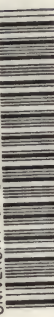


UNIVERSITY OF ST. MICHAEL'S COLLEGE



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# Catholic Highlands of Scotland.





THE DEE AT ARDEARIG, BRAEMAR.

[Frontispiece.]

THE  
CATHOLIC HIGHLANDS  
OF SCOTLAND

BY

DOM. ODO BLUNDELL, O.S.B.,  
F.S.A.Scot.

VOL. I.

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## AUTHOR'S PREFACE

THE kindly welcome offered by the public two years ago to "Ancient Catholic Homes of Scotland," and the request of many friends that the series be continued, have led to the issue of the present volume.

The wording and spelling of the original documents have been retained as far as possible, even at the risk of apparent inaccuracy.

It is with great pleasure that the Author expresses his indebtedness to the many kind friends who have assisted him with the illustrations, the correction of the different chapters, and the revision of the proofs.

FORT AUGUSTUS,  
24th May 1909.



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MAP OF SCOTLAND, SHOWING THE DISTRICTS DEALT WITH.

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*Design of Cover, Castleton of Braemar.*

DOM. LAWRENCE MANN, O.S.B., FORT AUGUSTUS.



The Chapters were revised as follows :—

Strathbogie . . . . .	The MARQUIS OF HUNTLY.
Glenlivet . . . . .	Colonel G. SMITH GRANT.
Strathavon . . . . .	Rev. PETER FORBES.
Glengairn . . . . .	JOHN MACPHERSON, Esq.
Braemar . . . . .	CHAS. M'HARDY, Esq.
Badenoch . . . . .	Colonel A. W. M'DONALD, D.S.O.
Lochaber . . . . .	Miss JOSEPHINE MACDONELL.
Strathglass . . . . .	The late THEODORE CHISHOLM, Esq.





# THE CATHOLIC HIGHLANDS OF SCOTLAND

## STRATHBOGIE

THE Abbé Macpherson, than whom no one was more conversant with the history of the Catholic Church in Scotland since the Reformation, asserted that "the preservation of the ancient Faith was due, under God, to the House of Gordon." And indeed this fact stands out very prominently in the history of the seventeenth and of the first half of the eighteenth centuries, and receives confirmation from the fact that whether we follow the titles of the former Dukes of Gordon, or the line of their possessions, we shall always find that the Catholics were there protected, and that fair remains of the old Faith still exist. Amongst the titles of the first Dukes of Gordon were Earl of Enzie, Baron Gordon of Badenoch, Lochaber, Strathavon, and Glenlivet, whilst the possessions extended from Gordon Castle on the north-east coast to Fort William on the west; and throughout this large extent of territory there were Catholic settlements, whilst the districts of

## 2 CATHOLIC HIGHLANDS OF SCOTLAND

Enzie and Glenlivet were the very centre of Catholic life and the nurseries of its priesthood.

Besides being the earliest seat of the Gordons in the north, Strathbogie, or Huntly Castle,<sup>1</sup> as it was later called, was long their chief residence, and one historian of the district claims with considerable truth that "the whole of the North of Scotland was for centuries ruled from this parish." At the change of religion, the Earl of Huntly became at once the head of the Catholic party. He commanded them at the battle of Glenlivet, in which the victory was chiefly due to his exertions; but King James was so enraged at this resistance of his authority, that he himself marched against the Earl, who was forced to flee to France. His proud Castle of Strathbogie was burnt and dismantled, and the beautiful tapestry and costly hangings—the like of which existed nowhere else in Scotland—were carried to Edinburgh. After three years' exile the Earl of Huntly returned to Strathbogie, was received into favour by King James, who created him the first Marquis of Scotland. The Castle of Strathbogie was rebuilt with even greater splendour than before, and within its walls was a chapel which the Catholics of the district long attended.

In 1607 George Gladstones, one of the ministers of St Andrews, was sent by the General Assembly to Strathbogie Castle. He was ordered to remain there fifteen months to instruct the Marquis and his family in religion. But at the next Assembly he stated that

<sup>1</sup> Although this district is not now recognised as belonging to the Highlands, properly so called, yet the mountainous nature of a large part of it, and its close connection with the other Catholic Highlands, make it fitting that it should be included with them.

he had gone to Strathbogie, "but had only remained there three days." He reported that the Marquis told him that he did not attend the preaching of the Word, partly in respect of the mean rank of such as were within the parish, and partly because his predecessors had a chapel within their own castle, which he had a mind to prosecute now, seeing he was rebuilding his house of Strathbogie.

In 1606 he had been accused of giving encouragement to the Roman Catholics, and thereby creating a great defection from the reformed doctrine. Shortly after, sentence of excommunication was pronounced against him; but in 1616 he promised the General Assembly of the Kirk that he would continue in the profession of the truth, *i.e.*, Protestantism, and would make his children educated in the same. The sincerity of this renunciation was, however, doubted even at the time.

The later years of the Marquis's life were embittered by the feud which sprang up between his family and the Crichtons of Frendraught; the Gordons believing that the Marquis's son had been purposely burnt to death at the Castle of Frendraught, in consequence of which they burnt and plundered the lands and cattle of the Crichtons. The old Marquis was summoned before the Council as abetting these outrages, and was imprisoned in Edinburgh Castle in December 1635. Of his journey to the south the late Rev. Mr Macdonald writes: "Like a loyal subject and with the courage for good or evil that had marked his career, he set out for Edinburgh to put himself in ward. Here the old man found that the Crichton influence had been

#### 4 CATHOLIC HIGHLANDS OF SCOTLAND

too much for him. Had this taken place in his younger days, the hero of Balrinnies and the Spanish bonds—the man who dared the Kings of Scotland to their face, and held a sway in this old castle (of Strathbogie) second only to that of the Kings of Scotland, would perhaps have braved false Charles Stuart to his face, as he had braved his father. But the old Marquis was done. He simply wished to get home to die—home to Strathbogie Castle—home to the noble house he had built, and which he has left us as a memorial behind him.”

His last moments are thus described by Spalding:—“The Marquis, finding himself become weaker and weaker, desired to be at home, and upon a day in June was carried from his lodging in the Canongate, in a wand bed within his chariot (his lady still with him), to Dundee, and is lodged in Robert Murray’s house in the town. But now his hour is come; further he might not go; his sickness increases more and more; he declares his mind to his lady and such friends as he had; then recommends his soul to God, and upon the 13th of June departed this life a Roman Catholic, being about the age of three-score and fourteen years, to the great grief of his friends and lady, who had lived with him many years, both in prosperity and adversity.” Father Blackhall adds that he was attended at his most edifying death by Father William Christie.

The same contemporary authority quoted above waxes wrath at the unkindly treatment to which his widow, now an old lady of seventy, was subjected. A daughter of the Duke of Lennox, and nearly related to the King, she was, like all professing Catholics of



STRATHBOGIE CASTLE.

[To face page 4.





that day, "straitly put at." But she had been a Roman Catholic all her days, and now was advanced in life. So she would not alter her religion, but rather made choice to leave the kingdom, and to flee to France. Here she died within a year of her leaving Scotland.

The second Marquis, son of the preceding, was most earnest in defence of King Charles against the Covenant, and finally met his death on the scaffold in Edinburgh in 1649. His people of Strathbogie are described at this time as "the most part malignants or Papists." It was this Marquis who used the memorable words: "You may take my head from my shoulders, but not my heart from my sovereign." When, eventually, he found himself upon the scaffold, he refused the assistance of the Presbyterian ministers.

His grandson, at the age of eighteen, "went to France, where he completed his education in a Catholic seminary," and throughout his life proved true to his religion. After his marriage to a daughter of the Duke of Norfolk, being precluded by his religion from holding offices of State, he remained at Strathbogie. In 1684 he was created Duke of Gordon by Charles II., but a few years later he fell into disfavour with James II., whose over-hasty measures for the reintroduction of the Catholic Faith he disapproved. Nevertheless, he was one of the last in Scotland to hold out for King James, not giving up the Castle of Edinburgh until three days before the battle of Killiecrankie. By Nathaniel Hooke, writing in 1707, the Duke is described as "a Catholic, and entirely devoted to the King"; and again the same writer says: "The territory of the

## 6 CATHOLIC HIGHLANDS OF SCOTLAND

Duke of Gordon is of great extent. He is absolute master of it, to protect the Catholics. He has given a house to the Bishop three miles off (and ?) from Gordon Castle, where the Prelate lives with his priests, and the Catholic religion is exercised pretty openly all over.”<sup>1</sup>

The truth of the first portion of Hooke's statement is proved by an incident narrated in “Chambers's Annals.”<sup>2</sup> In April 1699 the Duke allowed Mass to be said in his lodging in Edinburgh. The authorities receiving information of this, made seizure of the Duke, and a considerable number of persons of all ranks, as they were met together in his house for Mass. The whole party was soon cited before the Privy Council, when His Grace and seven of the other offenders appeared. The Duke spoke so boldly of the laws against his faith and worship, that he was immediately sent prisoner to the Castle: three others were put in the Tolbooth. In the following year Bishop Wallace was arrested, whilst hearing confessions in the Duchess's house in Edinburgh.

At this period Gordon Castle, near Fochabers, came into favour as the headquarters of the family, and Strathbogie was allowed to fall to decay. One cause of the preference for Gordon Castle was the fact of its being “more sheltered from fussy Presbyterian interference.”

Of the children of the first Duke, the Lady Jean married the Earl, later titular Duke, of Perth, who figured so largely in the Rising of 1745. The Duchess

<sup>1</sup> J. M. Bullock, “First Duke of Gordon,” p. 99.

<sup>2</sup> Vol. iii. p. 204.

herself was for years the chief support of the Catholics of Scotland, dying at Stobhall in 1773 at a very advanced age. Her brother, the last Catholic Duke of Gordon, met his death while still in the prime of life in consequence of a fatal illness brought on by a rapid journey to London, undertaken with the view to protect the little chapel of St Ninian, Enzie, from desecration, and to propitiate Government regarding the violent treatment to which one, Morrison, a preacher deputed by the General Assembly, had been subjected by the Catholics. Beside the sick-bed, the Rev. Robert Gordon, for many years his chaplain, was actually preparing an altar for Mass, when the Duke suddenly grew worse and the last rites were hastily administered.

The Duke, who had ever been a zealous Catholic, teaching the little Marquis, his son, to serve Mass in St Ninian's Chapel, had, however, married a Protestant, the Lady Henrietta Mordaunt. The Duchess promised her dying husband that she would keep their relative, Father Robert Gordon, as chaplain, to instruct and bring up their children. However, on the very first Sunday following the death of the Duke, this promise was broken, and the children were taken to the Protestant Church.

The death of the Duke, due as it was to his zeal for the old Faith, and the solemn promise so hastily broken, are indeed not without their vein of tragedy, and one cannot but feel, as one reads this account, that it was a noble ending to a long series of efforts on behalf of the old Faith. Indeed, the time when the Catholics of Scotland needed a powerful defender

## 8 CATHOLIC HIGHLANDS OF SCOTLAND

was fast passing away, and toleration was spoken of on all sides. Having for one hundred and fifty years been the outspoken opponents of the new religious ideas, whether of Presbytery, Covenant, or Episcopalianism, there is little doubt but that, despite occasional errors of judgment such as are inseparable from the history of any great family, the House of Gordon did a great work in affording at least some protection to Catholics, and did indeed preserve the faith in many a distant hamlet and in many a secluded glen.

Mention is often made in histories of the district of the chapel in the castle, with reference to which the minister of Strathbogie complained in 1660 that "if the church of the Lady Marchioness increased as much in the next three months as it had done in the last, he would give up preaching in Strathbogie altogether." Whilst in 1637 Father Blackhall "used to say Mass in Robert Rines' house in the Raws of Strathbogie, as well as at Cairnborrow, four miles distant." There is evidence that upon occasion he also celebrated Mass in the little abandoned church of Drumgeldie, *i.e.* Peterkirk, which stood some three miles westward from the Raws of Strathbogie, on Deveron-side, a mile or so up the water from Dunbennan Church. The desolate little churchyard at Peterkirk is not yet entirely abandoned, for still at long intervals a Catholic funeral wends its way thither. But in Father Blackhall's time the church edifice was still capable of affording shelter to the worshippers, although it was known as the *brunt kirk*.<sup>1</sup> Here indeed are

<sup>1</sup> "Seventeenth-Century Sketches," Miss M. Gray, Huntly.



buried many of the priests who laboured in the district, including the saintly George Adamson, himself a Strathbogie man by birth, who was so greatly praised by Bishop Geddes and others.

In 1688 there were said to be seven hundred Catholics in Strathbogie under Mr Christie. In 1724, from an unexpected source, the report of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, we get the interesting information that "there were 218 Roman Catholics in Huntly, with a chapel at Robieston, where Peter Reid and John Tyrie preach and say Mass." Mr Tyrie was here still in 1733, when he appears to have been succeeded by Mr Paterson. In 1736 the S.P.C.K. informs us that "there were 198 Roman Catholics, a mass-house at Robieston (66 feet by 18 feet!) where designed Bishop Gordon frequently, and Alex. Paterson stately officiate."

The chapel at Robieston, half a mile from Strathbogie Castle, was still in use in 1746, when it was burnt by the soldiery. In 1787 Mr C. Maxwell, the priest of that date, who resided at Gibston, was busy superintending the building of a new chapel which like others of that period was to be slated—"a great improvement," writes Bishop Geddes, "and a proof that the persecuting spirit is abated." St John's, as the new chapel was called, is still standing at the back of the present chapel, and about fifty yards distant from it. This little chapel has had a strange history. It was abandoned in 1834 for the new chapel, the site of which was acquired from the then extinct Lodge of Freemasons. After lying empty for some

## 10 CATHOLIC HIGHLANDS OF SCOTLAND

time, the old chapel was used as a carpenter's shop, but it has since been acquired by the resuscitated Freemason's Lodge, who still retain its old name of St John's.

The present church was built in 1834. The Directory of that date says: "During last winter a new and splendid chapel was erected in Huntly. A great part of the funds consisted of a munificent bequest made for that purpose by a late member of the family of Wardhouse, to which very considerable additions were made by John Gordon, Esq., of Xerez and Wardhouse. . . . Nor is it out of place to remark that this is the first Catholic chapel in Scotland since the Reformation that has had a spire and bell." The site, it has been truly said, is one of the most beautiful in the town. Huntly Castle is quite in view — great in its ivy-mantled ruins and affecting reminiscences. In its garden, marked by two old pear trees still standing, the immortal Father Blackhall, while a price was on his head, at the dead of night had a meeting with the Marquis of Huntly, to get permission to fulfil a promise, asked by and plighted to the Lady Aboyne on her death-bed, to take her daughter from Scotland to France to be brought up in the Catholic Faith.

It will not be out of place to mention here that besides the chief of the clan, many of the Gordon lairds long remained true to the faith of their forefathers, following the example of the Huntly family and sharing their persecution. Amongst numberless examples the following may be quoted. In 1601 Gordon of Gight, summoned for "popery" before the Presbytery, replied: "If it shall please His Majesty and your wisdoms

of the Kirk of Scotland sae to tak my blude for my profession, whilk is Catholic Roman, I will maist willingly offer it; and gif sae be, God grant me constancy to abide the same."

In 1624 Gordon of Craig as "an excommunicat and trafficking papist," was obliged to leave the Kingdom; in 1637 Gordon of Cairnboro and in 1638 Gordon of Cowdraine were cited before the Synod of Strathbogie, as was William Gordon, in Avochie, in 1650. The following year this good man being asked by the Presbytery "why he frequented not God's public worship and communicated not, answered, he was not of our profession, but was ane Roman Catholic, who was brought up in the House of Huntly in the popish religion. Being desired to conform himself to the reformed religion of the Kirk of Scotland, answered, he could not at the first till better information, etc., etc."

Of the family of Beldornie, now of Wardhouse, Jean Gordon, mother of the laird, and Marie his sister are in 1704 returned as Papists; whilst in 1732 it was reported to the Presbytery that James Gordon, of Beldornie, was a Papist, and that priests met at his house. Indeed, two of his sons were educated at the Scots Monastery of Ratisbon, viz., Arthur, who appears in the list of arrivals in 1739, when he was eight years old, and Charles, who entered in 1748, at the age of eleven. The younger only became a priest, and died in Holland in 1816. An uncle of theirs, Alexander, had entered in 1718, but he returned to Scotland, where he later married. He was a son of Alexander Gordon by his wife Giles MacDonell, of Keppoch. This lady has left a great name as a poetess,

## 12 CATHOLIC HIGHLANDS OF SCOTLAND

of whom Mrs Grant, of Laggan, in her letters says : "The enthusiasm with which her character was deeply tinged, seems to have been not only poetical, but heroic, patriotic, and in a very high degree devotional. She was a Catholic too, and took every advantage that a religion so pompous and picturesque offered to embellish her poetry with the peculiar imagery it afforded. The hymns and sacred rhapsodies of Sheelah (her Gaelic name) are still the consolation and delight of all pious Highland Catholics." It is indeed pleasing to note the sterling qualities of this good Catholic lady of two hundred years ago, and to remember that her descendants, who still remain true to the faith which was hers, had been so closely connected with the building of the present church.

Of the priests who served this mission, Mr John Gordon was priest in Huntly from 1742-1761, and his register of baptisms, marriages, and deaths is still extant. It is indeed one of the oldest registers which have survived. From a list at the end we learn that during the eighteen years he was in Huntly he was able to make fifty-six entries on the "list of those who abjured heresy" before him. Mr William Duthie continues the entries till 1776, when Mr C. Maxwell succeeded. At this date we are told there were two missions in Strathbogie. Mr William Reid at Mortlach—a man of great merit, though in feeble health—superintended 430 communicants in a circuit of eight miles; whilst Mr Duthie took charge of other 350 communicants within a range of ten miles from his residence at Huntly. Other priests in charge of this mission were Mr Andrew Scott—later Bishop—





MORTLACH.

Meeting-place of the Vicars-Apostolic and Administrators.

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1801 - 1805; Mr James Macdonald till 1811; Mr William Rattray till 1819; Mr James M'Lachlan, 1820-1826; and in later years Mr Terence M'Guire, J. Macdonald, and John Sutherland.

