

*ALONG THE ACHAHOISH BURN IN SOUTH KNAPDALE*

*Not to be found near the modern road  
But off a path to the side,  
An ancient path - a drovers' way -  
That winds through the countryside.*

Knappdale is remote Argyll  
Remainder of older time  
Of sheep and flowers, ruined crofts,  
Celtic crosses, rhyme

To ward off evil, give some peace  
To weary heart and mind;  
A lonely, wind-swept, sea-scraped place,  
Harsh, but not unkind.

At Ceann Loch Caolisport  
Near St Columba's cave,  
A house and farm above the sea,  
A sheltered stream, a grave.

(Ceann means 'the head of.' The name is pronounced  
'Kay-ahn lock kay-ole-is-port')

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Sometimes a boggy, sunken track  
Then climbing high and free,  
It follows the fall of the Achahoish burn  
As it burbles down to the sea.

At Lothead it crosses an old stone bridge  
Disused for many a year  
For the paved road follows a different way  
That the river does not come near.

The drovers' way, it meanders on  
Past the burn to a postern gate  
In a wrought-iron fence that marks the bounds  
Of the Lothead farm estate.

Inside the bounds of the Lothead grounds  
You can hear the ocean sigh  
And the seabirds calling far and away  
And the Achahoish burn's reply.

The way leads round to a shaded mound  
With a standing stone beside;  
There's a stone wall 'round the burial ground  
And the hush of the wind and the tide.

A rusted gate in a mossy wall  
A dusky place by a burn  
And sunlight falling through purple leaves  
On the grave of Donald MacEachern.

(Pronounced 'McKern')

A hundred years his tombstone stands  
Within the sea's soft moan,  
And chiseled in black these words engraved  
Into his granite stone:

*In loving remembrance of Reverend MacEachern  
Minister of this parish  
Who died on his way to Sunday service,  
Our minister we cherish*

*Feb. 16, 1896  
Just 46 years old  
Absent from us, at home with the Lord  
His body here dead and cold*

*Gone to where churches ne'er break up  
And Sabbaths have no end;  
Remembered forever by those he loved  
His ever-sorrowing friends.*

A man, he lived and worked and died  
In Argyll's obscure places  
Among people marked with the hardness of life,  
Deep-lined, graven faces.

Steadfast in love as steadfast in life,  
Dour, determined and stern -  
Imagine them in the little stone church  
Beside the Achahoish burn

Awaiting their minister Donald MacEachern  
Who never was late before --  
He would never arrive at the church that day,  
He would come to the church no more.

Silent and sad as they left the church  
For the Lothead burial mound  
They carried his coffin all that long way  
Then lowered it into the ground.

They'd dug him a grave by a baby's grave  
With Katie McLellan's stone  
Rough-hewn, hand-carved, by her father put there,  
With wild flowers overgrown:

*In memory of my daughter Katie,  
My baby who strayed from her home;  
Found a week later dead on Cnocdubh.  
Katie died lost and alone*

(Pronounced 'knock-doo;' the Black Hill)

But alone no more for by each other they lie  
In a dusky place by a burn,  
Katie McLellan who strayed from her home  
And the Reverend Donald MacEachern.

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