

## A PRACTICAL COURSE IN GAELIC

### SECTION F(2).

#### EXERCISE IN USAGE.

*Give the past tense of—*

- (1) **Chan eil mi sgìth**, I am not tired; (2) **Tha Iain làidir**, John is strong; (3) **Am bheil an nighean luath?** Is the girl fast? (4) **Càite am bheil Seumas?** Where is James? (5) **Có tha aig an tigh?** Who is at home?

*Give the present tense of—*

- (1) **An robh thu sgìth?** Were you tired? (2) **Dé bha aig an dorus?** What was at the door? (3) **Có bha anns an eaglais?** Who was in church. (4) **Càite an robh Iain agus Seumas?** Where were Iain and James? (5) **Có bha aig an loch?** Who was at the loch?

*Give the affirmative answer to—*

- (1) **Am bheil thu làidir?** Are you strong. (2) **An robh Iain mór?** Was Iain big? **Am bheil Màiri aig an tigh?** Is Mary at home? (4) **An robh an gille beag?** Was the boy small? (5) **Am bheil an duine mór?** Is the man big?

*Give the negative answer to—*

- (1) **An robh an nighean aig an tigh?** Was the girl at home? (2) **Am bheil an duine aig an dorus?** Is the man at the door? (3) **An robh an leabhar air an làr?** Was the book on the floor? (4) **Am bheil Seumas anns an sgoil an diugh?** Is James in school today? (5) **An robh Màiri anns an eaglais an dé?** Was Mary in church yesterday?

## Makers of Gaelic Literature

### 1. DONNCHADH BAN.

Probably the most popular of all the Gaelic poets was Donnchadh Bàn nan Oran (Fair Duncan of the Songs), whose surname was Mac-an-t-saoir (MacIntyre), and who lived from 1724 to 1812. In a sense, he is popular in the way that Burns is popular—as a lovable character, fond of company and of the ordinary pleasures, and with the gift of turning his own experiences and emotions into memorable songs. Like Burns too, there is a good deal more to him than meets the eye. There is more variety in his poetry, and more technical skill in the making of it, than one would, at first, suppose. But the comparison, either of their lives or of their poetry, should not be pressed too far.

Macintyre spent the earlier part of his life as a forester, or gamekeeper, on the borders of Perthshire and Argyllshire, and the latter part as a soldier and policeman in Edinburgh. And we can feel sure that he enjoyed life thoroughly whether he was stalking the deer and taking a salmon, or making merry with his companions in the City Guard. But, without doubt, his best poetry came out of these earlier days, when he was enjoying the prime of his manhood among his native hills and hamlets. It was against that background that he composed songs like “*Moladh Beinn Dorain*” (The praise of Ben Doran) with its delicate and detailed description of nature and of the red deer; “*Oran Seachran Seilge*” (The Song of the Unsuccessful Hunt); and “*Màiri Bhan Og*” (Fair Young Mary), the song which he composed for his wife and which is now acknowledged to be one of the finest songs in Gaelic. Towards the end of his long life, he wrote “*Cead Deireannach nam Beann*” (The Last Farewell to the Hills), where he talks of how he re-visited the hills to find them much the same as they had been, although he could no longer move over them with his earlier ease.

He composed many other songs too, but the reader who is, as yet, finding his way in Gaelic literature, might be content to get to know even those few that have been mentioned.

A new and complete edition of Macintyre's poems has been edited for the Scottish Gaelic Text Society by Mr. Angus MacLeod, and it will be published, it is hoped, this year.