

**NORMAN: A LEGEND
OF MULL; A POEM,
IN FIVE DUANS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649658329

Norman: A Legend of Mull; A Poem, in Five Duans by Robert C. M'Fee

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ROBERT C. M'FEE

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ROBERT C. M'FEE.

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GLASGOW:

JOHN HORN, PRINTER, 42 ARGYLE STREET.

1893.

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To
MR. ANDREW CARNE

PITTSBURG, U.S.A.,

WHOSE SUBSTANTIAL INTEREST IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF
FREE LIBRARIES HAS GIVEN AN INTELLECTUAL AND A
LASTING BENEFIT TO THE WORKING PUBLIC, PARTICULARLY
IN THE LAND OF HIS BIRTH, AND WHOSE NAME AND
FAME IN CONSEQUENCE HAVE ACHIEVED A WORLD-WIDE
REPUTATION,

This Volume of Verse

IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED BY

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

I HAVE it on very good authority that poetry is a drug in the market, there being so many Richmonds in the field now-a-days. Even while accepting this assurance, in the light of approximate gospel, it required all the moral fortitude I possessed to give me courage sufficient to issue this volume, and that only for private circulation.

The fact is, I had worked leisurely at "Norman" for a considerable period, changing and interchanging characters, situations, and incidents, until I realised, if I did not at once cry halt, I might go on perfecting for the natural term of my life, and with no greater satisfactory result to myself. Hence, I concluded to consider it as finished once and for all, well knowing, however, the multitude of imperfections it contains.

What I still see weak in it, others may not see; and, doubtless, what many may consider halting and imperfect, I, on the other hand, may have deemed sufficiently excellent to pass muster. It is a well-known fact that there is no accounting for tastes; no two people see alike, neither do they think alike, making differences and distinctions in many things. So wags the world, and perhaps it is good that it is so.

A critical analysis of this poem may do me good with regard to the future, but it cannot now alter the character or construction of the composition itself, since it has gone

forth for better or for worse. Again, the octosyllabic measure with which I have clothed it has been so thoroughly exploited in the past by the giants of literature, that the rhythm, whenever used since in a sustained manner, has been dubbed imitative. Thus I have been told that I have imitated. Well, if I have, is not honest imitation the sincerest form of appreciation, not to speak of flattery? I think so. And this much I do know: although I may be written down as an imitator in style, I am not a plagiarist in matter. The legend, as I read it, was of the barest description, giving ample scope to the imaginative faculty. Whether I have done the subject justice or injustice will be a matter of opinion at the best. If the poem interests the reader in its perusal, I shall feel that I have not written and published it in vain.

The different sections are entitled "Duans," in contradistinction to "Cantos," having given preference to the Gaelic term for a section or sub-section of a poem. This, at least, should commend itself to all Scotsmen and lovers of Ossian.

Many of the "Legendary Ballads and Songs" adhibited have appeared at different times in local papers, and many have not. With the exception of one short poem, entitled "The Good Queen of our Land," the entire contents are new to book form, and not to be found in my former volume.

ROBERT C. M'FEE.