Within the district of Strathbogie two spots are especially associated with the history of the Catholic Church during the stormy period of the eighteenth century. About six miles north from Huntly<sup>1</sup> is the hamlet of Mortlach; a mere hamlet it is indeed, and it was never much more, being situated in the Binn district, within the Parish of Cairnie. Mr John Gordon, of the family of Cairnborrow, seems to have settled here about 1718, for he died here in 1720. It was he who had been the first to settle at Scalan, moving thither from the lower district of Glenlivet. In 1739 Mr William Reid was priest here, and here he laboured with great zeal until his health was quite broken, when he retired in 1769. He had originally been sent to assist his uncle, Mr William Shand, who was at Mortlach for some years previous to 1740.

Although Mr Reid was made prisoner in 1746 and carried to Edinburgh, yet the chapel was not destroyed. There is thus every reason to believe that the priest's house was also spared, and that the building, as it now stands, was the residence of Mr Reid. Here the three Vicars Apostolic met for their yearly meeting, each arriving by different routes in order to avoid suspicion, and observing the greatest secrecy lest their meeting be thought political, instead of purely ecclesiastical.

<sup>1</sup> The town of Strathbogie was named Huntly as early as 1450, but the castle retained the name much longer, whilst the district retains it still.

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Close to the priest's house was the chapel, but of this scarce any traces are left. Services had, however, been conducted here for nearly a hundred years, when in 1805 Mr James Macdonald received the joint mission of Mortlach and Huntly. Although the ruins prove that there must have been many houses here at that time, the township is now deserted. Indeed a more desolate spot can scarcely be imagined, the poor land offering very little inducement to the farmer, whilst the exposed situation has nothing of the seclusion of Scalan, so far, at least, as weather conditions are concerned.

That a man should have the pluck to labour for thirty years, as Mr Reid did, in so wild a district is indeed proof of his sterling qualities, which were most highly commended by the venerable Bishop Geddes. This good missionary was also in favour with Bishop Smith and with Mr, later Bishop, Grant, if we may judge from the following incident, related by Mr Thomson in his notes. Upon Mr Grant's appointment to be bishop, Bishop Smith sent the briefs to Mr Reid, as he feared Mr Grant's humility and opposition. Mr Reid, who was a relative and close friend of Mr Grant, set off immediately for Preshome, where Mr Grant resided, and assuming a dejected and sorrowful countenance, he said he came to him as to his best friend on a subject that highly interested him and the whole mission, and showing the briefs directed to himself by Bishop Smith. "These," he said, "are come from Rome; what shall I do? My incapacity and unworthiness for such an office is known to you and to everybody—this cannot be the work of the







SHENVAL.

The site of the Chapel was over the hill to the right.

[To face page 15.

Holy Ghost, and I am resolved not to accept of the dignity, only I am uneasy at the thought of disobedience, not only to my bishop, but even to the Vicar of Jesus Christ. For God's sake speak your mind without disguise, and advise me in what manner I have to refuse the charge, for I feel I can never think of being bishop." He then put up the paper in his pocket, and Mr Grant, who really thought Mr Reid had been named, entered fully into the subject and strongly enforced all the arguments that could occur upon such an occasion to do away with Mr Reid's opposition and induce him to submit. This gentleman again did not miss urging in the strongest manner the objections to which he knew Mr Grant would give the greatest strength in his own case, all of which were answered with much perspicuity and force of reasoning. Mr Reid then pretended to be convinced, and concluded: "And can you promise me, Mr Grant, that this course which you advise is that which you would yourself follow?" "Indeed it is," replied his friend; "the course which I have advised you to take is that which I would myself adopt in your circumstances." "Very well," said Mr Reid, "here are the briefs; they are for you, and not for me at all."

The other station within the Strathbogie district which ranks amongst the earliest in the Highlands is that of Shenval in the Cabrach. The Bogie river, whence Strathbogie has its name, rises at the foot of the Buck of Cabrach, a hill nearly 2,500 feet high. The whole district, which is the dividing line between Banffshire and Aberdeenshire, has a most unenviable

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reputation for storms and for its excessive cold. For over a century it was known to the missionaries as the "Siberia of Scotland"; here they often started their career, but few indeed were they who did not soon yearn for other fields of labour, as the well-known tale related by Dr Gordon proves. A young missionary, fresh from College, when told by Bishop Hay that the Shenval was to be his station, remarked: "Very well; I can have no objection: it is very proper that every one should take his turn at that place." "Stop!" said the Bishop; "that is not a proper way of speaking of it; you should be willing, if necessary, to go and labour there for the rest of your life." "Of course so," said the young priest; "but if that should happen, may the Lord have mercy on me."

The truth seems to be that this mission was started at a time when persecution was most severe, and when priest and people had to retire to the most inaccessible districts in order to avoid pursuit. Inaccessible it certainly is, whilst the incident related by Abbé Macpherson proves its title of Siberia to have been but little exaggerated. During the only winter Mr Macpherson was there a deep snow fell on All-Souls' Day, and lay on the ground till the end of the following March, and for the most part of that time it was four feet deep all over. In many places where it had driven, it was on a level with the tops of the houses. While the country was thus covered he was on one occasion called to assist a dying person, and night coming on before they reached the place, his guide put him on his guard against falling down a chimney, as the path along which they were walking





led them over the top of a dwelling house—the chimney of which would, according to the custom of that time, have been a hole in the roof of the cottage.

The following list of the heights at which some of the Highland chapels, present and past, are situated may here prove interesting :—

	FEET	
Scalan, Glenlivet . . .	1265	1715-1799
Shenval, Cabrach . . .	1200	1731-1821
Chapelton, Glenlivet . . .	1175	{ The fine new chapel was built in 1897.
Tomintoul, Strathavon . . .	1150	{ An old and still flourishing mission.
Braemar . . . . .	1111	{ An old and still flourishing mission.
Glengairn, Deeside . . .	1100	{ The chapel was re- moved to Ballater, 1905.
Laggan, Badenoch . . .	950	{ The congregation is much reduced in numbers.
Tombae, Glenlivet . . .	900	{ An old and still flourishing mission.

Of these Shenval is certainly the most exposed, being placed at the top of a small hill, open to the winds from every direction. Indeed on the occasion of the visit paid by the present writer in the middle of July, the wind was so cold and piercing, “so coorse,” that he was glad to hasten away. “If Shenval were so bleak in midsummer, what must it have been to the devoted missionaries who lived there in midwinter?” was the thought that forced itself upon him.

The first of those to settle here was Mr Burnet, who is said to have had 700 Catholics to attend to. In 1731 Mr Brockie—then newly arrived on the mission



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—“got a croft in tack” from Dr Gordon of Keithmore, at Shenval itself, and removed thither. He had under his charge the Catholics of Cabrach, Glass, Mortlach,<sup>1</sup> and Aberlour.

During the incumbency of Mr Brockie, the chapel at Shenval was burnt by the Duke of Cumberland's soldiers, after which Mass was said in a barn till 1780. Mr Brockie was succeeded by Mr, later Bishop, Geddes. He found this mission laborious indeed, yet he greatly liked it. He served by turns five stations—Shenval, where he had a house of his own and for most part had the venerable Bishop Hugh Macdonald for a lodger, it being unsafe for the good bishop to appear in the Highlands, on account of the part he had taken in the Rising of 1745; Keithmore, where Dr Gordon, brother of Bishop Gordon, dwelt; Beldorny, Aberlour, and Auchanachy.

Mr Geddes was succeeded in 1762 by Mr Menzies, who took up his residence at Keithmore. He served this district till 1783, though it appears to have been divided about this time, Mr William Reid, who had had charge of it for a few years, taking the Strathisla mission, whilst Mr Dawson received Shenval as his first charge.

Of Mr Reid, Dr Gordon relates that, like so many of the priests of that date, he was on most friendly terms with his Protestant neighbours, and was greatly esteemed by them. At a time when there was very high feeling between different Protestant sections—Burghers, Anti-Burghers, etc.—Mr Reid attended a

<sup>1</sup> This Mortlach, for which in early times a Bishop's See is claimed, is situated a mile or so from Dufftown, some fifteen miles by road from the Mortlach of which above.



large dinner party. He could not restrain his emotion in bemoaning the loss of his fine mare. Old Tom Johnstone, a strong leader amongst the Anti-Burghers, thought that he had got a fine hit at Mr Reid at the expense of the ceremonies of his Church, when he put forth this profane query: "Did you give your mare Extreme Unction, Mr Reid, before she died?" "Deed no, Mr Johnstone," was Mr Reid's quick reply, "the poor beast died a Burgher."

As already stated, the chapel at Shenval was burnt in 1746, but in 1780 Mr Macpherson, who had arrived in the previous year, got a new chapel built. Protestants, as well as Catholics, we are told, even the minister himself, helped to provide the materials for the building. At this period the stations were Shenval, Braelach, Tullochallum, and Aberlour. At Tullochallum—long the residence of a branch of the Gordons of Glastirum—there was no room large enough, so Mass was said in the kiln, or granary. A complete set of altar hangings was kept here, and Alexander, one of the sons, used to carry the altar stone and chalice, with other requisites for Mass, from Shenval.

In addition to those visits, Bishop Hay, when on his journeys between Aberdeen and Scalan, invariably spent some time at Tullochallum, resting there occasionally for a week or more. When on his journeys, always performed in his later years on horseback, the bishop was accompanied by his man-servant. This was necessary as well for assistance as protection, as they carried all the baggage, including the bishop's vestments and everything necessary for celebrating Mass, in two immense saddle-bags, which were often

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so full as to hang down as far as the rider's feet on either side, and to require a very wide stable door to admit both horse and valise at the same time.

It is said that the name of Tullochallum was so well known in Rome that some of the students, on their return to Scotland as priests, having heard so much of it and the family, were astonished to find it only a modest farmhouse.

One saying of old Tullochallum is well remembered to this day. It pained him to think how he and a favourite companion, though such good friends during the week, attended different churches on the Sunday. Says Tullochallum: "Man, Sandy, it's a strange thing that we twa who are sic faist friends and ai togither through the week, should pairt company on the Sabboth. There must be something of the de'el in it."

When times became less intolerant, and it was considered more convenient for priest and people, the headquarters of the Cabrach Mission were removed from Shenval to the farm of Upper Keithock in Auchindoune, possibly about 1790. To help the priest to live, the Duke of Gordon rented him the small farm, and a little church was built, one story and thatched roof. Mr John Gordon, Tullochallum, took upon himself the cost of cultivating the priest's farm, seed and labour—never doing anything of his own till the priest's crop was laid down. A practice, by the way, which is still of frequent occurrence in the Highlands.

Some years later, Mr George Gordon, not satisfied with the thatched chapel, set to work and erected a comfortable two-story stone building with slated roof.

The lower story served as the presbytery, and the upper flat, having a vaulted roof, made a very respectable chapel—a great improvement on the other, with its mud floor.

In 1817 the village of Dufftown, on the property of the Earl of Fife, a very liberal nobleman, was begun. It is situated two and half miles north-west of the farm of Keithock, and besides being more central, was on the highway to Glenlivet and the upper missions. Mr Gordon got a grant of a few acres of land from the Earl of Fife, and in 1825 he built thereon a very neat stone church, with Gothic façade, as well as a compact and comfortable presbytery, and enclosed the whole property with a stone and lime wall, all of which remain to this day, a standing memorial of his zeal and energy.

Of the other stations of the old Cabrach mission, Shenval is almost completely depopulated, and scarce a stone remains to show where the chapel once stood, though it were to be desired that a cairn, so often seen in the Highlands, were erected to perpetuate the site. Aberlour has always been visited occasionally from Dufftown, and at the present moment a small chapel is in course of erection there.

At the risk of a slight digression, it may be interesting to note that the Strathisla mission was in 1785 fixed at Kempcairn, where the two daughters of Dr Gordon, of Keithmore, had resided since the death of their father in 1765. Kempcairn, of which an illustration is given in Gordon's "Book of the Chronicles of Keith," is a small farm about half a mile from Keith. The farmhouse is "a but and a ben" of one story, and

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the small chapel was at the south end, straw-thatched, and possibly still standing, In 1831 Mr Lovie transferred the church to Keith, where the present chapel and priest's house were erected by his exertions.

Dr Gordon, of whom mention has been made more than once in the foregoing pages, had at one time owned the estate of Balnacraig, on Deeside. This he gave, in default of male heirs, during his lifetime to the eldest of his three daughters, who had married James Innes, of Drumgask, near Aboyne. Dr Gordon then went to live at Keithmore, where Mass was said in his house by the priest of Cabrach, and this was the beginning of the Dufftown mission. It would thus appear that this good man and his daughters were largely instrumental in the foundation of the three missions of Balnacraig, the predecessor of Aboyne, Keithmore, the predecessor of Dufftown, and Kempcairn, that of Keith.

It is also worthy of note that as toleration became the order of the day, the remote chapels were disused and churches arose in their place in the neighbouring towns, so that at the present date the earlier stations of the Strathbogie district, where Mass was almost continuously said between 1650 and 1800, and which are accordingly well worthy of our veneration, are, as a matter of fact, almost lost to memory.

# GLENLIVET

## I

IN the history of the last three hundred years the quiet little valley of the river Livet has figured very prominently. In 1594 there was fought at Alltacoileachan the battle which has become known as the battle of Glenlivet, and which was little else than a combat between the Catholic Lords with their followers on the one side, and the Protestant Lords on the other. The facts are as follows. James VI., being undecided which party to support, that of the Catholics who were still numerous, especially amongst the nobility of the north, or the Protestants, sent in 1593 a secret mission to the Pope to treat of the return of Scotland to the allegiance of Rome; but in 1594, finding that popular agitation was increasing, he once more changed his mind, and resolved that the laws against Catholics should be enforced. With this view he determined to send an army to the Gordon country, ever the stronghold of the Catholic side.

The Earl of Argyle, having been appointed his Lieutenant in the north, marched at the head of over 10,000 men against his old enemy the Earl of Huntly. The Catholic Earls of Huntly and Errol "thought it would be more to their honour in so just a cause to die sword in hand than to be murdered in their own houses,

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They quickly collected 1,500 horsemen from amongst their friends and retainers, with a few foot-soldiers, and invoked the Divine assistance with confession and communion.”<sup>1</sup> Both sides fought with great valour, but six pieces of artillery with which Huntly was provided seem to have had a large share in securing him the victory. At their first discharge, Campbell of Lochnell, Argyle’s cousin, and Macneill of Barra, were shot dead, and the whole following of Lochnell left the field. A large part of Argyle’s men, who had never seen artillery before, were thrown into confusion by the cannonade. Huntly, perceiving this, charged the enemy, and rushing in amongst them with his horsemen, increased the confusion. At length the victory was complete and Huntly and his men returned thanks to God on the field for the success they had achieved.

A quaint story survives of a wounded soldier—Captain M’Lean, of Mull—who, as he lay dying on the field of battle, prayed that he might be buried in the quiet little cemetery of Downan, “where the tongue of the Sassenach might never be heard.” The good man’s grave is still pointed out, but along the whole length of Glenlivet not a word of Gaelic has been spoken for over one hundred years: the tongue of the Sassenach, unfortunately, is all that is heard.

But another cause of the celebrity which Glenlivet has acquired in the Catholic Annals of the past is that for the greater part of the seventeenth century, that is, from 1717-1799, the little college or seminary of Scalan was the centre of Catholic activity. Over a hundred missionaries were educated wholly or partially within its walls,

<sup>1</sup> “Narrative of Scottish Catholics,” Forbes Leith, p. 224.







THE COLLEGE OF SCALÁN, 1717-1799.

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and against it the hostility of the enemies of the Catholic Faith were time after time directed.

“Every Scots Catholic, who has any zeal for the advancement of the true religion in his country, and still more particularly persons in our circumstances, must naturally have an affectionate regard for the little College, as I may call it, of Scalán.” These words, written one hundred and thirty years ago, are surely truer still to-day. Their author, in his “Brief Historical Account of the Seminary of Scalán, read in an Academical Meeting in the Scots College at Valladolid, 18th June 1777,” assures us his information is derived from those who like himself had spent many years in the College, especially Bishop Hugh Macdonald, Bishop Smith, and Mr George Gordon, long time its Superior.

It adds greatly to the interest of the following narrative to know that it is in the handwriting of the venerable Bishop Geddes, the foremost authority on the history of the Catholic Church in Scotland. On this account the narrative is followed as closely as possible.

It was in 1713 that Bishop Nicolson and Bishop Gordon first started the idea of a seminary, which would not only prepare boys for the colleges abroad, but also educate them for the priesthood, without their leaving this country. The latter object was at first the chief one aimed at, though later the former superseded it. A few gentlemen's sons also, destined for a secular life, were received, but this was always considered accidental, and was avoided as much as possible.

The place chosen for the establishment was the

island on Loch Morar. Mr George Innes, afterwards Principal of the Scots College, Paris, was sent to be the first master, and Mr Hugh Macdonald, son of the Laird of Morar, afterwards first Vicar Apostolic of the Highlands, was one of the first scholars. But before the school had long existed the Civil War of 1715 and the ensuing calamities occasioned a dissolution of it; nor was the re-establishment of it attempted till a year or two after, and then Scalan was judged a proper place in which the execution of the former plan might be prudently resumed.

Scalan is situated in the furthestmost part of the Lordship of Glenlivet in Banffshire. It is a most isolated spot, surrounded on three sides by hills 2,000 to 2,700 feet high, which extend for many miles to the west, south, and east. Did the present writer not fear to interrupt the narrative he could give some details of a veritable pilgrimage up Glengairn, over the Lecht road which itself rises to a height of 2,000 feet, and which, as our author puts it, "forms the nearest part of the desert that divides Glenlivet from Strathdon." The first priest stationed in Glenlivet after the Reformation seems to have been Rev. James Devoir, who came from Ireland in August 1681 and remained till about 1698. He was followed by Mr James Kennedy, who came from Paris in June 1699, and later by Mr John Gordon, who came in 1708.

This Mr John Gordon, of the family of Cairnbarrow, was missionary in Glenlivet in 1715, and had his residence somewhere about Minmore or Castleton; but in the next summer, when General Cadogan and other officers of the Hanoverian party came north with their

troops, he thought it safest for him to make his ordinary abode in the most retired part of the country, and stayed commonly in a barn which was on the south-west corner of the "town of" Scalan. It was about this time that he resolved to make himself a habitation on the banks of the Crombie, near to an excellent fountain which he saw there, and in fact before winter, with the permission of Mr Grant of Tomnavoulin, he had all that place in tack from the Duke of Gordon, the juniper bushes—with which hitherto the ground had been covered—cleared away and somewhat of a yard formed. This was the very beginning of Scalan being a dwelling-place of our clergymen.

