

LOCHABER BAY'S CENTENNIAL OLD BOYS RE-UNION

September 13, 1912

Lochaber Bay, that part of God's country situated on the Bay from which it derives it's name, and surrounded by beautiful homes and well-tilled farms, was the scene of the remarkable gathering on September 13, 1912, when her many sons and daughters from distant places, came home to celebrate with the inhabitants there, their first re-union. They returned home to that place which touches every fibre of the soul, and strikes every cord of the human heart with angelic fingers praying. What tender associations are linked with home!—What pleasing images and deep emotions it awakens! It calls up the fondest memories of life and opens in our nature the purest, deepest, richest gush of consecrated thought and feeling. Intervening years have not dimmed the vivid coloring with which memory has adorned those joyous hours of youthful innocence. They were again born on the wings of imagination to the place made sacred by the remembrance of a father's care, a mother's love and the cherished associations of brothers and sisters. They came to see and to speak about the home of their childhood, their minds delve upon the recollection of joyous days spent beneath the parental roof when their young and happy hearts were light and free as the birds who made the woods resound with the melody of their voices.

The morning train from Ottawa bearing with it Pipe-Major MacDonald and Miss Mary Mann, the Highland Dancer, and a contingent of old boys and girls, was met at the station by the members of the committee with conveyances, and the people were driven to the beautiful grove situated on the front part of the late John MacEachern's farm, now the property of Fletcher MacEachern.

Until the programme commenced the time was spent renewing acquaintances, and Highland greetings, accompanied by the music so dear to the Scotsman's heart, that of the bagpipes.

After a few introductory remarks by the chairman, Mr. A. P. McLachlan, Rev. J. J. Ross, of Toronto, was called upon to engage in prayer. Mr. R. N. McLachlan, Mayor of Locaber, then read the following address of welcome:

"Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen: It affords me great pleasure

on this the occasion of the first Old Boys Re-Union, to welcome you back to the home of your childhood and youth. Since you left the old haunts the ravages of time have made many changes. You will notice progress on the one hand while on the other you cannot fail to see that many of the old land-marks have been removed. Through the intervening years that we have been separated and though divided by miles of distance, true to the characteristic of the Scotsman, we have followed one another to rejoice at the time of rejoicing and to sympathize in the time of bereavement.

"We also note with pleasure the success that all have attained in the several spheres of activity and as you have risen to a state of prominence and responsibility it not only brings credit to yourselves personally, but to the place of your birth. We welcome you again for the interest you have shown in the welfare of your old home. We acknowledge the substantial financial aid you gave us when the appeal was made to you for assistance to repair the church, and improve the cemetery grounds where so many of the old residents of this place are now sleeping; and while we rejoice with you in the progress you have made we look back with greater pride to the time, nearly one century ago, that marks the landing of the first

settlers of this place from their beloved Scotland. When they landed here the place where we now stand was a wilderness inhabited only by the redman, and the beasts of the forest. To the first settlers and those who immediately followed them was given the work of clearing the forest and making a home for their descendants. The next generation--our fathers and mothers--resumed the task laid aside by their parents with undaunted zeal. Christian fortitude and honest purpose, and to them was given the work of completing the conversion of the forest into well-tilled farms. How little can we tell how little we know the hardships endured and difficulties overcome to give to their children a better chance in life than they themselves received. This they accomplished only by forgetting themselves and their own comforts and as their hospitality was well known to friends and strangers we can assure you that the same spirit is among us to-day, and we will always welcome you back to Lochaber."

Mr. J. A. McLachlan, of Brooklyn, N. Y., made ~~reply as follows~~:

"Mr. Chairman, Hon. Mayor, Members of the Committee, Ladies and Gentlemen: It affords me great pleasure on behalf of the old boys gathered

here to move and accept your words of welcome. We accept it in the spirit in which it is given, assuring you that it finds a ready response in the hearts of the boys assembled here from far and near. In moving this address, there is only one fly in my ointment of pleasure, and that is, that your committee did not fix upon some other from among the boys better fitted and more competent than I, to do the honour. However, be that it may, Mr. Chairman, the committee could not have chosen one who would strive harder to do the subject justice than I, because, sir, I love the boys of Old Lochaber. I love them all, and of course, that includes the girls as well, irrespective of age or colour, so I ask you to bear with my limitations and accept the spirit of the effort. We will retire with some degree of satisfaction in having made the effort. In addressing you, I will do so to boys of Old Lochaber, but in a larger, broader and more comprehensive sense as Canadians; for it is as Canadians we are known, it is as Canadians we bring respect of this credit to the land of our birth. As Canadians we leave the imprint of our lives, be it for good or evil, upon the people among whom we live and move and have our being. I am proud, sir, of the fact that Canada and Canadians command the highest respect the

