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*Mary Cameron's account of the clearance of  
Aoineadh Mor  
Read by Anne Sinclair*

That was the day of sadness to many - the day on which MacCailein parted with the estate of his ancestors in the place where I was reared.

The people of Unnimore thought that 'flitting' would not come upon them while they lived. As long as they paid the rent, and that was not difficult to do, anxiety did not come near them: and a lease they asked not. It was there that the friendly neighbourhood was, though now only one smoke is to be seen, from the house of the Saxon shepherd.

When we got the 'summons to quit', we thought it was only for getting an increase of rent, and this we willingly offered to give; but permission to stay we got not. The small cattle were sold, and at length it became necessary to part with the one cow. When shall I forget the plaintive wailing of the children deprived of the milk which was no more for them? When shall I forget the last sight I got of my pretty cluster of goats bleating on the lip of the rock, as if inviting me to milk them? But it was not allowed me to put a cuach under them.

The day of 'flitting' came. The officers of the law came along with it, and the shelter of a house, even for one night more, was not to be got. It was necessary to depart. The hissing of the fire on the flag of the hearth as they were drowning it, reached my heart. We could not get

even a bothy in the country; therefore we had nothing for it but to face the land of strangers. The aged woman, the mother of my husband, was then alive, weak and lame. James carried her on his back in a creel. I followed him with little John, an infant at my breast, and thou who art no more, Donald beloved, a little toddler, walking with thy sister by my side. Our neighbours carried the little furniture that remained to us, and showed every kindness which tender friendship could show.

In the day of our leaving Unnimore I thought my heart would rend. I would feel right if my tears would flow; but no relief thus did I find. We sat for a time on 'Knock-nan-Càrn' to take the last look at the place where we had been brought up. The houses were being already stripped. The bleat of the 'big sheep' was on the mountain. The whistle of the Lowland shepherd and the bark of his dogs were on the brae.

*Mary Cameron's account of the clearance of Aoineadh Mor. Read by Anne Sinclair from 'Morven Transformed - a Highland Parish in the 19th Century' by Philip Gaskell.*

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