This spot was looked upon by Bishop Gordon as very proper for the purpose of reviving the Catholic School. Scalan was not only on the Duke of Gordon's estate, who was then a Catholic, but it was also retired, and there were many Catholics in the district. It is uncertain whether Mr Gordon had charge of the college; in any case he left it very soon, and Mr George Innes was appointed. Mr John Tyrie succeeded him; but he had the school only for a short time, when he was succeeded by Mr Alex. Grant, brother of Bishop Grant. Mr Grant continued Superior from 1720-1726. In 1726 the Seminary was closed for some months because of the storm raised against it, for Glenlivet and Strathavon were full of parties of soldiers, but in the course of the following year, the influence of the Duke of Gordon was sufficient to enable the bishop to reopen the Seminary. In 1728 its occupants were again twice dispersed in the short space of two months, but with little permanent damage to the establishment,

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which was soon again occupied by its owners in their ordinary routine of peaceful study!

The house was built at the foot of the hill on the very brink of the Crombie Burn, and for about twenty years it was almost entirely of turf. For the maintenance of some milch cows Mr Grant of Tomnavoulin gave them in subtack a piece of land extending up the hill from the house; and another Mr Grant, who was the Duke's factor in some of those parts, granted a piece of ground on the east side of Crombie, which put it in the power of the college Superior to form an enclosure, through which Crombie runs; and this contributes to the agreeableness of the place and much more to its usefulness. It is on a part of this ground thus added to Scalán that the house built in 1767 was situated.

Mr Hugh Macdonald, who had been at the school at Morar, was also one of the first pupils at Scalán. He was joined by Mr George Gordon, born at Drumin, in Glenlivet, later Superior of Scalán and long while missionary in Aberdeen. Mr James Grant, bishop in 1774, was two years at Scalán about the year 1720.

Bishop Gordon took a pleasure in staying some months in each year in the summer at Scalán, and was very desirous that learning and virtue should flourish there. For the obtaining of this end he drew up short rules in the year 1722, of which a copy in his own handwriting was still in the house in 1777. These rules resemble very much the rules of the Pontifical College, with which Bishop Gordon had become familiar during his long residence in Rome.

The good bishop began to reap the fruits of his

endeavours in the year 1725, for he then had the satisfaction on the Ember Saturday of September to confer the order of priesthood on Mr Hugh Macdonald and Mr George Gordon. The first of these gentlemen was not long after sent to the Highlands, and he exercised his missionary functions for some years with extraordinary success in the country of Morar, until he went to Paris, where he stayed in the Scots College a year or two, and then returned to Scotland and was consecrated Bishop of Diana at Edinburgh by Bishop Gordon in 1731, and was appointed by the Pope first Vicar Apostolic of the Western (Highland) part of the Kingdom. Such was the first alumnus of the little college of Scalan.

The other young priest, Mr George Gordon, had charge of the Glenlivet mission for a year, and then succeeded Mr Grant as Superior at Scalan. There were now many scholars at the College, amongst them being Mr Will. Reid, who after several years at Scalan was sent to Rome in 1733 and returned in 1739. He laboured with great zeal in the mission of Mortlach, until his health being quite broken he retired to Aberdeen. Two less promising alumni were Mr Will. Gordon, who after long residence at Scalan was ordained in Rome but never returned to the mission; and Mr Francis M'Donell, who was educated and ordained at Scalan, behaved ill in the Highlands, apostalised in Edinburgh about 1742, and then lived in retirement on the West Coast.

Amongst the sons of gentlemen not intended for the priesthood, yet educated at Scalan, appear the names of Mr Gordon of Aberlour, the sons of Gordon

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of Letterfourie and Birkenbosh, as well as of Glastirum. Mention is also made of a boarding school for young gentlemen which existed about this time in Strathavon under Mr Gregory Farquharson. He had been preceptor to Cosmo, Duke of Gordon, took arms in 1745, was made prisoner at the battle of Culloden, and died soon after.

In 1736 Mr George Gordon went to the Aberdeen mission and was succeeded at Scalan by Mr Alex. Gordon of Curroch. In 1738 he built a new house of stone and lime for the greatest part, and therefore much better than the former one. At this time there was at Scalan Mr Dougall Macdonald from the Isle of Uist, who afterwards completed his studies in Rome, and became a zealous missionary in his own country, but died young, to the great regret of all who had known him; Mr Alex. Gordon, who was himself another of the Scalan youths of this date, being both educated and ordained there, was Superior from 1736-1741. He was then made procurator of the mission, and as such resided in Edinburgh for the next twenty-two years. In 1763 he went to be chaplain to the Duchess of Perth at Stobhall, with whom he continued till her death in 1772.

Mr William Duthie was the next Superior at Scalan. This gentleman, while studying at Aberdeen in order to be an Episcopalian clergyman—indeed he was already Deacon in that Communion—was converted to the Catholic Faith, together with several others, by Mr Will. Shand, one of the most zealous and successful missionaries we had. Mr Duthie studied Divinity at Paris, was ordained priest, and in 1742 got direction of the Seminary.



In this year there met at Scalán Bishop Gordon, its founder, Bishop Macdonald, Mr James Grant, later Bishop, and the other administrators. Indeed at this period Scalán was frequently the meeting-place of the bishops and administrators. It was here that the meeting of 1733, which had such important results, was held.

In the summer of 1745 Bishop Gordon paid his dear Scalán the last visit. He died on 17th January, O.S., of the year following at Thornhill, near Drummond Castle. Bishop Gordon was the founder of Scalán; for nearly thirty years he had cherished it with the greatest care, and in the end he made it his heir.

Soon after the death of the good bishop, Scalán was laid in ashes, for as soon as the Duke of Cumberland saw that his victory at Culloden was entirely decisive, he sent out parties on all hands to extinguish (as was the language then) the remains of the Rebellion. One of these parties entered Glenlivet and soon directed their course to Scalán. This visit had been expected. Mr Duthie had dismissed all the students—another old account has it, “he changed their dress, to put them out of the kennin.” He had got all the sacred vestments and chalices, the books and even the movables carried to the most secret and safe place, and this was done with so much care that of these things very little was lost. On 10th May the detachment of troops surrounded Scalán, and orders were immediately given for setting the house on fire; nor was it long before these orders were executed. Mr Duthie, with a sorrowful heart, from one of the neighbouring hills, was looking down on the affecting scene. He saw his habitation surrounded by armed

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men, whom he knew to be full of barbarous fury. In a short time the smoking flames began to ascend, he could soon perceive the roof to fall in, and after a little there was nothing left but the ruins. This was to him and to many another a dismal sight, but the worst was that it seemed to be only the beginning of evils: they knew not what was to follow, nor where, nor when, these barbarities were to end. The entire extirpation of the Catholics of Scotland was loudly threatened, and was justly to have been feared, without the interposition of Divine Providence in their favour.

When the soldiers had completed their work, and done all the harm they could at Scalán, they departed thence in order to carry terror and mischief to other places, and then Mr Duthie ventured to come down to take a nearer view of the ruin they had left. To see the very spot where he had lived for years, where he had taught, preached, and prayed, and even offered the Holy Sacrifice, reduced to ashes, must have been very afflicting to the good man. But he retained his courage, and during the next year and a half he resided close by, and attended to the small crop at Scalán. In the summer of 1747 some of the houses were made fit for something of a dwelling, and then another house was built, but much inferior to the former, for it occupied only the ground on which the kitchen had stood before, and a little more.

Before the summer of 1749 Mr Duthie had again some scholars, and in particular Mr John Gordon, who completed his studies in this country and was ordained by Bishop Smith. He was missionary in Glenlivet after the death of Mr John Tyrie (1755), for two



or three years, and died of a fever in 1757 at Dunan, near Drumin.

But though Mr Duthie was thus endeavouring to bring the Seminary of Scalán by degrees back to its former state, yet much prudence was necessary. For until the beginning of the war of 1756 there were almost always two parties of soldiers stationed in Glenlivet, who had express orders to seize the priests wherever they could find them; and they expected a reward for finding them. Hence it was that, even in the year 1752, there was a strict search made at Scalán for Mr Duthie in the night; but he had been forewarned of his danger by the sergeant or his wife, who were quartered in Deniemore. And it chanced, not only on this, but on many other occasions, that the soldiers, in hopes of some reward, which was always liberally given them, let fall some hint, or dropped some letter, as if it had been by accident, that so the persons aimed at might be put on their guard. It may be here observed that those who have seen only the present times of peace and safety in our country, cannot easily form to themselves a just idea of those past troubles, nor have a strong enough sense of the reasons we have to be thankful for the calm which the Catholics now enjoy.

Mr Duthie continued at Scalán until the summer of 1758, when he became Prefect of Studies at the Scots College, Paris. He had under his care after the battle of Culloden, Mr John Gordon, above mentioned, Mr Alex. Geddes, Mr Alex. Kennedy, and many others.

Mr William Gray was the next Superior. He was born in Strathbogie and had been converted to the Catholic Faith. He had taught in various gentlemen's

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families, and was ordained Deacon by Bishop Smith, but I do not find that he was ever advanced to the priesthood. Whilst Mr Gray was Superior at Scalán, an extraordinary visit was made to it by two Protestant parsons, who were sent in 1760 by the General Assembly to observe and bring them an account of the state of religion in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. They did not indeed so much as alight from their horses at Scalán, but after having spoken for a little while with Mr Gray, who had expected their coming and had invited them into the house, they rode off expressing their surprise that so great a noise should have been made about a place that made so poor an appearance and seemed of so little consequence.<sup>1</sup>

Besides some others Mr Gray had for scholars at Scalán John, Alex. and William Gordon, of the families of Clashmoir, Minmore, and Lettoch in Glenlivet, and Alex. Cameron from Braemar, a grandnephew of Mr Thomas Brockie, who had been a very active and successful missionary in the parishes of Cabrach, Glass, Mortlach, and Aberlour (or Skirdeston). These four Mr John Geddes found in the house when he removed from Shenval in 1762, and others he received in the following year, especially John Paterson, who in 1777 had charge of the Seminary.

In the same year, 1763, a renewal of the subtack of the small farm was obtained from Mr Grant of Rothmaes, and indeed this gentleman and his father, Mr Grant of Tomvullin, had been all along friendly to Scalán, and though they were often solicited,

<sup>1</sup> A copy of this report may be seen in the Register House, Edinburgh, where facilities for perusing it were kindly afforded by Rev. John Anderson, the Curator.

especially by the Presbyterian parsons, not to allow such a popish school to be on their property, yet they never yielded in the least to threats or importunities, but always continued to give what assistance and protection they could to the Seminary, and even gloried in doing so. The father had the happiness to be converted to the Catholic Faith in his last illness, and was assisted at his death by Mr George Gordon, of Scalán, as he was wont to be called.

About the same time Scalán got an addition to its small revenues by there being applied to it about £12 a year, whereof the one half was a benefaction granted by Pope Clement XII. for the education of Scots Catholic boys designed to be sent to the colleges abroad, and the other half is the interest on a part of 10,000 crowns given by King James VIII. to be employed by Cardinal Spinelli in the way he should judge most expedient for the advancement of the Catholic religion in Scotland. An equal sum was granted to the Western Vicariate at the same time for the same end.

Whilst on the subject of financial matters it may be remarked that at this period the cost of each pupil at Scalán was £6 a year, as stated by the Bishops to Cardinal Spinelli, of whom they were begging still further alms.<sup>1</sup>

On 4th August 1764 Alex. Cameron and John Gordon set out from Scalán for Rome, and Alex. Innes, of the Balnacraig family, departed with them in order to go to the Scots College, Paris. Their places were filled by John Farquharson and James Cameron.

<sup>1</sup> Bishop Geddes's MS. Notes.

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Here, however, Bishop Geddes's account stops, so that the remainder has to be supplied from other sources. We learn indeed that Scalan was a charge singularly congenial to the gifts of the future bishop, although its hardships and privations severely tried his constitution. He found the students living in a hovel, where we may be sure the interests of education could not thrive. Mr Geddes applied his energies to remedy discipline; study and economy went hand in hand, and a brighter day seemed opening for Scalan. He had a number of youths in readiness for the demands of the Foreign Colleges greater than was required. He by and by transferred his community from the hut where he had found it to a convenient house on the opposite or right bank of the Crombie, and about seventy yards from the river. Additions were made to the house by subsequent superiors, till at the period of Bishop Hay's arrival the last improvements were in progress.

In 1767 the lease of the little farm was renewed for seventeen years and a new house was built; but Mr, later Bishop, Geddes did not stay long to enjoy the new premises. On 7th December of that year he was succeeded by Mr John Thomson, who remained as Superior till 1770, when he was succeeded by Mr John Paterson. In 1784 the charge of Superior was taken over by Mr Alex. Farquharson, who was succeeded in 1794 by Mr James Sharp, who still was Superior, under Bishop Hay, when the Seminary in 1799 was removed to Aquhorties.

But to go back a short time, 19th May 1769, being Trinity Sunday, was an eventful day in the history of

Scalan. In this remote little spot Bishop Hay, who was to do so much for the Catholic Church of Scotland, was consecrated by Bishop Grant, the two Bishops Macdonald being his assistants. The consecrating bishop had spent his boyhood within its walls and could recall the original building—almost entirely of turf—as it was in 1720, whilst one at least of the assistant bishops, viz. Bishop Hugh Macdonald, had been the very first of its scholars.

At the meeting of the administrators at Scalan in 1779 a matter of peculiar interest was treated of. It was the proposal made by Bishop Hay of praying by name for King George III. Ever since the Revolution of 1688 the Catholics of Scotland prayed indeed for the "King," but it was well understood that this King was the lineal representative of the Stuart family; and until within a few years of the present period it would, by the great majority of the Scottish Catholics, be considered wrong to pray for any other. Now people's sentiments had changed; they argued on the subject, and concluded that it was neither prudent nor reasonable that they, who were comparatively a mere handful, should oppose the general voice of a whole nation in choosing the first magistrate. What gave more force to this consideration was, that the line of the Stuarts might be looked upon as extinct. It is true Prince Charles and his brother Henry were still in life; but both of them were far gone in years and had no successors. The younger brother, Henry, was not only a Cardinal, but also a Bishop. The elder brother, Charles, who had been married for several years, had no children. It was universally allowed

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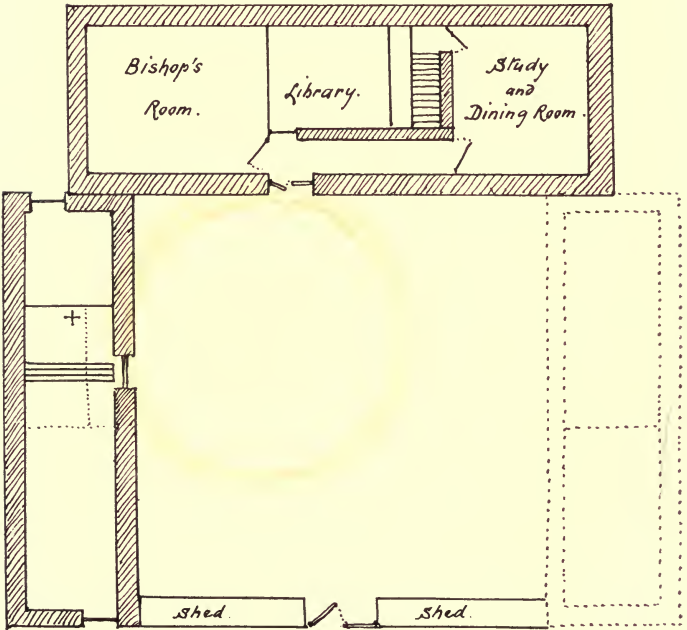
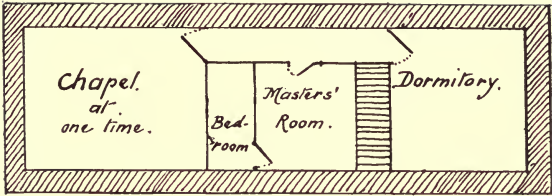
that, after the death of the two brothers, who might then be considered as politically dead, the reigning family ought to be acknowledged as lawful heirs to the crown.

The proposal met with little opposition, even from the Highland clergy, who were supposed to be the most attached to the Stuarts, and a mandate was issued to all the Scottish missionaries to mention King George and his Royal family, and recommend them to the prayers of their respective congregations.

The "Brief Historical Account of Scalán" thus concludes:—"The time by the goodness of God will come, when the Catholic religion will again flourish in Scotand; and then, when posterity shall enquire, with a laudable curiosity, by what means any sparks of the true faith were preserved in those dismal times of darkness and error, Scalán and the other colleges will be mentioned with veneration, and all that can be known concerning them will be recorded with care, and even this very account which I give you, however insignificant it may now (1777) appear, may one day serve as something of a monument of our Church history, transmitting down to future ages the names of some of those champions who stood up for the cause of the Church of God."

But if the "Historical Account" can claim to be of interest, the building itself cannot fail to excite the veneration of all who visit it. The plans here given were made from measurements on the spot, but there is no doubt that the various rooms were at different times put to different uses. The buildings, as shown on the plan, were no doubt completed by degrees, and

*Plan of upper floor.*



*Plan of ground floor.*

PLAN OF SCALAN.

[To face page 39.]







ultimately formed a compact little establishment, well suited to its purpose, and to the times. The whole property of about twenty acres was enclosed with a good dyke, while the buildings formed a square. On each side of the entrance gate—the stone foundation of which, with hole for the bolt, may still be seen—was a stout wall with sheds on the inside. On the north and south sides of the square were two long, narrow wings, whilst the main building stood at the far or east side. The walls at each side of the entrance gate, and the south wing have been removed, but their traces are still plainly to be seen. The main walls throughout are very thick, so that it was found impracticable to pierce them to make a door, when some recent alterations were contemplated. Indeed it is wonderful how little alteration has taken place, which doubtless is largely due to the fact that the old house has for the past hundred years been in the possession of the same family, who have ever regarded it with veneration.

Some years after the removal to Aquhorties Mr James Michie took the farm of Scalán from Mr Paterson. He had no children, but adopted the two orphan girls of his sister, and brought them up most carefully. They married, and in their turn brought up their children with the greatest care. The late Mr M'Gregor, son of the elder sister, was well known for the veneration in which he held "The Scalán," and for the pleasure he took in preserving it; whilst his sister has carried on the family tradition to the present day.