wide world over, not because they are the big noise, not because of the sounding of brass and the tinkling of symbols, but because of a stirring worth and integrity. I have a pride that so many of our boys command such universal respect and attain to positions of leadership in many avenues of life in the mighty nation to the south of us. I have sent sympathy, I was going to say respect, for one of our illustrious countrymen who is a leader of religious thought and sentiment, not only in the great city in which he lives, but throughout the whole of the U. S., and is held in the highest regard not alone in his own denomination, the Baptist, but by all the other sister Protestant denominations, who said upon one occasion that as he drew near Canada, where on a visit to his people, every step nearer made him feel smaller. He forgets that in uttering such sentiments as these that he is bringing this honour upon the mother who bore him. He forgets that it was the present and example of Godly parents that made him the man he is. He forgets that it was the land of his birth and to the mighty men who went before him that he imbibed the spirit that made him a man big enough to become a big man in a big place. I feel that for him, though high his

title, though proud his name, powerful his position as wish can claim, the sentiment thus expressed was unpatriotic and un-Canadian. Men, we should never forget the heritage given us by our fathers; a heritage of rugged honesty and stirring worth, a heritage of simple faith in God. Put it not away from us, remove not the land-marks which our fathers have set around which clustered the glories and romances, the hopes and fears of battles fought and victories won, one of which I will name, "The Church". Give her the best that is in you of manhood, of honour, of service, and never forget that she is as she ever was the great conservator of moral and spiritual forces in our natural life, the great balance wheel which keeps us from flying off on a tangent. It is the one thing the spite of its faults, faults which are but significant of its human side. Down through the sweep of the centuries has steadily pointed the way out of darkness into light, right up to the throne of Grace, and brings us face to face with the fact that Christ our Redeemer lives, and that because He lives, we live; because He lives, we are made heirs to God, and joint heirs with Christ--co-workers with Him in the great business of life. Forget it not, men; it is a duty we owe, a duty to be performed, ever mindful that a duty-loving,

duty-doing people will win the day against those seeking only Glory. "Sons of France! Awake to glory!" told the youths of France the dominant passion in his breast, and awake in him a corresponding sentiment and under its spell he swept through Europe tumbling thrones and empires, and in Egypt he felt that forty centuries were looking down upon him from the pyramids; but at last, one morning in June at Trafalgar Bay, another sound was heard, not quite so loud in tone, but none the less insistent or less personal.

"England expects every man to do his duty". And at Nelson's signal, duty-loving England and glory-loving France met on that historic battlefield as they had met before and since. Duty proved the stronger and won the day.

Today, men, the call is to duty. The beautiful land of the Maple Leaf is calling for men who will not consider their country as a single procession across its border in a single generation, but who will look upon it as the Land with all its people in all their periods; the ancestors who made us what we are and whose memory we cherish. The prosperity to whom we are to transmit what we prize, unstained as we have received it, men who will strive by every wile justified by honour to have her ships of commerce to cut the blue

waters of every sea. That her soil shall yield freely of its vegetables and mineral wealth, that she should be dotted with peaceful homes, the abode of virtue and love. That her cities should be adorned with all that is glorious in art, that famine and plague, property and crime should be fought with all the united energy of head and hand and heart. That her historians and poets and orators should make his achievements and mighty arms known to all the children and the world. That the oppressed of every land may find a refuge within the boundary. That she may ever be a nation and loved by sister nations and that while we strive with might and main for material success to attain the highest measure of success for the nation, we must also have closely interwoven with the material success in earnest contribution to the thought of moral energy. The happiness and spiritual hope and consolation of mankind. Honour your country, men! Live for her, die for her if necessary, but remember, that whatever is right or wrong for another country is right or wrong for you, that right and truth and love for man, an allegiance for God is above all things else. That any man who supports his country is responsible to humanity, to history, and to Him, to whom all nations are but as a drop in the bucket, and the smallest dust in the balance.

