A FAMOUS PRECENTOR.

THE LATE MR MURDO MACLENNAN.

Last Saturday the grave closed over the mortal remains of one who for a very long time was well and widely known and respected in the North of Scotland, and to whose melodious and tuneful voice thousands of people used to listen with delight as he "lifted the psalm to grandly solemn church at Sweat or Sacramento."

He was born in Contin on the 15th July, 1806, the youngest son of a weaver, whose trade he learned but did not keep up. Contin had even in those early days a good school, and not a few went from there to the University, his eldest brother among the number. He entered the Indian Civil Service, and after taking high rank there, fell a victim to the climate. His second brother, Rodrick, was schoolmaster of Inshir, in the parish of Fintray, Aberdeenshire for upwards of 46 years; and he, the last of a gifted family, sleeps among the number. He entered the Indian Civil Service, and after taking high rank there, fell a victim to the climate. His second brother, Rodrick, was schoolmaster of Inshir, in the parish of Fintray, Aberdeenshire for upwards of 46 years; and he, the last of a gifted family, sleeps among the number.

When Only Sixteen Years of Age, being called upon to fill the place of his father, the precentor, who, with other of "the men," had gone to the Burn of Fintrinock, at that time a place of high festival at communion seasons. While his father was able to lead in Contin, he officiated in Fodderty, and was present on that tragic day on which the saintly Mr Noble reproved a couple who openly misconducted themselves and scoffed at the psalmody in memory of the occasion. Some voices joined in the music almost at the outset, as soon as they perceived what the tune was. When the precentor himself read the second line in the grand style in which such composers do read it, the only answer was a shock of coin, followed by a wave after another of flat harmonious sound rolled upon the ears of those who listened, but could not join, to judge from the expression of the countenances, the effect was such as the music never produced upon them before, so touching, so sweet, so passing sweet. Friends from the South who had not before heard the old church tunes with their beautiful prolonged variations, looked at each other for an instant, as if to say that now, for the first time, they were listening to the sound of praise as it ought always to be heard. Their looks were those of surprise, soon changed to looks of the deepest devotion." Forty-Three Years After he closed the Assembly singing, also at Inverness, when he was 80 years of age, Dr Aird and the old elders objected to the innovation of singing without giving out the line. He used to relate an amusing incident in connection with this. During the building of Dunrobin Castle so many workmen from the south were employed that special English services had to be provided. Mr Maclean was engaged to conduct the singing, but the old elders objected to the innovation of singing without giving out the line, and when the new minister stepped into the box, they took up their Bibles, and, one by one, slowly left the church. With ready task, he chose a tune of their own, and when they were out in solemn majesty, one after another they slipped into church and took their seats, and before the end of the service their prejudices had been banished for ever. One feature of the old sacrament time has passed away with him. The Free Church with which he was so long connected began its career.

In 1845 he presented at the Assembly, which met in Inverness, when he was presented by Mr. Walter Hately with a beautifully bound volume of psalmody in memory of the occasion.

Dr Baith, in his little book describing Dr Candish's tour in the Highlands during the same year, makes the following interesting reference to him:—"The best Gaelic precentor in the North had been selected to lead the psalmody. He was a quiet looking young man, about 50 years of age, of grave, but not of austere or pretentious aspect, dressed in the ordinary dress—the Sunday dress of a farm servant—his hair brushed down on his brow, his ungloved hands coarse and red with rustic toil, his demeanour modest, though quite self-possessed. He had faced assemblies as large before, although he had never sung in the presence of learned doctors or of the gentlemen. The first line of the psalm to be sung was read by the minister. The precentor chose one of the most plaintive and one of the sweetest of the old long tunes. Some voices joined in the music almost at the outset, as soon as they perceived what the tune selected was. When the precentor himself read the second line in the grand style in which such precentors do read it, the only answer was a shock of coin, followed by a wave after another of flat harmonious sound rolled upon the ears of those who listened, but could not join, to judge from the expression of the countenances, the effect was such as the music never produced upon them before, so touching, so sweet, so passing sweet. Friends from the South who had not before heard the old church tunes with their beautiful prolonged variations, looked at each other for an instant, as if to say that now, for the first time, they were listening to the sound of praise as it ought always to be heard. Their looks were those of surprise, soon changed to looks of the deepest devotion."