Bishop Hay ever had a great liking for Scalán, and the Bishop's Well is still pointed out, as also his

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“Walk,” shaded with trees, where he wrote the greater part of his works. There, too, “doun yon burn, ye ken,” as my informant expressed it, is the students’ play-green and the pool in which their morning ablutions were performed.

As the venerable bishop wrote in 1799:—“I confess it causes me great regret to leave Scalán, where we have been so long, and where so many worthy missionaries have received at least part of their education”; so too the present writer leaves this subject with regret, for there are few spots which recall so many memories of the great difficulties which our forefathers had to face, and of the courage and perseverance by which they overcame them.

But besides the chapel at Scalán, the Catholics of Glenlivet had often two other chapels, and almost always one.

The earliest chapel of which I find mention is that used by Mr John Grant prior to the Rising of 1715. This was situated near Minmore or Castleton, at the junction of the rivers Avon and Livet, but it is not heard of after that Rising. It may be that he used one or other of the old pre-Reformation churches at Downan or at Nevie, as was done in the case of the neighbouring Strathavon, and also at Peterkirk, Strathbogie. The old chapel of Nevie was in the angle of the Nevie burn and the Livet, where faint remains of it can still be seen. Much of the building, however, was swept away in the flood of 1829, when numerous coffins were exposed to view. In 1794 the remains were very distinct, and it then bore the name of Chapel Christ.

Already in 1745, at the time of the second Rising, there was a chapel near Tombae which was spared from destruction "on account of the neighbouring houses, but all that was within it was taken out and committed to the flames." At that time Mr John Tyrie was priest here, having been appointed to Glenlivet in 1739. He had joined Prince Charlie as Chaplain to the Glenlivet and Strathavon contingent under Gordon of Glenbucket. He followed the Prince into England and left him only after the battle of Culloden, where he received two wounds on the head from a horseman's sword and got off with great difficulty. By lying concealed for many months he avoided being apprehended, though his house, books, etc., at the Bochle were burnt by a party of soldiers—the same party, no doubt, who burnt the chapel furniture. Mr Tyrie died at Shenval, in Cabrach, in 1755.

The next priest in Glenlivet was another prominent figure in the Catholic History of the '45. Mr George Duncan, who had charge of this district from 1758-1761, was imprisoned in 1746. He soon gained his liberty, however, and was sent by Bishop Smith to Carlisle to offer spiritual assistance to Macdonald of Kinloch Moidart, Macdonell of Tiendrish, and others, who lay under sentence of death. At the bishop's desire Mr Duncan went cheerfully upon this delicate and dangerous expedition of charity. He got admittance to the prisoners as a friend of theirs, heard their confessions, as well as those of some English gentlemen who were in the same situation, communicated them to their great comfort, having carried with him the Blessed Sacrament for that purpose, and got safely

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out of the town and back to Scotland without any interruption; but an information had been lodged against him by the magistrates, and a search was made for him a few hours after his departure.

At his first arrival to take charge of the Glenlivet mission Mr Duncan stayed at the Scalán, but in the autumn of 1759 he built a room for himself at Tomnavoulán. He was succeeded by Mr Guthrie, who "first took up his habitation at Upper Auchenraw, where Miss Margaret Tyrie dwells," and had charge of Glenlivet, Morings, and Glenrinnis. In 1768 he received as assistant Father Dominic Braggan, whose health, however, soon gave way, so that in 1772 he left the Scotch mission and returned to Ireland. From then till 1778 Mr Thomson had charge of Glenlivet, where he was succeeded by Mr James Macgillivray (1778-1785), Mr Carruthers (1786-1793), and Mr, later Bishop, Paterson (1793-1812).

Meantime the chapel of 1746 had been replaced towards the end of the century by another, for the old Statistical Account (1794) states that "from the entrance to Crombie eastward and up Livet more than a quarter of a mile, is Caanakyle, where the popish priest resides, and where, on the bank of Livet, about 200 yards from the priest's house, is lately built<sup>1</sup> a new Mass-house, with stone and lime and slated." This chapel met with a violent end, for in 1829 the stream on the bank of which it was built rose most suddenly, and the greater part of the building was swept away; the apse, however, still remains to show the former site.

<sup>1</sup> The exact date of the building was 1786.





TOMBAIE, GLENLIVET.

Mr Paterson was succeeded by Mr James Gordon, who built the present most picturesque chapel. His efforts, as he himself writes, "at collecting in the sister kingdom were not unsuccessful, and the building, of which the foundation stone was laid in 1827, was so far advanced as to enable him to open the chapel for the celebration of divine service on Candlemas Day, 1829." The new chapel was built on very handsome lines for that period, as Mr Gordon expected that the Catholics from the whole glen, numbering at that time well over one thousand, would make this their parish church. When, however, Abbé Macpherson decided to build another church four miles further up the glen, and so save his countrymen the long walk in that inclement district, a third part of the Tombae chapel was used as a school, and continued to serve this purpose until new schools were built by the present incumbent.

Mr James Gordon, who had built the Tombae chapel, died in 1842 and was buried within its walls. He was succeeded by Mr Robert Stuart, who continued in charge of this mission for twenty years, and dying in 1861 was also interred within its sacred precincts, in which tablets have been placed to the memory of both these priests.

# GLENLIVET

## II

“ An honest man here lies to rest,  
As e'er God with his image blest ;  
The friend of man, the friend of truth,  
The friend of age, and guide of youth.  
Few hearts like his—with virtue warm'd,  
Few heads with knowledge so informed.”

—BURNS.

THE other church at present existing in Glenlivet owes its origin to the venerable Abbé Macpherson. To few men indeed has it fallen to be of greater service to the Catholic Church in Scotland, as the following notes, taken from the Scots Directory of 1849, will show.

Paul Macpherson was born of Catholic parents, at Scalan. His mother dying when he was but six years old, he was sent to a Catholic school at Clashmore, in Glenlivet. From it he was removed the year following to a school kept by an old woman, who taught him to read, but whose own attainments did not extend to the art of writing. This he acquired from Mr, later Bishop, Geddes, who then presided over the seminary of Scalan. Indeed young Macpherson would willingly have entered there at once, but he had to wait until a vacancy occurred, as happened in June 1767.

After two years at Scalan he was sent to Rome, but



in 1777, before his studies were completed, his state of health was so precarious that he had to leave Rome and passed to the Scots College at Valladolid, where his former patron, Mr Geddes, was Superior. Here he was soon restored to good health, and continuing his studies was ordained priest on Easter Monday, 1779. Very shortly after he left Valladolid for London, where he met Bishop Hay, with whom he travelled to Edinburgh. His first mission was that of Shenval, in the Cabrach, probably the wildest of the missions on the mainland of Scotland. There were four stations, Shenval, Braelach, Tullochallum, and Aberlour, in each of which Mass was said on successive Sundays. At the time of Mr Macpherson's arrival the number of Catholics did not exceed eighty, though some years before they had been ten times that number. At Shenval itself, where the largest number assembled, Mass was said in a barn, the chapel having been destroyed in 1746; in the other cases it was said in the largest farm-house available, as, indeed, was the custom all through the Highlands at this period.

The very first summer after his arrival Mr Macpherson got a new chapel erected. Protestants, as well as Catholics, even the minister himself helped to provide the materials for the building. It was a decent place of worship considering the times, but there is now scarce a trace left of it, and the congregation is dispersed. Under Strathbogie an account is given of how Mr Macpherson, being called to assist a dying person in the middle of winter when the snow was very deep, was warned by his guide against falling

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down a chimney, as the path along which they were walking led them over the top of the dwelling.

Despite the rough climate Mr Macpherson was sorry to be called in the following year to Aberdeen, and indeed the keenness of the easterly sea air was too much for his constitution, enfeebled as it had been by his dangerous fever in Rome. He accordingly removed to Stobhall in 1783 and remained there till 1791, when on his appointment as Procurator for the Mission he went to reside in Edinburgh. In 1793 Mr Macpherson was nominated by the Bishops, Agent of the Scottish Mission in Rome, and in August of that year he left Scotland to assume the duties of his office, and continued for many years to transact with the Holy See all the ecclesiastical business of the mission.

But the quiet missionary from the Braes of Glenlivet was also to take his part in some of the incidents of the stormy period which followed the French Revolution. Soon after General Berthier, by order of the French Directory, had taken possession of Rome in February 1798, and had carried off Pope Pius VI., it was deemed advisable that the Scotch students should return home, and Abbé Macpherson accompanied them to England. It was then that occurred one of the most remarkable circumstances in his varied career. His long residence in Italy and his personal acquaintance with His Holiness induced the British Government to select him as their Agent in an enterprise no less bold than it was perilous, and which even as yet (1849) is scarcely known to the historians of the period.

In that year the British Cabinet received a suggestion as to the practicability of rescuing from the despotism

of France, and placing under the protection of England, the person of the Pope, then a prisoner in the maritime town of Savona, on the Genoese coast. An English frigate was ordered to cruise off the land, and Abbé Macpherson was despatched from London with ample powers and funds to accomplish the object. He was to contrive some method of communicating with the Pope, in order to apprise him of the plan laid for his liberation. The town was to be bombarded; a signal was to be hoisted on his residence that no guns might be pointed in that direction. Amidst the confusion and alarm which the firing would inevitably cause, the Pope was to be hurried in disguise to the shore, where boats, well-manned, were to be in readiness to convey him on board the frigate. The plan would have been successful in all its arrangements, had not information disclosing the whole been sent to Paris, by parties in the pay of the Directory, from the neighbourhood of Downing Street. Abbé Macpherson was arrested, plundered, and cast into prison; and Pius VI. died the next year at Valence, in the interior of France, whither he was instantly removed.

About this time (1798) Abbé Macpherson was mainly instrumental in securing the most valuable of the Stuart papers for the Prince of Wales, afterwards George IV. By order of the Prince they were purchased by Sir John Hippesley and then consigned to the British Vice-Consulate at Civita Vecchia; but that town having meantime fallen into the hands of the French, their removal became impracticable. Signor Bonelli, an Italian gentleman resident in London, was sent out to attempt their recovery; and on reaching

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Rome, he applied to the Abbé Paul Macpherson, of the Scots College. This was a matter of much delicacy, no British subject being then permitted by the French authorities to approach the coast. The Abbé, however, contrived to obtain a passport to Civita Vecchia, and having ascertained from the Consul where the papers lay, he applied to the Commandant of the place for leave to search among them for certain documents required in a litigation in Scotland. The Commandant desired to see them, and happening to take up a transcript of King James II.'s Memoirs, exclaimed, that as the papers seemed of no consequence, having been already published, the Abbé might dispose of them as he thought fit. Under this permission they were sent to Leghorn, and thence shipped to Algiers, whence they reached England.<sup>1</sup>

After his liberation from the imprisonment mentioned above, Abbé Macpherson came to Scotland and remained in charge of the Huntly Mission till 1800, when it was determined that he should resume his post at Rome and endeavour to save what he could of the property of the College and take care of it. He arrived in Rome in June 1800. After the second occupation of the city and the seizure and exile of Pius VII. by the French General, Radet, the good Abbé undertook another journey to this country in 1811.

On the restoration of Pius VII. to his dominions, the Abbé returned again to Rome. Besides being Agent to the Scotch Vicars Apostolic, he was for some years employed in the same capacity by those of England. He exerted himself to effect the re-establish-

<sup>1</sup> *Quarterly Review*, 1846—Stuart Papers.

ment of the Scots College, and having saved what he could of its former property, managed its vineyards and everything else with much prudence. Previous to the inroads of the French, and after the suppression of the Jesuits, the College had been under the direction of Italian ecclesiastics; he succeeded in obtaining from the Holy See that it should in future be governed by superiors from Scotland, and he was himself appointed the first Scottish Rector; however, it was only in 1820 that the first students were sent to it.

In 1822 the Abbé came to Scotland intending to remain for some time, but before he had reached this country, Mr James Macdonald, under whose charge he had left the College, died suddenly, and then Mr Macpherson had to retrace his steps. Five years later, in 1827, the Abbé again set out for Scotland and put in execution a plan he had long had at heart. Since the removal of Rev. James Sharp from Scalán to Aquhorties in 1808 there had been but one chapel and one clergyman in Glenlivet. As this district is of considerable extent, being about fourteen miles in length, the population of the higher and more remote part, which is almost exclusively Catholic, was subjected to great inconvenience for receiving instruction, and attending the duties of their religion. How considerable, to say the least, these inconveniences were, may be judged from the fact that as there was no bridge over the Livet, all the good folks from the Braes—the woman-kind, at least—walked barefoot till they crossed the river, doing similarly on the return journey. To remedy this evil Abbé Macpherson set about erecting a new chapel and schools for the benefit of his country-

## 50 CATHOLIC HIGHLANDS OF SCOTLAND

men.<sup>1</sup> Accordingly, having obtained from the Duke of Gordon, to whom he had been of service in Rome, a central though barren spot of ground of about 10 acres, he raised upon it a neat and commodious chapel, seated for about three hundred persons, and a dwelling-house for the clergyman, together with good farm buildings. He not only erected these, but supplied them with all the necessary vestments and furniture, and the whole at his sole expense, receiving no assistance from any quarter but what the people of the country gave him in the carriage of materials for the building. He also improved the piece of ground attached to the chapel, a part of which he laid out as a cemetery for the use of the congregation. In 1832 he built schools which have ever since been in operation. These having been accidentally burned in 1835, he provided the means of rebuilding them. Many other instances might be cited of his love of country—of his anxiety for preserving in it the lamp of religion.

But previous to this date, viz., in 1834, the good Abbé, now in his seventy-eighth year, was again sent out to Rome in consequence of the sudden death of Mr Angus Macdonald, Rector of the Scots College there. The aged Abbé could give the College little more than a nominal supervision. He was, however, spared to see yet twelve more years, and then he gradually grew more and more feeble, till at length the whole system gave way and he expired, in sentiments of the most fervent piety and hope, on 24th November

<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to note that long before this, Mass had been said at intervals at Lettoch, a farm about half a mile from the new chapel. At this early period the Gordons of Minmore occupied Lettoch, a fact which easily accounts for its being selected for the station.



1846, in the ninety-first year of his age, and the sixty-eighth of his priesthood. To few is it given to reach so advanced an age; few also can look back upon years so well spent as his were. Having amassed some money as the well-earned reward of the ability he displayed in the various affairs which he was employed to transact, he spent the whole of it for the benefit of religion in the manner already described, and it may be said of him that he died in apostolic poverty.

Mr Macpherson, even when he was living in Glenlivet, was unable from infirmity to take any active part in the mission work. "He rode a bit sheltie and lookit after the work," being from all accounts most active in his supervision of the smallest details. He is still remembered as having brought the first rosary beads seen in Glenlivet, and my informant has not forgotten how as a wee lassie her first idea was to put them round her neck as a new ornament; but the pious old man soon put this right. "Don't wear them over your clothes, my dear, but under them, and when tending the cattle, just tell yer beads, and all sorts of good will come to you." These words remind me of the quaint lines:—

"Be of gud prayer, quhen scho may,  
And heir Mess on the haly day;  
For mekill grace comes of praying  
And bringeth men ay to gud ending.

"And in the kirke kepe o'er all things  
Fra smyrking, keking, and baklucking,  
And after noyne on the haly day  
Owthir pray or sport at honest play."

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The first priest who had charge of the mission thus established by Abbé Macpherson was Mr M'Naughton, who remained till 1834. He was succeeded by Mr William Dundas, who at Chapeltown died of fever in 1838. Next followed Mr Charles Gordon, himself a Glenlivet man, being born at Clashmore, half a mile from the chapel. But the priest who has left his name most markedly in the glen is Mr James Glennie, who was priest there for three-and-thirty years. He was a most exemplary man, greatly beloved by rich and poor. It was at his request that the Duke of Richmond and Gordon made the road from the Pole Inn three miles up the glen—a work which has been an untold blessing to the inhabitants. At the time this road was made the Braes resounded with the praise of Mr Glennie, in the following parody:—

“If you'd seen these roads before there were any,  
You'd hold up your hands and bless Mr Glennie.”

At his suggestion also the Duke planted large tracts of ground which had hitherto been useless waste. Nevertheless, he has left behind him the name of being a severe scolder. The son of a soldier, he was doubtless a strict disciplinarian. Other priests who are known to have laboured in this mission are Mr Peter Frazer (1718), Mr George Duncan (1746-1757), and Mr James Carruthers (1785-1794).

An interesting paragraph occurs in the Statistical Account of Scotland, Edinburgh, 1794. “Besides the churchyard of the parish, there are two other burying-places, one upon the east side of Livet, near four miles from the parish church, near the walls of the old



chapel of Downan; and another, almost five miles higher up the glen, on the west side of the Cromby and opposite the Bochel. It is called 'The Buiternach,' and was consecrated more than forty years ago, by two popish bishops, to be a burying-ground for the Catholics; but few are as yet buried in it."

The church, built by the venerable Abbé, had been used for seventy-five years when the present incumbent of the mission found means to replace the old chapel by a larger and more substantial building, of which the decoration and fittings show great taste, and form an interesting comparison with the simplicity of "The Scalan."

The little seminary of Scalan and the brave missionaries who issued from it have seldom received their well-merited praise in more touching terms than those used by the Right Rev. Bishop Chisholm, on the memorable occasion of the opening of New Blairs, 23rd October 1901. The description, cited by him, of the old house, and the lesson to be learned from it, were as follows. Scalan was a house of two stories and an attic—thatched, as was then the custom—about fifty feet in length and sixteen in width. . . . We entered it from the court by the only door in the middle of the west side of the house. A narrow passage connects both ends of the house with the entrance door. To the left at the end of this passage was Bishop Hay's room, with a small closet attached where he kept his books. In this room he consecrated Bishop Macdonald in 1780. Next door to the Bishop's room was Mr Geddes's room. On the right of the entrance was another chamber, which served as the boys' chapel in the

## 54 CATHOLIC HIGHLANDS OF SCOTLAND

morning, their refectory at noon, and their study room during the rest of the day. None of the rooms in the house had any ceiling but the flooring of the room above, with the rafters exposed. Nearly opposite the entrance was a steep narrow staircase, little better than a ladder, leading to the boys' dormitory immediately over the school, and thence by a shorter ladder to the attic above. At the other end, over the Bishop's room, was the private chapel, sixteen feet by ten, where the Blessed Sacrament was reserved. On the right hand was another small room and bedroom combined—for a master. The lavatory was the running stream of the Crombie. The college routine was the same as in other colleges, except that the boys' time for study was frequently broken into by their being called upon to take part in the operations of the farm attached.