So, boys of Old Lochaber, wherever ye may be, in whatever avenue of life, in whatever climb, may we ever be found battling for the right, going on and ever on with a trinity of faith, a faith in ourselves, faith in home and native land, a faith in God, so that when the wings of time shall have rolled this old world upon the shores of eternity, and at the toot from Gabrielle's horn shall summon men and women before the great judgment bar, and we come face to face with the great Captain of our lives, God grant that we stand a united Lochaber."

The proceedings then terminated for a time, and the people, numbering about 250, now went their way to the schoolhouse where a bountiful repast had been prepared by the ladies.

Returning to the grove, a photograph was taken of the following gentlemen, the eldest, not only in the gathering but of the place, whose admitted ages but of the place, whose united ages aggregated 725 years.

Mr. Donald McLenan, Mrs. James Lamb, Mr. John McDurmid, Mr. Neil McGinnis, Mr. James Curry, Mr. Alex McCallum, Mr. Dugald McLachlan, Mr. Neil MacEachern, Mr. Archie McKeechnie.

A group photograph was also taken of the whole gathering. The programme was commenced by the execution of the Highland Fling by Miss Mann which so delighted the Scots, that they demanded an encore which was gracefully responded to.

The chairman then called on Rev. K. Palmer of Toronto to speak. In a short and witty speech, Mr. Palmer said that being of Irish descent and among so many Scotsmen, his address would be short. He congratulated the large gathering on the successful arrangement and said what a pleasure it gave him to be present.

Mrs. John A. McLachlan, of Brooklyn, N.Y., rendered a recitation, "Saunder's-McGlashan's Courtship", in a very acceptable manner.

Scotland's famous poet, Robbie Burns, was introduced to the gathering by Rev. John Hart, of Buckingham, in his immortal "The Cotter's Saturday Night."

After this visit from Robbie Burns, Miss Mann followed, dancing a highland Schottish. Scotland in song was then introduced by Rev. Mr. Turnbull of Rockland, in "The Banks and Braes of Bonnie Doon."

Rev. J. J. Ross, of Toronto, on arriving received an ovation. He opened his remarks by saying the great pleasure it gave him to be once more among the friends of his youth, to mingle with them on this, the occasion of the first re-union, and congratulating the people on the large gathering. He then took the audience mentally on a visit to the different homes which constituted Lochaber years ago, commencing at his own old home. And as he visited each home and related incidents in connection with each, the history of former Lochaber passed before the gathering. In graphic language he described the trials and troubles of the early settlers, and told how their honesty and God-fearing lives had made an impression, and been the power for good upon all whom they came in contact. He then related in a humorous way, how he himself earned his first dollar. Fifty cents of it he gave to his mother, twenty-five cents he lent his brother, which he claims was never repaid; with the remaining quarter, he bought a purse only to find he had no money to put in it. His next ambition was to earn money to put in this purse and this he accomplished by working for twenty-five cents a day, pulling mustard. Turning then to more serious things in alloquant language, he exhorted his hearers to live in such a

way as to leave behind them a name as untarnished as they have received it.

Next came the sword dance by Miss Mann, which was followed by an address by Mr. W. A. McCallum, president of the Committee. "It affords me great pleasure to welcome back to the sons and daughters of Old Lochaber who had been able to answer the roll call at this re-union. Many of you have been absent for a long period from the place of your birth, and have now returned to visit for a short time the haunts of happy childhood, and to mingle again with friends of early days. It is with unfeigned pleasure we hail the return of old friends and revive memories of long ago. We love to talk of youthful days with it's fun and it's frolic, and to recount the long cherished incidents that lie imbedded in memory's page. May the delight be yours while opportunity lasts, and may you carry back with you happy thoughts of your brief visit to gladden years to come, and give you solace in the day of gloom. There are three bright spots on memory's page that are not easily effaced, and always carry with them fragrant reminiscences. They are the home, the school, and church. From these come the moral influences that build up the character of a nation, and from the personal qualities of its citizens. We welcome you then to the home of your

fathers with all their tender recollection and hallowed association, on which the memory loves to linger with fond delight again. We salute with peculiar pride the comrades of happy school-days, fragrant of rod and rule, reminiscent of unwilling tasks that had to be done with gloomy brows and slowly moving feet, recollection of noisy games, also too short that seem to end before they were well begun.

