took; and this shred of wood, fished up from the bottom of a highland bay, is all that is left to intimate that the fate of the Spanish Armada was but typical of what, in your majesty's day, befel the invading fleets of a spirit mightier far than that of Philip. As a relic of British triumph, I lay it at our monarch's feet." So saying, he placed the fragment at the king's feet, and bowing, turned to be gone.

"Stay, sir," said his majesty, "we part not so; as your present reminds me of my people's victories, so wish I to remind you that the king of England makes the gift welcome, and will place it in his royal armoury."

The islander drew himself proudly up, as he said, boldly, "I have made a mistake—it was to the king of

Great Britain I brought this gift; Sir Walter, where is he to be found?"

The king smiled, and holding out his hand to the other, said, "I bow to your rebuke; and now I can account for the darkening brows and kindling eyes of many chiefs who had not the kindness, like my friend Maclean, to remind me that in not including in my dominions this brave and ancient kingdom, I was resigning a noble half of my empire."

"Donald," said Sir Walter, "I must have you to stand to my friends Wilkie, or Allan, for a picture of the Raid of Redswaire; for you realized the image I have ever formed in my mind of the proud warren:

"He raise and raxed him where he stood,
And bade them watch him wi' his marrows."

"But, my friend, his majesty expected a more poetic exhibition of your powers. Has that morsel of black oak no wild legend linked to it?"

"Our highland legends," replied Maclean, "have been too coldly received by Saxon gentlemen to induce me to try one on a king. The heroic strains of Ossian, admired every where abroad, are laughed at in England. But why not relate a romance about this bit of oak yourself, Sir Walter? You can match ten highland harpers in the art of making something out of nothing."

"Maclean has you there, Sir Walter," said the king; "in truth you have charmed the world with so many brilliant fictions in your own name, that, like the black knight in Ivanhoe, men say you are content to achieve marvels in a mask. Give us the tradition of Maclean's oak, were it but to show, which, by-the-bye is needless, that your genius is never at a loss."

"Your majesty's wish is a command," said Sir Walter, "but I fear I shall so handle a highland legend as to induce my brother Makkar to interpose, and tell the tale himself."

With that glimmer in the eyes, and pursing of the mouth which, in Sir Walter, always announced something of the mingled serious and comic, and seemingly with no very good-will to the task, he began:

"One sunny day, my liege, of this present summer, a strange ship was observed standing towards the shore of a little isle, which, though belonging to Britain's crown, your majesty may never have heard named."

"Heard named!" muttered Maclean, "the isle of Tobermorrie is famous in tale and song."

"The clearest eyes in the isle," continued Sir Walter, "began to examine the make and the rigging, nor did a closer approach afford better knowledge; for first one anchor, and then another was dropt into the bay, and the mariners, like men whom the shore rather menaced than invited, seemed resolved to keep on board, and hold intercourse with no one. Various were the surmises, which the coming of this ship occasioned; for a vessel of any mark is a sort of marvel among our western isles."

"A small marvel!" murmured Maclean? "as if we had not the fleets of the Norsemen, and as if we had forgot the destruction of the Florida, the best ship of the Armada."

"Various, my liege," pursued Sir Walter, "were the surmises which this ship occasioned: a Macraw, who kept a small still in one of the caverns of the coast, trembled for his dearest of distillations, and declared the vessel to be an excise cutter, come to extinguish the little freedom still abiding by traffic. A Macgillary who had retired, (I use a mild word) from one of your majesty's marching regiments, without consulting the colonel, looked upon it as an armed schooner on a cruise for deserters, and took to the hills accordingly. A Cameron,—I know not how he came there,—who fondly believed that the line of the Pretender was immortal, tossed his bonnet, and began to whistle as he marched among the heather, the air of 'You're welcome, Charlie Stuart;' while Maggie Macdonald, a reputed witch from the headland of Mull, exclaimed, 'A shadow and not a ship—a demon and not the work of men's hands; for see, it has dropt anchor over the spot where the Florida, with all her treasures, lies in fifty fathom of water—a spot haunted by the spirit of

the princess of Andalusia; I have seen her corpse-lights myself."

"That's all truth," exclaimed the islander; "I should like to hear how you came to know that, Sir Walter?"

"My ears, Maclean, hear further," replied Scott, "than you are aware of; the lowlands are not without even spiritual intelligence: would you monopolize for your highlands and isles all such intercourse? Content you, man, with the second sight, allow us humbler folk of the south, to discover upland legends in our own way. But to my story—Maggie Macdonald's opinion did not go uncontradicted; a Maclean, who was beside her, exclaimed, 'It is an English ship, come with a diving bell to pick up all the red gold out of the Florida; but it serves our isle right to rob her—she has never done luck since she took to the heather with Prince Charlie.'"

"I wish to say no word of offence," cried the islander; "but may a Saxon knife cut my highland lugs, and mend a gauger's brogues with the bits, if you, or any body else, ever heard such words from the lips of Donald Maclean. So put that in your sporan, Sir Walter."

"Well, then, even tell the story yourself," replied Scott, internally enjoying the islander's anger, and his majesty's wonder.

"By all the water in the blessed well of Tobermorrie, I shall e'en do that same; for I see you are bent on making mirth of as fine a tradition as isle or mainland contains."

"But Maclean," said his Majesty, "as this is to be a poem, will you not in the spirit of a true minstrel, accompany it with the music of your harp."

The islander coloured as he replied, "This harp belonged to Flora Macdonald, and the strings have continued mute since she touched them to soothe the miseries of one whose high courage, and daring deeds, deserved not the fortune of an outcast."

"You may speak out, Maclean," said the king; "I feel for the misfortunes of one whose blood was the same as my own; and it was one of the first acts of my reign to place a noble monument over the dust of our unfortunate princes."

"And right glad were you of the opportunity, sire," answered Maclean; "but I wrong you; for the gallant, some say misguided men, who in battle and in exile died and suffered in the cause of the Stuarts, your majesty has shown a sympathy, unfelt by the earlier princes of your house. The sea, the shore, and the two-edged sword, were the friends of your throne, and I murmur not against the decrees of Heaven."

"Yet a Maclean hesitates to touch his harp at the bidding of his prince," said his majesty. "Sir Walter, the loyal spirit of verse resides but in your own bosom."

"Verse—true verse, is ever loyal, sire," said the islander, "and it is to be found every where in the north; but it lies with us, as gold lies in the mine; it wants the popular impress which your majesty's lineaments give to make it pass current. I have not Sir Walter's excellence in the art of harmonious rhyme; but since I have promised it, I shall tell the tale of that Flora Macdonald, called in our land, Flora the First, at which the introduction of Sir Walter pointed; but your majesty will excuse my imperfect English—I must translate as I speak, and I cannot always find a southern substitute for our heroic highland."

"One evening of that year in which the Spanish Armada visited the shores of our isles, my ancestress, Eupheme Macdonald, sat by the side of the blessed well of Tobermorrie, to dip, on the rising of the moon, the eldest son of the chief of the Macleans, on whose bloom a sea-elf was supposed to have breathed. As she sat with the child in her lap, looking on the fountain, the water became shaken and agitated; and something was presented to her sight which caused her to shriek, and, without biding the rising of the moon, to hasten with the child to the chamber of her mistress. Now Eupheme was a relation of the lady, and had nursed her when a child; so she procured ready admittance, and could speak her mind without fear: 'O