This work on the farm, which is elsewhere often referred to as a necessary evil in the life of Scalan, was doubtless one of those to which the Bishop referred when in a later part of his speech he said: "No doubt the obstacles which the old students had to encounter, and the hardships they had to bear, brought out the best traits in their characters, and made them the men they were, and the men they are, a priesthood of which any country might be proud."





TOMENTOUL FROM THE SOUTH.

[To face page 55.]

## STRATHAVON

“The waters of Avon so fair and clear  
Would deceive a man of a hundred year.”

THE river Avon, to which this quality of extraordinary transparency is ascribed, issues from the north-east end of a small loch of the same name, which lies at an elevation of 2,250 feet above sea-level, and is immediately overhung by the steep and almost mural masses of Cairngorm (4,084 feet), Ben Macdhui (4,296 feet), and Ben Mheadoin (3,883 feet). The river flows nearly thirty miles before it falls into the Spey at Ballindalloch, the greater part of this distance being within the Parish of Kirkmichael, though the last two miles are in the Parish of Inveravon. About half-way along its course the Avon passes the village of Tomintoul, now a flourishing little town, although it is not much more than a hundred years ago since the site of the village was a bleak and barren moor. From its exposed situation, and having no woods near it, it still often looks bleak enough. This is, however, scarcely to be wondered at when we remember that it is at the highest elevation above the sea, and at the furthest distance from the sea of any village in Scotland of the same extent and population (New Statistical Account).

The whole of Strathavon was long known for its

fidelity to the ancient Faith, the Laird of Ballinalloch in 1671 being prosecuted, along with Gordon of Carmellie and Gordon of Littlemill, for harbouring priests, and being present at Mass. By degrees, however, the lower portions of the glen gave way and conformed to the new religion, but the more remote have ever remained true to their former tenets, and have, along with the sister glen, Glenlivet, been a secure shelter for the persecuted clergy and a constant source of supply from which to refill its ranks, as will indeed be seen from the following pages.

Although it was not till the year 1610 that the new religious ideas obtained much of a footing in Inveravon, yet the period between 1638 and 1660 was the most trying time throughout Scotland for both priests and people. This was the time when the Covenanters were in the ascendant. Several of the nobles were frightened into the new religion, and many of the landed gentry had to seek an asylum in foreign countries until the storm had blown over. Towards the end of this period, however, that is, between 1653 and 1660, we learn that "the number of conversions amongst the people was so great, especially in Strathavon, the district nearest to the Highlands, and in Strathbogie, that in the former place more persons, and these of better condition, assist at the venerable Catholic mysteries than at the profane worship of the heretics."<sup>1</sup> Whilst the same author gives part of the report to Propaganda of the Prefect Rev. Mr Dunbar who in 1668 writes: "The Catholics hold their services in private houses, where sermons are preached, and the sacraments are

<sup>1</sup> Bellesheim IV. 348.

administered; in the Highlands, however, this is done with much greater freedom. Not a single church is at the disposal of the Catholics, but Mass is said and sermons are preached either in private dwellings, or in some cases, as in the Highlands and in the Hebrides, in the open fields."

At the close of the seventeenth century we have the authority of two Protestant writers that Strathavon and Glenlivet were generally or almost wholly Catholic. Sir Robert Sibbald, of Kippis, describing Speyside in 1680 says: "The people here (Strathavon) are more rude than in any other place or waterside that runneth into the Spey; generally both in this country and in Glenlivet they have fallen to Popery." A little later (1689) Major-General Mackay states that he had three ways of retreat, either towards Inverness, or down Speyside, or through Strathdown and Glenlivet. The latter he would have preferred to the other two, but says "he durst not resolve to march through an enemy's country, all Papists, with an enemy four times his number in his rear."

For many years Strathavon and Glenlivet were under the charge of the same missionaries, of whom the first to be known by name is a Mr Trayner, who came to this mission from Ireland and who probably remained here until 1694. From 1699 to 1704 Mr James Kennedy was in charge of the Strathavon and Glenlivet mission, where he died most deeply regretted after he had spent but five years, during which he laboured with great zeal and fruit. During these years Inveravon was attended to by Mr Thomas Innes, who in 1701 was sent to the Scots College, Paris, in the



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capacity of Prefect of Studies. The next priest in these districts is Mr John Gordon, who in 1716 removed from the lower parts of Glenlivet to the higher, where he would be more secure in the troublous times which followed the Jacobite Rising of 1715. He was followed by Mr Peter Fraser (1718-1720), who had been a Dragoon, but had been converted whilst lying in hospital on the Continent. Here the conduct of those who attended him caused him to examine the Catholic religion, and later to become a Catholic. After two years he went to the West Highlands. He was followed by Mr Alexander Grant (1725-1737), one of the Grants of Auchlichry, who took up his residence at Clashmore in Glenlivet. Although Mr Grant remained in the district until 1743, he was incapacitated for work about the year 1737. Ten years previous to this time Strathavon and Glenlivet became separate missions, each with a priest of its own. Father Donald Brockie (1727-1730) appears to have been the first priest with the sole charge of Strathavon, or Strathdown as it was then called. He was followed by Father Robert Grant (1730-1731) and Mr James Duffus (1731-1735). Father Robert Grant was a Benedictine monk from the Scots Monastery of Ratisbon. So also was Mr Donald Brockie, aforementioned, whilst amongst other names from Strathavon are those of Father (Kilian) Grant, who came on the mission in 1731; Father William (Erhard) Grant, from Tombreak; Father Lewis (Maurus) Grant, from Auchlichry, besides those in later years. At this early date there seems to have been a specially close connection between Ratisbon and Strathavon.

The statement that Mr Alexander Grant was incapacitated for work affords a favourable opportunity for inserting the following, hitherto unpublished, account of the life of the missionaries in the Highlands at this time. In 1732 Bishop Gordon thus writes to Propaganda:—"There is not one of the missionaries but does more than three could do with any degree of convenience. Of this, however, they do not complain; their zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls make such fatigues easy to them. But to be in real want of the most pressing necessaries of life is too much for human nature to bear. How often, since I had the charge of this mission, with the heart pierced with the deepest grief, have I known these truly Apostolic men, after travelling the whole day through snow and rain from one village to another, assisting the sick, instructing the converts, and comforting the distressed, retire at night to their miserable habitations, where they had neither fire nor meat to relieve oppressed nature. Many have the heroic charity to lose their lives under these miseries rather than abandon their charge. But this cannot be expected of all."

The next priest in succession was Mr William Grant, who would seem to have been made of very tough material. In 1736 Mr John Gordon, the Curator of Gordon, writes from Fochabers, 10th April, to Robert Farquharson, Auchriachan at the Duchess of Gordon's sight and desire, informing him that his friend Mr William Grant was complained of for having said Mass, where the minister was wont to perform worship, and had performed the Office of the Dead in the Kirk and

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Kirkyard. Auchriachan was desired to use his influence with Mr William to avoid such practices, as might make it thought that those who had the management of His Grace's concerns give countenance to such things.

In October of that year the Curator of Gordon again writes from Fochabers to Mr William Grant himself that he supposes Mr William is before this apprised of more particulars by Dr Gordon than Aberlour could inform him of; that he thinks it prudent Mr William should leave that part of the country he is complained of staying in, that Dr Gordon, or some one of esteem with the Duchess of Gordon, should let her know that he was actually gone out of it, or that some of Mr William's friends might be put upon to write to the minister to know from him if Mr William was gone out of the country or not; upon which the minister would acknowledge a plain fact, and this acknowledgment from the minister of Mr William's absence might be transcribed to Her Grace. He adds that it was his positive opinion that Mr William ought not to return, nor even be seen in that country, until he should concert with Dr James, who would not surely advise him to expose his own person, or give trouble to his friends. He concludes by telling him that he could do Mr William no further service than acquaint him of his danger, with his wife's humble respects. (The person here mentioned as Dr Gordon and as Dr James was the venerable bishop.)

Another side of this matter is presented by the letter of Bishop Gordon (27th October 1736), who

writes to Mr William Grant, in Glenlivet, that he—the Bishop—had been doing, and would do all in his power in this affair, and that they who had been hottest, were become cool, and would soon be easy, and that probably Mr William would be at liberty to act according to his own zeal and prudence before Candlemas. The Bishop exhorts Mr William to comfort himself with the thought of being so happy as to suffer in such a cause, asserting that it was his exerting so zealously his talents for the Propagation of the Faith that was the real cause of his being persecuted. He recommends to his care and zeal the poor destitute people of Glenlivet, who were in such a lamentable condition as to move the compassion of the hardest heart; he wishes that when he could, he would give some assistance to his own sorrowful people (in Strathavon), and to the people of Corgarff, who were so desirous of the spiritual food he offered them.

Again in January 1737 the good Bishop writes to Mr Grant commending him for the good he was doing, and congratulating him on his having so well adjusted the intricate case of the people of Clashmore; wishing also that Mr William might have some settled place in Strathavon, but scarcely thinking that the Duchess could be depended on; he requires that he make some excursions into Glenlivet.

Probably Bishop Gordon's forecast was correct, and the affair was hushed up. There was a great desire on the part of those in authority to leave the Catholics in the peaceful practice of their religion. But after the '45, matters altered completely, and the fear

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occasioned by the successes of Prince Charlie, together with the well-known preference of the large body of Catholics for a Stuart sovereign, made the very name of Catholic distasteful to those in high places. Accordingly Mr William Grant found himself in greater difficulties than ever. Here is the last chapter in his history as far as I have been able to trace it.

From a copy of a memorial presented in the name of Mr William Grant to the Lord Justice Clerk and Lord Minto, Commissioners of Justiciary at Aberdeen, 17th September 1750, it appears that the said Mr William Grant was apprehended in June of that year by a sergeant and two soldiers, in consequence of a misrepresentation made of him to an officer; that he had been brought before Mr Alexander Grant, of Ballindalloch, and bailed for by Mr Will. and Mr John Gordon, of Minmore; that within a limited time he would be presented to stand trial under a Tailzie of £50 sterling; that he went into Aberdeen upon Citation, in order to save the Tailzie and in hopes of mildness; that he confessed himself a priest "habite and requited" after having made an objection to the execution against him—which was not signed by the officer; and against the Court as not competent—as the Statute commits the execution of the Act, on which the Indictment was grounded, to the Privy Council of Scotland, not now in being; that verdict came in against the pannel guilty of the Indictment, and sentence was pronounced against him (17th September) to depart this kingdom before 18th October of that year, never to return under Pain of Death.

This Mr Grant very nearly went out as chaplain

in 1745. The circumstances, in the words of Bishop Geddes, were as follows :—" Mr Gordon, of Glenbucket, raised all the men he could in Glenlivet and Strathavon; and as these were mostly Catholics, it was judged proper that they should have with them a priest for their chaplain; wherefore Mr John Tyrie, who was the missionary in Glenlivet, and Mr William Grant, who was missionary in Strathavon, cast lots to determine which of them should go with the men, and which remain to have the charge of the two countries. The lot for going fell on Mr Tyrie, to the regret of Mr Grant. . . ."

The chapel which Mr Grant used was between Findron and Auchriachan, where a "bonnie bit green" — as my informant assured me—can still be seen. There too is the priest's well, the water of which runs down the hillside to the Conglass just below. The position of this chapel is thus described: it was at the north side of the service road, where the service road is crossed by the road leading from the village over the bridge of Conglass, and on the east side of this latter road.

When Mr William Grant left the district, Strathavon was under the care of Mr Geddes, afterwards Bishop Geddes, who was then at the Scalan. This arrangement went on for a few years. Mr Geddes gives the number of Easter Communicants for the year 1763 as 800 in Strathavon. At this period there were 1,100 Communicants in Glenlivet.

In 1788 Rev. Donald Stuart erected the first chapel in the then rising village of Tomintoul. It was close to the present chapel, though a little nearer the street.



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Father Stuart was a native of Strathavon, where he laboured for over twenty years.

That there really was a chapel at Auchriachan in recent times seems to be proved not only by the tradition of the district, but also by the following facts. We have indeed already heard a good deal of Mr William Grant, still, the account is very typical and therefore well worth recording. Amongst the letters of Mr Grant, who died in 1763 and had long been missionary in Strathavon, was one of Mr George Grant, of Clourie, dated 10th August 1736 and addressed to Donald Farquharson of Auchriachan, to the effect that some days before he had waited on both lairds of Grant, and spoken to them of the usage given to Mr William Grant by Mr George Grant, minister. Sir James Grant had promised to call Mr James Chapman, minister of Alves, and endeavour to put a stop to the trouble privately, by making Mr Chapman signify his (Sir James's) mind to Mr George Grant, the minister; Clourie had mentioned Mr William's services done to the Laird of Grant when in Glengarry, and what risks Mr William's father would have run for him. The laird said he was inclined to do all the service in his power to Mr William, but could not show himself in such a thing against the Duke of Gordon, in any public manner.

Of the same date is an order to John Grant, factor of Strathavon and Glenlivet, signed by the Duke of Gordon, commanding those who were building a Mass-house near Auchriachan to desist, and requiring that they pull down what they had built, the refusal of which should be at their peril, and the







THE STRATH, STRATHLAVON.

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popish priest, William Grant, will do well (it is said) to take care of himself.

The sympathy of the district seems to have been strongly in the good priest's favour, to judge from the words of the minister himself, who writes from Kirkmichael to the Curator of Gordon that the said Curator and Mr John Hamilton, when at Laggan, of Blairfindie, had not allowed him to "condescend on proofs" of the insolence of Mr William because the thing was notorious, and had promised that said priest should be removed never to return to his parish during his incumbency; but that said priest, encouraged by his popish relatives, continued to exercise his office, and therefore he, the minister, would be obliged to acquaint the proper authorities.

Other priests of this period in this district were Mr John Reid (1764-1770), Mr John Thomson (1770-1772), Mr Alexander Cameron, later coadjutor to Bishop Hay (1772-1780), Mr John Farquharson, a native of the district (1781-1783), and Mr Donald Stuart (1783-1804). He was succeeded by Mr Alex. Badenoch (1804-1808), after which we come to the long incumbency of Mr Donald Carmichael (1808-1838).

It was no doubt he who was responsible for the following entry in the Scotch Directory of 1831:— "The chapel of Tomintoul, which was built forty-two years ago, having been found too small for the accommodation of the Catholic population of Strathavon, amounting to about 600 souls, it was found necessary to erect a gallery, an undertaking which was executed with some difficulty by reason of the

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lowness of the side walls." Indeed those who know the style of building of the Highland chapels a hundred years ago, will not doubt of the difficulty of getting a gallery to fit within its long low walls. The wonder is that such a task should ever have been attempted. At best it could have been but a temporary expedient, as in 1839 "was opened the new chapel, the erection of which was rendered necessary by the threatened ruin of the former one." This chapel owes its existence to the exertions of the Rev. Donald Carmichael, its former rector, who with much labour realised the sum necessary to complete the structure.

How great this labour was may be judged from the tradition, still existing in Strathavon, that it was sad to see the poor priest's hands, so worn and marked were they with carrying the bag of copper and of silver which he had gathered during the fifteen months he was absent collecting for the building. This is doubtless in great part true, as communication was most difficult in these parts eighty years ago, and banking facilities were unheard of.

A "terrible nice man" was Mr Carmichael, who besides the chapel which he left as a monument to his energy, is still remembered as a "particular fine farmer." When he was summoned to take the administration of the temporalities of Blairs, a neighbour expressed his regret at Mr Carmichael's departure, and wished to know what sort of a farmer his successor was likely to be. "I nae doubt," said the good priest, "but that Mr Cameron will let out the mole and let in the dockin."

It must, I think, have been during the building of the present chapel, that a room at Cults at the lower end of the village—still called the priest's room—was used for Mass. It was here that Mr Carmichael before his sudden call to Blairs last officiated in Tomintoul, for he said very regretfully, as is still remembered: "Yes, indeed I had a great work in building yon chapel, yet I never had the pleasure of saying Mass in it."

Mr William Mackintosh (1838-1842) succeeded Mr Carmichael, and was in his turn succeeded by Mr James Russell (1842-1852) and Mr Henry Gall (1852-1863), who built the first Catholic school in Strathavon. When the Sisters of Mercy came to reside in Tomintoul, this school was assigned them as a Convent, and two cottages on the mission property were fitted as a school and continued to be used as such until the present up-to-date buildings were opened.

There had, of course, been schools of a sort in Strathavon previous to Mr Gall's time. For instance, Mr Charles Gordon, St Bridget, Strathavon, son of John Gordon, of Glenbucket, became a Catholic, and taught the Catholic children during Mr Carmichael's time in a school near the Bridge of Conglass. The school was either the old chapel or a building near it. But this Mr Gordon was dead a number of years before Mr Gall started the regular public school in Tomintoul.

Mr Gall is still spoken of with the greatest affection by the old people who in their childhood had hearkened to his lessons. Indeed the good priest was school-

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master as well as clergyman. It is said of him that "his heart was with the young," and that on leaving Tomintoul his parting wish was, that he might some day return and be buried with his children of Strathavon.

## GLENGAIRN

“Oh, leeze me on the rock and reel  
Frae top to tae that cleeds me bien,  
And haps me fiel and warm at e'en,  
I'll sit me down and spin and sing,  
While laigh descends the summer sun,  
Blest wi' content and milk and meal,  
Oh, leeze me on my spinning-wheel.”

SUCH is the delightful picture afforded us by Burns of the happiness and contentment of the country lass a century ago. Now surely in these days when there is so much talk of affording amusement to young people in the country districts in order to keep them at home, and to counteract the so-called attractions of the towns, it is well to take a look at the life in these country districts at the time when Burns wrote. That young people at that date were happy in their simple surroundings is clear from the very vivid impression still left in the minds of the old people, who look back with the greatest pleasure on the happiness of those early days—far more, it is to be feared, than the present generation will look back on the happiness of their present surroundings.

The truth is that the people of those days, young and old alike, were ever busy, ever usefully employed



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in providing for themselves some of the many necessities of life, which they then produced by their own industry, but which are now bought at the shops. These industrious habits undoubtedly made the time pass swiftly and pleasantly. Moreover, the competition between members of a family, and between different families in a hamlet, led to the greatest interest being taken in these home products. Mrs Agnes Muirhead, whose apt quotations are inserted here, has well said :<sup>1</sup> "To be able to spin well was an important accomplishment, and there was often a keen rivalry amongst young women as to who could spin the finest yarn and make the best linen at a 'rocking.' When lads and lasses came together in social glee, each of the latter brought to the merry meeting her spinning-wheel or 'rock.' Yule, or Christmas, seems to have been a time for holidaying and feasting amongst the spinners, but all were supposed to begin again at their accustomed work on 7th January, which was called St Distaff's Day, or Rock Day.