Again our memories also cling to the church of our fathers with its sacred association and consecrated services. It was here we learned the lessons of Righteousness and Truth from the Holy Book. The family pew may not be unoccupied by those we loved the best of all on the earth. The voices we cherished may be silent in the grave, the hands to which we clung in youthful affection may be cold in death, but the influence they threw around us and the example which they set before us will continue to lead us with lasting benefit for time and eternity. The cemetery where lies the dead and to which our attention has been given with timely and practical beneficence, reminds us of the high-souled men and women we venerate. They are not dead but gone before. We do know the happy social

firesides they made for us, but we do not know the sacrifices they made for the present good and future welfare. May we be worthy of them and imitate their good example and look forward hopefully to the re-union to the world beyond.

The Secretary-Treasurer of the Committee D. A. MacEachern, read the following communication from some who were not able to be present.

"Regret unable to attend Lochaber celebration tomorrow; best wishes for glorious day and happy re-union." (sgd.) J. D. McCallum, Buffalo, N.Y.

"Your invitation to attend the Old Boys Re-Union on Friday, September 13, 1912, was received. We regret very much not being able to be among the children of Old Lochaber. "Mon Sandy", we would like to visit the "auld hame" that stretches from Ross' hoose to the Curry's hoose". How he would enjoy seeing the "Hieland Body with his kist o' whustles", and how he would like to see the good Highland Fling and Sword Dance. This would be indeed the "swell time o' oor life" if we could only be there. Old Lochaber "no as big as Scotland", is big enough to hold the affection of the loyal sons and daughters. We shall think of you on the 13th and recall the old boyhood days and the old friends." Yours sincerely. (sgd.) Henry Ross, Schnectady, N. Y.

"Your most kind invitation to hand. I regret to state that I will not be able to be present at the re-union this year. Perhaps in case of the event being repeated another year I might be able to be present. Wishing the celebration every success." Yours sincerely. (sgd.) Harold Scott, Coboconk, Ontario.

"Mrs. Peel and I regret very much our inability to be present at the Old Boys Re-Union. The date chosen is a very fitting one for us being the 13th anniversary of our wedding, so that we could be present we could make the celebration a double one for us. We sincerely hope that the re-union may be in every way a success, and that the many Lochaber folk who have achieved name and fame in many distant places may renew greetings, and recall experiences in the old school house on the hill and enjoy the memories of Auld Lang Syne. We wish one and all a happy and memorable re-union." Yours sincerely, (sgd.) James A. Peel, Lindsay, Ontario.

"I am sincerely grateful for the invitation to attend the Lochaber Old Boys re-union. I regret that pastoral duties as well as family cares

prevent me from aiding my recollections of happy bygone days by mingling again with old-time-friends at Lochaber! I see as a first suggestions of the gathering of 1912 a similar one of 1892. The picnic in the grove near the graveyard was followed by a lecture and concert in the church--the shining white church recently renovated inside and outside with its oak grained pulpit, little organ and large newly frosted windows. Even the aged--the great-grandfather and the graat-grandmother, octo and nono-generian, have come to have their picture taken by the camera of my imagination. The people are real and well remembered, only the grouping is imaginery. There is Grandpa and Grandma Ross, mingling with MacEacherns, McDermids, Watersons, Camerons, Lambs--but every time would fail me to tell of all, for every house opened its doors to welcome the missionary, and every home was represented in the picnic of 1892. From my mental picture of this picnic I seem unable to exclude those not there on that occasion, for the gathering and the community have become one in my memory. Even those not yet born in 1892 appear as I have since come to know them, and they claim a place in my kaleidoscopic picture. I see myself and my fellow-student Taylor, hustling about the football, swimming, racing, jumping, wrestling, eating, drinking

and even talking depended upon our preambulation. I see a group gathering around the Rev. Dr. Smyth and the Rev. James Beatt in friendly but keen discussion over some debatable point, sharpening their wits at each other's expense; perceiving how the crowd dearly love a contest they changed it from mental to athletic. The group widens to give room for the wrestling match. They tug, they strain,--down, down they go, the Smyth above, the Beatt below. The scene moves from grove to church. There the contest shows that the summer singing school has developed good voices and there both old and young enjoy the Rev. Dr. Smyth's graphic and humorous description of recent travel in lands beyond the sea. Another turn of the kaleidoscope brings to view the children of 1892, now heads of households. I see new matrons wend their way to the old homes. I see the boys and girls of 1892 now put on the serious, earnest look with which responsible citizens close such a day of relaxation. They hasten to catch the train that bears them back to family, pastoral, professional, medical, official, mercantile duties and cares. God bless Lochaber, and may the memory of departed loved ones be blessed." (sgd.) F. D. Muir, Windsor Mills, Quebec.

The secretary then said as he was the Judas of the Committee, and carried the bag he would give an account of his stewardship. The statement showed that abundant money had been collected to defray the expenses of the re-union. It also showed that forty-two of the old boys and girls had contributed to the repair of the church and the improvement of the cemetery grounds. One old boy in the person of R. B. McLachlan, had to send his contribution seventy-five miles by mule-driver and the same arrived in time for the celebration. The report also showed that from nearly every province in the Dominion of Canada money had been received, as well as from New York, Boston, New Hampshire and other places in the United States. In conclusion, he said, that to continue improvements on the cemetery grounds as the Committee intended to do more funds were required; the list would be left open permanently, and all contributions sent him would be duly acknowledged.

Dr. D. L. McLachlan, of Greenland, N. H., was called upon, and on rising said that it gave him great pleasure to be once more among the boys and girls of Lochaber. He paid a glowing tribute to Lochaber's former settlers, and then remarked the pleasure he had in noticing the advancement made by the boys since they left their former homes. But, he said, while

we feel proud of those who have gone forth and made names for themselves, we feel just as proud of those who in remaining at home, doing their duty, quietly made it possible for the others to leave. Even though they have not made world renowned names for themselves, nevertheless we feel justly proud of them.

"I am not as gushing as the secretary or as eloquent as the chairman", were the first words from Lochaber's eminent critic, Mr. D. W. McLochaber. He then proceeded to right imaginary wrongs. Too many religious denominations he first saw, and he wondered why all were not Presbyterians. At this juncture a stalwart old Baptist in the rear was heard to remark "Who made you judge?" Turning then to the social side of affairs he upbraided unmarried bachelors and called particular attention to one farm on which was erected two residences. But he forgot the fact that the hand of death had visited one house after the other had been erected, which fact made it necessary for the remaining occupants to move away. We can forgive our friend, Mr. McLachlan, for the above remarks since he is still a bachelor and the house he should occupy is still vacant.

Mr. Hugh McLean of Buffalo, N. Y., a grandson of Mr. Donald McLean, who settled in Lochaber nearly one century ago, expressed his pleasure in being present at the celebration, and suggested that the same should be made an annual affair.

Miss Mann concluded her part of the programme by dancing the Sailor's Hornpipe.

The chairman, in conclusion, thanked those who voluntarily contributed to the programme, and in any way helped to make the re-union a success.

While the ladies prepared supper, games were indulged in, and as evening was drawing on the wants of the inner man were again supplied. This meal was dispatched with efficiency for our old friend Andrew Ross was master of ceremonies in the kitchen, and as in by-gone days, kept everyone in good humour with his witty remarks.

Surrounding the tables is found every living member of the late Malcolm McCallum's family. Mr. McCallum died some years ago, but Mrs. McCallum resided continuously in Lochaber for seventy-three years, and passed away to her eternal reward and was buried at Lochaber on July 1, 1912

Mr. and Mrs. Peter McLachlan looked quite happy surrounded by their entire family, with the exception of two absentees. These, with Mr. and Mrs. John McDermid, Mr. and Mrs. Donald McLean, Mr. James Lamb, Mr. Neil MacEachern and Mr. James Currie, constitute the list of the pioneers present, and a unanimous expression of regret was tendered by the gathering at the absence of Mrs. James Lamb and Mrs. James McCallum, who were unable through sickness to be present.

It was left to the vice-president of the committee to make the concluding speech. Mr. McCallum was equal to the occasion. First, he mentioned the ladies, who voluntarily contributed to the refreshments, and included those absent as well as those present. He concluded by saying he hoped this would only prove one of many like gatherings in the future.

The people then joined hands, singing "Auld Lang Syne", and disbursed to the strains of "Lockaber's Lament", by Pipe-Major MacDonald.

This brought the memorable re-union to a close.