" 'Yule has come and Yule has gane,  
And we have feasted weel ;  
Jockie's at his flail again,  
And Jeannie at her wheel.' "

"Indeed nothing could exceed the industry of the women, both old and young, who lived in an age when carding, spinning, and bleaching were in fashion, and when the gudewife, to use the words of an early poet,

" 'Keepit close the hoose, and birrilit at the wheel.' "

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<sup>1</sup> "Scottish Home Industries," Lewis Munro, Dingwall.





INTERIOR OF A HIGHLAND COTTAGE FIFTY YEARS AGO.

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In few districts of the Highlands did the old customs survive longer than in Glengairn, but as many and very charming descriptions of them have appeared in numerous volumes it is needless to repeat them here. A few additional ones, however, are inserted in the hope that they will prove of interest.

On Candlemas Day the people all brought to church candles dipped by themselves. Each house had a mould, but the candles made in it were not considered of such good quality as those made with the hand. Besides, there was at one time a tax on candles, with the result that these moulds had to be kept out of the gauger's way. The better way of making the candles was to fasten the wicks, five or six at a time, round a stick. The tallow was then melted and placed in water—neither too hot nor too cold. The wicks suspended from the stick were dipped into the liquid tallow and then taken out, the process being repeated until the candles were the right thickness, when the thumb and forefinger were passed over them to give them a neat finish.

At this time the crusie—the old form of iron lamp—was in common use, and a “grand light it did give.” The best wick was the dry pith of the common rush, and three or four of these would often be plaited together. Train oil was most commonly used.

The “casting” of the priest's peats was a day of great importance and no little fun. The people all gathered on the day appointed and went to the priest's moss, whilst the gudewives of the glen sent of their best for the dinner—chickens and scones and abundance of milk. The peats were cut and stacked—the

lads and lassies not scrupling at times to cast a turf at one another. At the end of the day the company repaired to the house, the barn was cleared, and the party ended the day with a festive dance, His Reverence himself being there, well pleased to see the company full of mirth.

When the peats were dry, the clerk announced the fact and begged the congregation to help to bring them home. In Glengairn Willie Ritchie, the clerk, is well remembered. He was almost as venerable-looking as the old priest himself. He would let all the people out of church, and then hastening outside himself would call out with an air of the greatest solemnity: "Eisdibh! Eisdibh! Tha moine 'n t-sagairt tioram an diugh!" "Hearken ye! Hearken ye! The priest's peats are dry to-day"; which meant that the good people were to come on the morrow to help to bring the peats to the house. Towards evening, as the loads of peat were known to be coming to an end, the company would assemble once again round the house. The last load was always brought in to the sound of the pipes, refreshments were served, and again there was a "wee bit dance." On a good day as many as fifty loads of peats would be brought in.

Such meetings, however, had their due season, outside of which they dared not be held. The story is told how at a meeting in Lent the company greatly wished that "a wee dance" would end the proceedings. James Mackenzie was willing to pipe, but he had not his pipes with him. A lad was sent down to his house for them and requested them of Mrs Mackenzie. The good woman was sore perplexed. She dared not refuse



her husband the pipes, and she foresaw the wrath of Mr Mackintosh the priest if she co-operated in the breaking of Lent. She decided on a middle course, and handed the lad the pipes after removing the reeds. The company rejoiced as they saw their messenger return with the music, but their spirits fell when the chief parts were found to be missing. On the following Sunday Mr Mackintosh severely scolded the company at the meeting. "And you, James Mackenzie," said he, "who tried to play the pipes, kneel you out here in the middle."

It was the duty of the clerk—William Ritchie aforementioned—to light the candles. One of the residents in the glen, herself a very old woman now, describes how she used to love to see the two venerable old men at the altar. She would, however, sometimes indulge in a little hypocrisy at William's expense. As he came in to prepare the altar for the priest, she would pretend to be praying so fervently as not to see him. Whilst the priest was vesting, William would need to light the candles. He would look round occasionally to see whether she would not go and fetch the coal—in the days before matches. When she did not move, though indeed it was seldom that she did not, the old man was forced to fetch the coal himself. He would shortly after return and ascend the altar steps, when he commenced "to bla' and bla' and bla'," the sparks and ashes flying in all directions, until at last there was flame enough to light the candles.

At this time the roof of the chapel was open, and showed the rude beams, whilst the altar was just a rough table. Some "of the folks had kneeling boards,

but the maist of them prayed, kneeling on the clay floor."

Previous to 1828 there had been a teacher of music for the choir, but he had taught only hymns. At this date James Cumming, from Tomintoul, took the Glengairn choir in hand and taught them Masses by Rev. Mr Gordon, of Dufftown. Cumming had "a wand and a tuning fork, and I mind we used to sing the *Dies Iræ*. There were good singers in Glengairn then, but there was no instrument." At this time the chapel in Aberdeen had a great name for music, the like was not to be heard in the whole country.

Of the congregation it must be said that their simple piety cannot be too highly extolled. The life of many was very austere. Charles Durward used to fast very rigorously, and led the life of a hermit, leaving his dwelling only to do a neighbourly turn for some one, or to go to church. He was found dying in his lonely room, with a stone for his pillow. Several of the congregation had the habit of fasting every Sunday till after Mass out of reverence for the Holy Sacrifice.

But the person whose name was the most respected for sanctity was Margaret M'Gregor—Margaret of the Laggan, as she was called. She lived at the beginning of last century, and occupied a small hut near the Laggan burn. She employed her time spinning and carding, whilst on a small loom she made "gartans" which were thought to be so strong that no wear and tear would use them up. She also made ropes of rough wool, sent in by the neighbours, the ropes being used at clipping time to tie the sheep. Her shoes were made by herself of the same rough wool, and were some-





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THE MILL OF THE LAGGAN, GLENGAIRN, IN 1868.



thing akin to carpet slippers. The soles were of old cloths laid fourfold beneath the foot and sewn together with strong twine. Her gown was of blue homespun, and over it she habitually wore a grey cloak with a hood. Thus clad she was often seen walking over the hill the nine miles to the Corgarff chapel, for she seldom left her cottage save to go to Mass. Her food was of the simplest—a boiled turnip over which she sometimes cast a handful of meal for her dinner.

Margaret was well educated and had many books, whilst her piety was the admiration of the countryside; all day long she worked and prayed at intervals. She had an hour-glass which told her the time for prayer and the time for labour, and she passed from her knitting to her prayers and from her prayers to her knitting as methodically as possible. "She composed and repeated constantly Gaelic prayers. I sometimes brought her meal or other food and learned these prayers from her own lips." She wasted away without any struggle, and was attended on her deathbed by Father Forbes. She had been for a long time helpless, crippled, and deformed by rheumatism. She is buried in the old churchyard of Dalfad, the family burying-ground of the M'Gregors, from whom she was sprung.

Of the schools and scholars of early days, some quaint memories survive. In 1820 one James Mackenzie was schoolmaster. He was a native of Delnabo, in Strathavon, and was the principal actor in the following little comedy which is given in the language in which it was described. "Mackenzie was tall, well-looking, and fresh, and though he had lost his right arm, could be very severe, I insure ye. One

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day Alex. Catanach went up wi' a coont, and Mackenzie, enraged at a mistake in the coont, broke the slate over Sandy's heed and left the slate like a horse's collar round the laddie's neck. There were sixty or seventy bairns in the school at that time. Mr Mackenzie were a clever man though, if it were na' that he wanted the arm."

Festern E'en—Shrove Tuesday—was the day of the annual cock fight. As many as thirty birds would be brought in in one day. The best fighter was called the King, the second the Queen, the third the Knave. They that would not fight were called "fogie." There were no lessons that day, it was a day by itself. "What waps"—continued the party above-mentioned—"What waps the birds did gie. People came from far and near and stood in the school to see the fight. Each boy brought a bird and held it under his oxter, waiting his turn to fight."

The children all brought a peat each to the school, and they always tried to find a hard one, as on the way to the school there was often a "battle of peats." Probably this accounted for the peats being none too dry when at last they got to their proper destination, as the following would seem to show. "John Michie—him that's noo a monk at Fort Augustus, ye mind—had a school at Ardoch. He threesh in the morning, got his breakfast and went to the school. He wrought in the school a' the morning on to three o'clock. The school was always fu' of reek—jist a reeky hole. I never thought much of reek after that, we were a' well learned to the reek; it never fashed me after that." We shall have more to say about John Michie later,

but must pass now to the priests who in succession had charge of the mission of Glengairn.

“Remember me to the people of Glengairn,  
Beginning with the fiddler,”

are lines which occur in the farewell poem which Mr John Macpherson<sup>1</sup> asserts was written by Mr John Owenson, the last priest in Braemar, whilst lying in prison in Aberdeen about the year 1606. The same author remarks that the local tradition is that the fiddler referred to was the priest of Glengairn, who went about as a strolling musician. This device was certainly practised in other parts, as it is well known in the Dumfries district that the priest—Mr Francis Maxwell—went about the streets of that town in the year 1706 playing the fiddle in order to have an opportunity of informing Catholics where Mass would be celebrated.

In 1704 a list of “Papists, Apostates (to Popery!), Popish priests, etc., was drawn up by the minister of the united parishes of Glenmuick, Tullich, and Glengarden,” from which we learn that “Calam Grierson, *alias* M’Gregor, of Baladar (Ballater), Papist, frequently receives popish priests such as Mr Robert Seaton, . . . ; Mr John Innes, Jesuite; Mr Ramsay, *alias* Strachane . . . ; — Gordon, seminary priest, and Walter Innes, brother to Charles Innes, of Drumgask, Jesuite. The said Calam was leatly building a chapel for them, and erected a very high crucifix on a little hill near his house, to be adored by all the neighbourhood. He always keeps publick Mass and popish conventicles in his house and is such

<sup>1</sup> “Catholicity in Glengairn,” *St Andrew’s Cross*.

trafacter that few or no Protestants that become his tenants, or servants, escape without being preverted by him." This good worthy was also accused of mimicking the Protestant minister at his preaching—an offence which seems to have been taken more seriously than was probably justifiable. It was Mr Forsythe, the priest of Braemar, who seems to have reconciled Calam to the Church.

In this year (1704), according to the Directory of 1853, the above-mentioned Mr Innes was in charge of the mission of Glengairn. He was a cadet of the Balnacraig family, and his reception into the Church is thus described by Father Charles Farquharson:—"Mr John Innes, missionary in Glengairn, whom I knew well, was a schoolmaster in the south, beyond Edinburgh. He was moved with great indignation, hearing that a great man there sent for a priest out of Edinburgh, and came to the great man's house to expostulate with the priest, since he durst not scold the sick. 'I wonder,' said he, 'how you priests come and delude people when they lose their judgment.' 'Go immediately to his room,' replied the priest, 'and examine well whether he be in his sound judgment, and see convert him back again.' This the other did not think proper to do, seeing he was told the gentleman was as sound in judgment as ever he was. They spoke a great deal together. Mr Innes asked the loan of a book; was sent afterwards to the province of Champagne, became a Jesuit, and afterwards missionary in Glengairn, where he helped and converted many." After five years in Glengairn, he retired to the Scots College, Paris, where he became Superior.



Mr Innes was succeeded by Mr Gregor M'Gregor, of the family of Ardoch and Dalfad in Glengairn, and son of the afore-mentioned Calam. Being not only a native of the glen, but also a brother of the proprietor, he acquired a greater influence in the country than any of his predecessors. He erected a chapel in the wood of Dalfad and also a dwelling-house for himself at a convenient distance. He, however, did not remain long in Glengairn, having returned to his monastery shortly after the unsuccessful Rising of 1715, though he was again on the mission in 1724 to 1728, when he was in Glengarry. In June 1730 he again returned to his monastery.

To him succeeded Father Dunbar, S.J., who continued as missionary in Glengairn till 1734, when he was recalled by his superiors to the Continent, on account of his having shown "some premonitory symptoms of aberration of intellect."

His place was supplied by Rev. Alexander Gordon of the Glencat family, near Aboyne, who continued to discharge his duties with great zeal and activity till the rising of the Jacobite party in 1745, when he attached himself, along with many of his flock, to the fortunes of Prince Charles Stuart. He was present at the disastrous defeat of Culloden, and was taken prisoner and lodged in the jail of Inverness, where he died about three weeks after—a martyr, without doubt, to the misery and squalor which were the inseparable attendants of the dungeons used in those times as jails in Scotland.

In consequence of the fierce persecution which occurred in Braemar after 1745, Mr Charles Farquharson



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came to reside in Glengairn and had both these parishes under his charge. He continued to serve these missions with great energy and success till 1781, when he retired to Braemar, where he died in 1799.

The last two priests with whom we have to deal are Rev. Ranald Macdonell, who had spent but two years in the district when he was transferred to Glengarry, and Rev. Lachlan Mackintosh—the Apostle of Glengairn—who here spent no less than sixty-four years. This remarkable priest was born in Braemar in 1753. He was admitted to the seminary of Scalán 18th July 1770, and in the November of that year he was sent to the Scots College, Valladolid. He there completed his studies and was ordained priest at Segovia by the bishop of that city in February 1782.

One incident of note distinguished his scholastic career. He was at college when the Duke of Wellington passed through Valladolid and slept a night at Boecillo, the country house of the college. The Duke offered a commission to any of the students if they would join the British Army. This temptation proved too strong for young Lachlan, who changed the college uniform for that of His Majesty George III. Not long after, however, he was attacked by fever, and as he lay at death's door, the life which he had forsaken at college recurred to him. He vowed that if he recovered, he would return to college; he did recover, and in fulfilment of his vow returned immediately to Valladolid, where his soldier's uniform was long preserved.

After his ordination he returned to Scotland and took charge of the united missions of Glengairn, Corgarff, and

Balmoral. He erected at Clashendrich a commodious chapel, not sparing even his own hands in the building of it. This chapel was still used by the congregation in 1853. He also raised funds sufficient to enable him to build a neat and comfortable house for the clergyman. For sixty-four years this indefatigable missionary laboured with the greatest zeal, and died in 1846 at the patriarchal age of ninety-three. He is interred in the ancient burying-ground at Foot of Gairn, and over his grave his congregation have raised a tombstone with an elegant Latin inscription to perpetuate the memory of a devoted clergyman, who spent more than half a century in administering the consolations of religion to a flock thinly scattered over one of the wildest and most inaccessible districts of Scotland. Such an instance of devotedness to the sacred duties of his calling, for such a length of time, in circumstances of much poverty, labour, and fatigue, is seldom met with.

The truth of the above remark regarding the inclemency of the district may be judged from the fact that at a somewhat later period it happened on two occasions that at the Mass on Christmas Day, when every possible effort would have been made by the really earnest parishioners, only the server was able to be present with the priest at Mass. The snow was indeed waist high, and the nearest of the congregation would have a mile at least to walk.

Like many another, Father Lachlan was unaware when old age had fairly incapacitated him for work, and resented not a little that Father Lamont should endeavour to assist him. One day the Sunday Mass

was at Corgarff, some nine miles across a steep hill, and Mr Lamont, then only home for a while from College, accompanied Father Lachlan. The aged priest rode his trusted "sheltie," and urged his companion to take a turn on the beast and so rest himself. The latter, however, preferred to walk rather than trust his limbs to the ancient roadster. Arrived at the chapel they found that the congregation had not yet assembled and that they must needs wait. Mr Lamont took the opportunity to make his confession: "And for your penance," said Father Lachlan, "you may ride back the whole way on my bit sheltie."

All his life through Father Lachlan was "the life of company," and no doubt fully appreciated the following. He used often to catechise his people, the elder and the younger alike. One day he asked an elderly young lady, whom people misjudged to be wanting in brains, "May Cameron, what is matrimony?" No answer; but the party to whom the question was addressed hung down her head and seemed to feel the question "awful sair"—she had never had an offer of matrimony. "Come, come, May," said the priest, "what is matrimony?" Again no answer. Then the priest became annoyed, and feared that others might also refuse to answer, so he repeated: "Come now, May, what is matrimony?" The head was not raised, but from under the large straw hat came the unexpected answer: "Pheu, pheu, you and your matrimony; many a twa you've putten together, and t'were better they'd never seen other."

Once in each month Father Lachlan used to say the Sunday Mass at Corgarff, where he had himself

built the chapel. Great was often his difficulty in crossing the Glasghoil, the long wild hill which separated it from Glengairn. In better weather it was the custom for the greater part of the Glengairn folk to walk across with him, and on these occasions they would recite the rosary as they went. An old parishioner, Luis Mackenzie, was telling this one day to one less acquainted with the district, who remarked what a beautiful custom that was. "Ah weel, sir," said old Luis, "wi' a' the lads and lassies, it was often a gey roch rosary."

The Catholics of Corgarff, who in 1794 numbered over one hundred, had long formed a numerous congregation by themselves, and had resident priests amongst them, of whom the best remembered is Father M'Leod, *alias* M'Hardy. He proved himself a great support to the Catholics in Corgarff during very trying times, and the people were greatly aggrieved when he was removed from their midst. He was a native of Corgarff, having been born at Ordachóy, a farm still in the possession of M'Hardies, descendants of his brother's family. Father M'Leod was held in great veneration by the Corgarff and Strathdon people, and being one of themselves he was protected and shielded by both Catholics and Protestants alike, and his hiding-places were never divulged. It was, unfortunately, otherwise with his successor, who was a stranger to the people and to the district, and was therefore unable to withstand in safety the frequent military searches made for him.

Near Corgarff is another ancient graveyard with the remains of a church; it was dedicated to St Machar. Close by is also a holy well. Round the

above-mentioned chapel at Dalfad there is also a burial-ground, in which at least one priest is interred, but who he was is not known. Other tombstones bear the name Grierson—M'Gregor being at that time a proscribed name—whilst others have only an initial. The favourite burial-place, however, has always been St Mungo's, at Foot of Gairn, where the walls of the old pre-Reformation church are still standing.

My informant on many of the above incidents was our old friend John Michie, who, though he protested that "he never had a memory to carry a tale," yet was able to give most interesting details of the life in Glengairn of old. Born in 1816, John Michie had lived seventy-four years in the glen, and even at that age he was able to start a new life as a lay brother at Fort Augustus, where he yet lives.<sup>1</sup> In childhood he met with an accident, which deprived him of the use of one arm, but his great ingenuity made the other do service for two. Indeed, despite the assertion that his school of old was "fu' of reek," he was known in his lay-brother days to have eighteen fires lit and brightly burning before six o'clock in the morning.

In his earlier days he had been a shepherd, and would speak with pride of the fine widders which Braemar then produced. At one time there were two markets in September, to which sheep would be brought even from Badenoch, whilst one grazing alone in Braemar yielded nine hundred of the finest widders. Sometimes he would take his flock to Edinburgh—all the way

<sup>1</sup> On 14th March 1909 he celebrated his ninety-third birthday. Though totally blind, he is still in good health, and with the use of a stick finds his way to church at 5.30 each morning for Mass and Holy Communion.

by road—and would be two weeks on the journey, sleeping each night in the open with his plaid wrapped about him alongside of his flock. “That was the time,” he would say, “before there was much word about deer—and I dinna think the deer have done much good.” To the remark “At that time there must have been many an honest man travelling home by road, but I fear those whom one meets to-day are not of that sort,” he replied: “Nah, nah! ye will not often get an honest man walking the road nowadays—*the honest man cannot afford it*”—words which suggest many philosophic deductions.

Besides being shepherd, he was the best scholar in the glen, and for some time acted schoolmaster, as already mentioned. Even when old age had made him blind, he would delight to work out problems in his head, problems, too, which were hard enough even for one who had taken high honours in mathematics at Cambridge. Having been all his life of most temperate habits, it seemed strange that he had not put together a little money; but this was easily explained by the fact that all his life through he had been charitable far beyond his means. His little cottage was open to every passing wayfarer, to whom he never refused a meal and a night’s lodging, so that the slender means which barely sufficed for himself were spun out to afford a hospitality which many a large farmer would not dare to undertake. When at last he was advised to find a home where he would be cared for in his old age he decided to enter at Fort Augustus as a lay brother. Having lived so long in the glen where he was born, he left it in the



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old pastoral fashion, and with his plaid over his shoulder started to walk across the hills he knew so well, into a district not less than sixty miles away, and reached Fort Augustus safely in three days.

His friends in Glengairn had expected that he would say good-bye to each one, but the old man feared, no doubt, that this would be too much for his kind old heart, so he left very early one morning without bidding adieu to any one. He was, however, seen mounting the hill which the road ascends, and on reaching the summit turned round to have a last look at the Glengairn of his childhood, then kneeling awhile he prayed a blessing on his old home. When word passed through the district that John Michie was away, and that he had thus bid them adieu, there was many a tear seen rolling down the faces of those who had so long known him. How closely his interests were interwoven with the Catholic life of Glengairn is clear from the fact that while his maternal grandmot. was sister to Father Lachlan, his grandmother on his father's side was long housekeeper to Father Charles Farquharson. He had, moreover, himself fulfilled the duties of clerk and sacristan for well-nigh fifty years.

He would speak of the Glengairn of his day as of a thing of the past; and so indeed it is. The pretty little chapel built as recently as 1868 is now without a Catholic congregation, and has been sold on the understanding that it will be taken down. How great the tide of emigration from this glen has been, is seen from the fact that at a recent meeting in



St. Mary's, Glengairn



SAINT MARY'S, CANDACRAIG, GLENGAIRN.

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Australia one of the company, seeing such a number of Gairnside folk on their way to the meeting, asked in sport: "Why, lads, where is it that we are going; is it to Feille Machà?" For many, many generations Feille Machà has been celebrated round St Mungo's cemetery at Foot of Gairn, and it is to be hoped that it may yet be celebrated for many generations in distant lands, whose sons and daughters may remember with pleasure the Glengairn from which they are sprung.

## BRAEMAR

### I

“Land of the mountain and the flood,  
Where the pine of the forest for ages hath stood ;  
Where the eagle comes forth on the wings of the storm,  
And her young ones are rocked on the high Cairngorm.”

“It is generally, and very correctly said, that there are three primary objects which form the romantic beauty of a district, and which must necessarily enter into the composition of every picturesque landscape. These are hill, water, and wood ; and where one of them is absent, the scenery is incomplete and loses much of its charm. There is abundance of all three in Braemar, very much in keeping with one another, and, as might be expected, upon a large scale. In fact it can boast of having the highest hills, the purest water, and the finest pine forest in Britain.

“Of course in this enumeration of the different elements of romantic scenery, the presence of the habitations of mankind, either congregated or scattered, is taken for granted. Without this, the finest landscape would lose its greatest charm—the grandest scenery would, after all, be but a sublime desert—the temple of nature itself would feel still and lonely to the worshippers.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “Braemar and Balmoral,” Rev. James Crombie.

Indeed it is probable that no other district of Scotland is so rich in natural beauty and in historic sites, for it was the beauty of the situation and of the surrounding scenery which led the late Queen Victoria to make it her favourite residence, whilst the names of Monaltrie, Abergeldie, Invercauld, and Inverey, are full of memories of some of the most interesting events in Scottish history. When to this is added that the old Faith has held unbroken sway in the district, and that to this day it is replete with traditions of the priests and of the Catholic people of bygone days, one feels that it is indeed a difficult task to do justice to the traditions and to the history of the Braes of Mar.

Of the historic sites mentioned above, Monaltrie came into the possession of the Farquharsons about 1568. In 1645 Donald Farquharson, a Royalist and a follower of Montrose, was slain in Aberdeen, leaving behind him the reputation of being one of the gallantest captains in Scotland. A century later Francis Farquharson—the Baron Ban—followed Prince Charlie and suffered and sacrificed much in consequence. He was included in the Act of Attainder of May 1746, and was excluded from the benefits of the Act of Indemnity passed in the following year. He was sometime a prisoner in England, and was very near losing his head. He was indeed condemned to death, but obtained a pardon, and after a while the restoration of his property, which had been forfeited, on payment of a very heavy fine.

Abergeldie is an old castle on the south bank of the Dee, noted, not for its size or architectural features,

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but rather for its antiquity and the associations old and new that have gathered round it. For fully four centuries the lands of Abergeldie have been held by Gordons, ancestors of the present owner, for it was in the time of James III. that they were granted to Alexander Gordon, a kinsman of the Earl of Huntly. The Laird of Abergeldie and his son fought at the battle of Glenlivet in 1594, Abergeldie's son being amongst the slain. The lands and Castle of Knock—a fine old castle four miles further down the Dee—were subsequently added to the Abergeldie possessions when the Gordons of Knock came to an end through their feud with the Forbeses. Gordon of Abergeldie took some part in the civil war towards the end of the reign of Charles I., and his lands, in common with other parts of Deeside, were plundered by Argyle's men in 1644. After the Revolution Abergeldie was garrisoned by Government troops under General Mackay, but the clansmen of the Braes of Mar besieged the garrison so tightly that the General himself was obliged to turn aside next summer and come to their assistance. He was so exasperated by the opposition which he encountered that he burned twelve miles of the country and at least 1,400 houses.

Close to Abergeldie Castle a light iron suspension bridge was thrown across the Dee about ten years ago. Previously the river had been crossed by a contrivance locally known as "the cradle"—a cage suspended from pulley-like wheels, which ran on two stout ropes attached to wooden pillars on the north and south banks. The weight of the cage and passengers carried them a little beyond the middle







INVERCAULD HOUSE. THE HIGHLAND GAMES.

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of the river, after which the passenger completed the journey by pulling on the ropes with his hands. "The cradle" was in operation for a very long time, and seventy or eighty years ago a bride and bridegroom were drowned by the breaking of the rope—which some thought had been cut or tampered with.

Invercauld House has been for centuries the residence of a chieftain of the Clan Farquharson, and occupies a magnificent position on the banks of the Dee—a position which much surpasses even that of Balmoral. Parts of the house are of great age, but the larger portion is of more recent date. In the autumn of 1715 the Earl of Mar took up his quarters in Invercauld, and a tablet in the wall of the Invercauld Arms commemorates the raising of the Standard there. A good idea of the "Local Government" at Invercauld less than a century ago is given in Mr Coutts's "Dictionary of Deeside," from which much of the above has been taken. The economy of the place then included the home farm at Keiloch, hardly a mile distant, with a large stock of dairy cows and other cattle, besides a number of Highland cattle; a lime-kiln, where lime was prepared both for building purposes and for top-dressing the lands; a vegetable and flower garden, as well as a nursery for raising seedling forest trees and rearing them till fit to be planted out; a sawmill for cutting up grown timber; a flock of sheep pasturing in the meadows, and ten or a dozen Highland ponies, generally running about the parks and stabled only for a few months in winter; a slaughter-house, where fattened victims from the flock and herd were prepared for the larder and the cook; a building for smoking

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and curing venison hams to be used outside the season when deer are fit to be killed; baking and brewing departments, and a girnal or store for oatmeal, which was supplied by the Cromar tenants in part payment of their rent, and sold out (a shade below Braemar rates) to the servants and workers on the estate, many of whom, both men and women, might have been seen on a Saturday (the day when the girnal was open) carrying home a firloot or more of meal on their shoulders. The system was one which employed numerous servants and workers, most of whom had crofts added to their cottages, and some, who were not otherwise sufficiently provided for, were allowed the use of a bit of the Keiloch home farm.

Of Inverey Castle nothing but the ruins now remain, situated about five miles from Braemar. Concerning Inverey and the lands, Mr John Grant in his "Legends of the Braes of Mar," has much to tell, and the following are selected, though indeed the whole of the little book forms most interesting reading.

William Farquharson, of Inverey, followed his brave cousin Donald Og (Monaltrie) from the beginning of Montrose's campaign, and at the death of Donald, he received his sword from the Great Montrose, and with the claymore, the colonelcy of the Braw Lads of Braes of Mar. Inverey seems to have left Montrose before the fatal battle of Philiphaugh. Later, this sword was carried on the coffins of all the Invereys to the grave, but it is not known what became of it afterwards. John of Inverey—the Black Colonel—commanded the men of Mar under Dundee. It was in the Black Colonel's day that the incident occurred which was

the origin of the now popular dance, the Reel of Tullich. It seems that the minister of the Kirk of Tullich one very cold Sunday morning preferred to stay within the doors of his warm manse rather than face the biting cold of the road to the kirk, and the no less distressing temperature of the kirk itself. Meantime, the parishioners, to the number of some scores, had assembled, and finding the waiting in the cold troublesome to their feet, and to their hands as well, they scrupled not to warm them by beating time on the floor and clapping their hands into the bargain. The lads and lassies began to chaff, and from words it came to action, so that the auld kirk was soon the scene of a merry meeting. A "stockingful of placks<sup>1</sup> and bodles"<sup>2</sup> was next collected, and one, two, three, and four jines<sup>3</sup> followed in quick succession. The "gude ale" gave the company spirit, and the sitting still (in the Kirk of Spital of Glenshee there were no seats at that time, perhaps neither were there at Tullich) was quickly changed to a merry dance, even the fiddler being soon at his work; indeed as the morning wore on, "inspired, excited, in a frenzy, the fiddler who officiated improvised the reel of Tullich." It is said "that a cobbler ascended the pulpit and (with shameless sarcasm) held forth with an energy worthy of Knox. Two weavers and three tailors installed themselves as elders, and some couples of pretended defaulters were immediately sessioned; meantime, the blacksmith had taken the precentor's desk and was trolling forth a gude and godly ballad."

Peter, the fourth of Inverey, succeeded his father,

<sup>1</sup> Sixpence Scots.

<sup>2</sup> Twopence Scots.

<sup>3</sup> Drinks.

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the Black Colonel, about 1700. He was present at Sheriffmuir, where he commanded the Lads of Mar, in whose midst the Standard had been unfurled, 6th September 1715. Mr Grant points out the strange omission of any mention of the men of Mar in the ditty written on that occasion, though adapted to the very tune of "The Braes of Mar." The words of the original went:—

"The bra' lads o' the Braes o' Mar,  
The bra' lads o' the Braes o' Mar,  
The bra' lads o' the Braes o' Mar,  
Wha love to court on Sunday."

The ditty of 1715 runs thus:—

"The standard on the Braes of Mar  
Is up and streaming rarely,  
The gathering pipe on Lochnagar  
Is sounding lang an' sairly.  
The Highland men,  
Frae hill and glen,  
In martial hue,  
Wi' bonnets blue,  
Wi' belted plaids  
An' burnished blades,  
Are coming late and early.

"Wha wadna' join our noble chief,  
The Drummond and Glengarry,  
Macgregor, Murray, Rollo, Keith,  
Panmure and gallant Harry?  
Macdonald's men,  
Clan Ronald's men,  
Mackenzie's men,  
Macgillivray's men,  
Strathallan's men,  
The Lowlan' men  
Of Callender and Airly.

“Fy! Donald, up, an’ let’s awa’,  
 We canna’ longer parley,  
 When Jamie’s back is at the wa’,  
 The lad we love sae dearly.  
 We’ll go—we’ll go,  
 An’ seek the foe,  
 An’ fling the plaid,  
 An’ swing the blade,  
 An’ forward dash  
 An’ hack and slash,  
 And fleg the German carlie.”

Who the composer of this ditty was is not known, but the writer of the more famous account of the battle of Sheriffmuir was Rev. Murdoch M’Lennan, minister of Crathie (and Braemar). It runs thus:—

“There’s some say that we wan,  
 And some say that they wan,  
 And some say that nane wan at a’ man ;  
 But one thing I’m sure,  
 That at Shirra-muir  
 A battle there was, that I saw, man.  
 And we ran, and they ran,  
 And they ran, and we ran,  
 But Florence<sup>1</sup> ran fastest of a’ man.”

The battle of Sheriffmuir was a sadly mismanaged affair, in the course of which one old Royalist who had fought at Killiecrankie exclaimed: “Oh for one hour of Dundee!” But the end of the Rising, the capitulation at Preston, was a long way worse.

About the year 1700 lived Gilleasbuig Urrasach (Gillespie the proud), a worthy whose history is a good sample of its kind. He would never stir beyond the

<sup>1</sup> Florence was the name of the Marquis of Huntly’s horse.



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threshold without being armed to the teeth, and besides the ordinary complement of gun, broadsword, dirk, targe, a pair of pistols, and a skiandubh stuck in at the garter of each hose, he carried one in the sleeve of each arm. This was to prevent surprise in whatever position or state the enemy might find him, and to assure an arm offensive, even when fallen, or taken at close quarters unexpectedly by a foe of greater personal strength.

About this time eight Lochaber men, under the command of a remarkably bold, strong, and active leader, drove away the cattle of Glen Clunie, the Baddoch, Gleney, Glenconnie, and Glen Dee in the night time. As it was summer, the flocks and herds were as usual in the glens. The Braemar men rose *en masse*. Invercauld was chosen their captain. He selected from those assembled thirty of the flower of Braemar, among whom, of course, was Gillespie the proud. That night they set out, passed through Glentilt, and next day entered Lochaber. A hundred miles of the roughest road was play to the men of those days. Mounting a steep hill, they met an old man whose hoary head and long beard gave him a most venerable appearance. Like every other one they had seen, he would give them no intelligence on the subject of their expedition. Resting there, however, to refresh themselves, and making him partake of such refreshment as they had, after many promises of secrecy, they prevailed on him to speak, and were informed that their cattle lay concealed in a secluded little glen somewhat further on, and that the robbers would be found in a little shieling near by. Making a short circuit, they



were enabled to come on the place unperceived, and after stationing one or two men to care for the cattle, the rest managed to surround the shieling; not, however, before one of the robbers, who had been at the door, made his escape. A party charged the door with loaded guns, and ordered those within to come out, threatening otherwise to fire. At the third summons the leader told them to withdraw a short space, and on their complying, stepped out to the green, as wild and handsome a giant as man could wish to see. "It would be useless," said he, "for me with eight men only to contend with you, but"—and he raised himself proudly—"I defy any single man of you to combat, and all of you one after another. Now then, for the honour of Mar!" There were few present, though, indeed, all were the bravest of men, who seemed desirous of measuring their prowess with the terrible Lochaber man. He had thrice to repeat his challenge. At length Gillespie Urrasach stepped forward. There was a desperate struggle. The wonderful activity of Gillespie prevailed, and the Kern was felled to the ground. After this, the shieling was forced, and all those found within put to death. By morning the Mar men had cleared Glentilt, homeward bound with their recovered cattle.<sup>1</sup>

On another occasion it was with sacred things that Gillesbuig got into trouble. He persuaded some old wives that the priest had delegated him to hear their confessions, and so frightened the first would-be penitent that she ran out wringing her hands. Gillespie fell back in the chair ready to die of laughter, when

<sup>1</sup> "Legends of the Braes of Mar," p. 148.

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the priest arrived on the spot. Next Sunday he was excommunicated for his frolic, and long remained subjected to the severest penance.

We are told that at the end of his wild life, he confessed to one great remorse—that his dirk which had killed nineteen had not managed to make the number twenty—not counting the victims of his gun, sword, and pistol. In his last moments he was attended by the priest, who probably found that many of his deeds of blood were in self-defence, or in the protection of his master's property, in which he gained a great name for himself.

It was foretold of a cousin of his, Donald Dubh Epiteach, that he would hang himself with his own garters. The story is inserted here as showing how the Sunday Mass even at this date was possible in the two wildest districts of Scotland, the Braes of Lochaber and of Mar, from the former of which the fortune-teller hailed.

Donald Dubh Epiteach (Black Donald, the Egyptian), about the year 1740, was in Farquharson of Allancuaich's following, and accompanied his master on a visit he paid to some acquaintance in Lochaber. When there he was a good deal annoyed by the fixed regard of an old crone in the house, and therefore walked out.

"Ah!" exclaimed she, with a deep sigh, as he disappeared, "a pretty man, a pretty man! Pity he is destined to such an end!"

"And what may that be, pray?" asked Allancuaich. After insisting awhile, he learned that Donald Dubh would hang himself in his own garters. He mused

awhile over this prediction, and then requested to know whether this doom might be averted from his trusted retainer. "Well," replied the crone in a musing way, "it might—it might. Suppose he were to attend Mass regularly every Sunday; ah well, but what matters that to us: he is none of our people."

And nothing more could be extracted from the fortune-teller. What he had learned, the laird did not fail to communicate to his follower. So deep an impression did this make upon Donald, that he never failed to attend Mass regularly every Sunday during his lifetime, except on one occasion. On the Sunday referred to, the Dee was so swollen with rain that no boat could be "stinged" across. The Epiteach, on worship intent, with others in his neighbourhood, all ignorant of the fact, came down to the ferry, which was then as now at the head of the river, about half a mile above Auchindryne. Finding there could be no passage effected, he sat down disconsolate on the bank, and a feeling of unaccountable depression came over him, so that he could not be comforted.

"Bless me!" exclaimed a lad present—Allancuaich's herd—who coveted Donald Dubh's garters, "don't make such a fuss about a Mass. I'll sell you my right and title in the benefit of it for your garters."<sup>1</sup>

Without a word Donald untied and threw them to the lad. Later in the day, when they were calling the servants about Allancuaich to dinner, it was

<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that the garters of those days were long knitted strips of wool each three feet and more in length.

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found that the herd had hanged himself in one of the byres with the garters he had coveted. And the doom of the weird woman was held to have been averted from Black Donald.<sup>1</sup>

The country where the Jacobite Standard was raised in 1715 was not slow to "come out" in '45. Invercauld, now an old man with little influence, and Lord Braco, a new arrival in the district, favoured the established Government, but all the rest of the lairds with all their following were Jacobite, the foremost being Francis Farquharson of Monaltrie and James Farquharson of Balmoral. Francis Farquharson, as has been already mentioned, narrowly escaped execution, whilst James, of Balmoral, was severely wounded at Falkirk. In preparation for that battle, Balmoral drew up his men in the form of a wedge, thus—he marched at their head, two men followed in the second rank, three in the third, and so on to the rear. "Now, my lads," said he, "march in silence. Fire not a shot till you can discern the colour of the horses' eyes, then give one volley altogether; throw down your guns and rush upon them, cut the horses' bridles, and we will then deal with the men."

As they advanced a bullet hit Balmoral in the shoulder. "Four men," cried his henchman, "to carry our wounded chief to the rear!" "Never!" cried Balmoral; "four men to carry your chief at the head of his children into the thickest of the fight."

After the suppression of the Rising the Braes of Mar suffered along with the other Jacobite centres.

<sup>1</sup> "Legends of the Braes of Mar," p. 173.



MAR LODGE IN 1775.

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In 1748 the Government leased the old Castle of Braemar, and completely rebuilt it, placing therein a garrison to keep the clans under control, and later to keep down illicit smuggling. It was in front of the Castle of Braemar that the Highland Meeting was annually held, one great feature of the games being the race to the top of Craig Choinnich, shown on the right of the illustration. This race, said to have been instituted by Malcolm Canmore, was discontinued at the late Queen's request. The gathering is now held in the Princess Park, the gift of the Duke of Fife, who still continues the same kind and generous treatment which has distinguished his ancestors, and of which an excellent example is given in the following chapter. The new site of the Braemar gathering is still within a few hundred yards of the spot where the Standard of the Jacobites was raised in 1715; but each year, as the gathering is favoured by the presence of the Royal residents in the neighbourhood, it ever grows more and more true that no people in Britain are more devoted to the Crown and to the Royal family than those of the Bra' Braes of Mar.



## BRAEMAR

### II

To begin our sketch of the church of Braemar at the Reformation itself, the priest at that time was Rev. John Owen, or Owenson, a very pious man and beloved by his people. During the first storm of persecution he remained amongst his people and encouraged them by his presence and example to adhere steadfastly to their religion. He was assaulted and dragged from the altar by a hired band of soldiers, who conveyed him to Aberdeen jail; but on his way there he told them that the person who had assaulted him that day had seriously offended God, and he foretold that before a day and a year would pass, the hand which had struck him would rot and would be cut off from the shoulder. That this prophecy came true is amply proved by the writings of the times; nor did any of the people of Braemar, whether Catholic or Protestant, in the least doubt it.

On obtaining his release from prison Father Owenson immediately returned to Braemar and resumed his priestly duties under very trying circumstances.

After Father Owenson's time the priests were apprehended by the military, and those who escaped had to go into hiding or leave the neighbourhood, and the



HOLY WELL OF SAINT MARY, INVEREY.

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districts of Braemar, Glengairn, and Strathavon were privately attended to by a few Jesuit priests dressed in disguise. One of these, a Father E. Lindsay, used to visit Braemar periodically dressed as a shepherd, playing on a flute, and by this means he was able to meet the Catholics and arrange for the necessary services being held before his departure from the district. Father Lindsay died at Kirkconnell about 1664, aged eighty-eight years.

After this came the Father Gilbert Blackhall, a pious and holy man, who in 1637 resided privately at Aboyne Castle, and for some time was living with Donald Farquharson in Braemar and attended to the wants of the Catholics there and at Crathie. He wrote a most interesting account of his travels and experiences while resident in Deeside, which was published by the Spalding Club of Aberdeen. Father Blackhall died in Paris about 1670.

Father Forsyth was the first resident priest in Braemar after the Reformation. He came to the mission about 1671; his district included both Braemar and Glengairn. He was apprehended and imprisoned for a time, but on obtaining his liberty he returned and laboured with great zeal until about 1701. It is he who figures so largely in the account of the conversion of Lewis Farquharson, given by his son Father Charles Farquharson. Both on account of the interest of the narrative and of the great merit of the writer the passage is here given in full.

“William Farquharson headed the Braemar men, and went abroad with Montrose, leaving his son John his heir to the estate of Inverey. This John resolved,

being son to the elder brother, to make a minister of Lewis, my father, give him a kirk, and seize on his small estates as his own. He sends him therefore to the College of Aberdeen. Having ended his studies, he became helper to the minister settled at Crathie. After awhile he gives him a letter to get a kirk. His professor, on reading Inverey's letter, told him to write a book against the Papists, and then he would get a kirk. This meritorious book was finished, and my father, before he printed his book, reflected thus:—

“‘I write nothing here against the Papists, but what I found in our best authors. Yet I have a scruple about some things that are said and often printed against them. Papists have surely committed many bad things; yet I do not find sufficiently proven that these bad things proceeded from principle. There is a priest coming to this country in the night, and if he objected that we calumniate them, I would think great shame!’ He goes directly, finds at Invercauld some of Mr John Owenson's books of controversy, and blots out of his own manuscripts, accounts of the Irish and French massacres, together with many other calumnies. He then finds his book too little; ‘but,’ says he, ‘I'll answer this popish book till my book will be big enough for the press.’ The first argument of the Catholic book was, that Jesus Christ settled an infallible church upon earth. ‘Oh, oh!’ said he, ‘this is the Achilles of the Papists; if they prove this, they will make us all rebels to God and His Church. I must answer this, or I'll do nothing. If they prove this article alone, they will then not need to prove any other article of their religion!’ He wrote an answer,

compared the Catholic argument, and found his answer obscure and the Catholic argument much easier to be understood by the reader of both, threw it away, and wrote another. He found this insufficient. He began to pare and study, but the more he studied, the more difficulty he saw in answering it. Then he sought all the books of his own persuasion, thinking he would undoubtedly find a clear answer to the argument; but was much surprised they all wrote very little concerning it. He, in his surprise, compared them to a bird flying over a river, and tasting a little of the water in passing quickly to land. 'What!' said he; 'no answer to this chief argument of the Papists, but jeering, bantering, and scolding? Good God!' says he, 'Christ's builds a Church, the gates of hell shall never prevail against it; He'll be with her to the world's end! How can I believe that all these texts are false, and be a Christian? With the help of God I'll be at the bottom of this. I read these texts more than twenty times, and only now find their strength when put together and well considered.' He goes down to Aberdeen; while the young ministers propose their questions, he proposes his. 'What answer,' says he, 'will I give the Papists to this argument?' The learned Professor answers thus: 'Go home, Lewis,' says he, 'write your book the best way you can, and you'll get a kirk; don't dive deep into controversy, otherwise you'll go straight to Popery!' This answer struck his scholar dumb; he replied nothing, but going home, said within himself: 'What is this? If I dive deep into controversy I'll go straight to Popery? If we have the truth on our side, the more I dive into it,



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the better I see it ; but it seems he sees it on the side of Popery. But if I see it on that side, I will embrace it ; my salvation depends on believing and doing what Christ taught.' Full of this thought at his coming home, he reads the whole Catholic book. His reflection was : ' Good God ! we bragged we were forced to separate from the Church of Rome because she denied clear texts of Scripture—had nothing to say for herself but the authority of her Church. I'm much afraid we are all wrong.'

"As the author of that book cited another book for some article that could not be found either at Invercauld or at Crathie, he sent for Donald Roy M'Callum, and said : ' I want a word with your priest that comes to visit you with moonlight ! ' Donald denied at first that any came to him. But my father told him he knew a priest came to visit him as well as himself. Donald then owned, and begged he would not raise a persecution against him. ' No, Donald,' said my father, ' I'll do him no manner of harm.' Donald told this to Mr Forsey as a piece of news, when he came. ' Oh, man,' says Mr Forsey, ' did you tell him that I frequented your house ? ' Donald said : ' I thought to deny it, but as he told me with some warmth he knew it as well as myself, I thought it safer to own what he knew already, and begged him not to raise a persecution against us. " I'm far from it," he replied ; " I want only one word of him in as private a place as you or he think proper." ' Mr Forsey ordered Donald not to tell the minister (Mr Farquharson) till after four days were over after his departure from his house, that he was there ; ' for,' said he, there is no churchman



between this and Castle Gordon but myself. I have some few in Glenlivet, very few in Strathavon, and you and another man here; and if you betray me, your blood and that of others will be upon your own head.' When Donald Roy told this, and that Mr Forsey refused to see him, my father told him he was sorry he had too much reason for mistrusting him, and said: 'When Mr Forsey comes again, assure him upon the word of a gentleman and an honest man that I'll be upon my back before any harm come over him while he'll be with me.' This Donald tells Mr Forsey what was said to himself. 'Very well, Donald,' said Mr Forsey; 'do you remember what the little priest said to that man's father when he left the country?' Upon Donald replying that all the country knew it, as well as he—'Who knows what is God's design? 'Tis easy for God to convert him; and as he has a little estate in the midst of the country, he may, if he converts, be a considerable support to religion in this country; and his example as an outward grace may induce many to follow him. Go you this moment and tell him to meet me very early to-morrow, in any private wood you'll both agree upon.' At their meeting in the wood of Dalbreckachy, my father assured Mr Forsey he would to the utmost of his power defend him. 'I ask nothing,' said he, 'but the loan of such a book,' telling him the title. 'I will send it,' said Mr Forsey. When he came again he brought the book, and said: 'If that gentleman reads this book, and ask another interview, I'll have more courage to meet him; yet, as formerly, I'll put my whole trust in God. They burned all our books that they could lay hands

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on, and yet preach that we keep the people in ignorance.'

"Next time Mr Forsey came to the country, Donald Roy told him my father wanted another word of him. The meeting was at the same time and place. My father was there. Mr Forsey concluded there was a longer meeting intended, as he saw some meat and drink prepared and brought by my father, who begged him to sit down and told Donald to come at night for Mr Forsey before it should be dark. My father began to ask questions about religion. Mr Forsey said he declined disputes about religion, because they usually begot hatreds and quarrels. My father answered: 'There shall be no disputes or quarrels between us; but my only desire is to be informed about many things I heard and read about your religion.' 'With all my heart, then,' replied the other, 'I will tell what we believe.' Night came; Donald comes; they agree to meet next morning, and Saturday the same. On which day, at night, my father says: 'Go you home, Donald, and come to-morrow to my house. I hope, Mr Forsey, you'll take a bed from me this night.' 'This may hurt us both,' replied Mr Forsey; 'it will debar you from getting a kirk, and draw a greater persecution on me.' My father replied: 'I am resolved to be persecuted with you. As I have a dislike for Nicodemus's way, I'll tell you plainly my design. To-morrow I have a mind, with God's grace, to abjure all heresy, and to be reconciled as soon as you think proper, and that publicly. There are about forty persons in this country that never go to the kirk, and always expect and pray for a churchman of the religion

of their forefathers. I will call them, and you'll be, I hope, pleased to explain to them the principal points of the Catholic Faith and motives of credibility. I know they'll imprison me, and take from me my worldly goods, as far as God will allow them; and while I'm at home, I am ready to employ myself every Sunday in teaching all those who are willing the Christian doctrine.' All this was executed the next day. Mr Forsey departed next night for Castle Gordon. My father was put in prison twice, and was liberated twice, paying 500 merks; and as the Earl of Mar was his great friend, he lost not a bit of his land. So when God in His mercy has a mind to convert a country, He does extraordinary things, and gives His grace to those that are sincere, of an upright heart, and prefer their salvation to all things else."

Probably Mr Forsyth little thought when he received Mr Farquharson into the Church that the laird's two sons, John and Charles, would be amongst the most devoted priests of that period, rich as it was in names whom later generations learned to venerate. We shall have to treat of them later. After the conversion of Mr Farquharson, Mr Forsyth settled permanently at Braemar, and remained in charge of that extensive mission until the beginning of the eighteenth century, when he died, and was buried in the old Catholic burying-ground of Castletown of Braemar, where a handsome stone marks the spot where his ashes repose.

Mr Forsyth was followed by Father Robert Seton, S.J. It is probable that he only remained a short while in this district, and that about 1703 he was succeeded by

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Father Hugh Strachan (*alias* Ramsay), who remained in Braemar until 1736. It was Father Strachan who has left us so delightful a monument to his diligence and accuracy in the fine old Register of Baptisms. This begins at the end of the year 1703, and continues uninterrupted till the end of the year 1736. The entries number three or four to the page, and are 776 in all. The following form is preserved almost verbatim, though written out most carefully afresh for each entry. "93.—J. baptised was a child to John Laman, *alias* McGillivi, commonly called the Ter Og Buoy; he lives in Castletoune, in the parish of St Andrews or Kindrochit, commonly called Braemar. The father and mother are Catholics, and are lawfully married. The chyld was called Elizabeth. The godfather was John Laman, *alias* Mc Gillivi; hee's Catholik and married, and lives in Torran, in the parish of Glengarden. The godmother was Anne Mc-gregor, a Catholik and widow, and she lives in Ardichi, in the parish of Glengarden: And the chyld was baptised at Ardichi, in the parish of Glengarden, since I could not at that tyme go to Braemar, this 21 day of March in the year 1710." The 200 odd pages of this register, in their old sheepskin cover, form a most interesting record, which it is pleasant to know will soon appear in print under the able editorship of the New Spalding Club.

The last few entries in the register are in a different handwriting, presumably that of Father Peter Gordon, who was priest in Braemar from 1736-1763. His register exists also. Of Father Gordon, Bishop Geddes writes, that he was apprehended in 1746, and on being

taken to Aberdeen jail, Mr Menzies of Pitfodels stood bail for him. On being liberated, he returned to Braemar, arriving there before the soldiers who had seized him had got back. Father Gordon was succeeded by Father William M'Leod, *alias* M'Hardy, and after him came Father Charles Farquharson, who served the mission in Braemar and Glengairn till 1781, when he retired to Ardearg. He died in 1799, and was buried in the same grave where the remains of Father Forsyth lie deposited. During his long residence as priest in Braemar, Father Farquharson won the esteem of all with whom he came in contact. Of him and of his brother John—concerning whom see under "Strathglass"—Mr Grant says: "Their piety gained them the veneration, their learning the esteem, and their urbanity the love of all those who knew them." He was, however, often tracked by the priest-hunters, whose cupidity was excited by the reward offered for his capture. Once as Invercauld and his coachman were walking along the banks of the Dee, they perceived on the opposite side his Reverence esconced below a thicket that grew at the foot of Craig Choinnich. The coachman proposed to arrest him, and gain the Government reward. Invercauld durst not oppose him, so he crossed the river at some distance from where the Father, little suspecting snares, sat quietly reading his breviary. Sneaking through the trees, the servant came behind him, and taking him by the collar, with the phrase, "You are my prisoner," captured him.

"Stop a moment," returned Father Charles, "until I finish my prayers, and then I am your man."

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The Jesuit went on quite unconcernedly to the end, and closing his book with a slap, made a huge sign of the Cross, staring the astonished coachman out of countenance, while he repeated: "In nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti. Amen." What heretic could stand it from a Jesuit without a shudder of fear and terror? The coachman's prisoner in the name of the King of Great Britain and Ireland was refractory on one point. Jesuits were always scheming and contentious. He would not enter the river to cross to Invercauld, and be handed over to the authorities, but at a place of his own choosing. Astonishing to hear of such liberties being taken by a Catholic priest! This place would not suit, neither would that; but this one is the very ford that it pleases Jesuit feet to tread; and he plunged in with the coachman, and strode on till the water was up to their arm-pits. Then—a caution to those who will meddle with Jesuits—in turn he seized the coachman by the collar and by his nether garments, at a place of ignoble name—and he dipped his head into the water. He allowed him to kick and struggle at full scope, and after a time took him up to make a short study of physiognomy, and from this concluded—he was a physician, Father Charles—that another dip might be administered with good effect. Down went the head again, till the termination of the chivalrous Lord Lovell's career, in dying with a guggle—uggle—uggle, had nigh ennobled the coachman of Invercauld. The Jesuit, however, in the nick of time raised him up and bore him to the Invercauld side of the river, where, on a bed of soft moss, he laid him down beside his master, the



laird, who had been a spectator of the whole transaction, and sat on the bank holding his sides in an agony of laughter. Before the coachman had recovered his senses, Father Charles had disappeared in the wooded side of Craig Choinnich.<sup>1</sup>

As a physician, Father Charles undoubtedly did a great deal of good in the country. He had a peculiar way of arriving at the truth, when examining the prevaricating relatives of a patient as to the treatment employed. If they suspected it was contrary to his ideas, no earthly advantage would induce them to disclose the nature of it. One time he was called to see a darling child in a house near Gairnshiel. The boy was evidently dying.

“Ah! um! Do you give him plenty of milk meat?” asked he, as if thinking there had been woful neglect in this.

“Well, well, I am very sure he never wants for that,” answered the mother.

“Ay, um! but when ye churn”—cross-examining with an air of doubt—“ye do not give him a ‘fuarag’ of the cream?”

“As sure as death, Mr Farquharson,” was returned, “I never mak butter but he gets a good ‘fuarag’ out of the churn.”

“Just so, goodwife,” concluded the physician; “well, you just buy the winding-sheet with the butter, for you have irretrievably destroyed your child’s digestion with so many good ‘fuarags.’ See that you are more careful with the rest of your bairns.”<sup>2</sup>

The good Jesuit’s advice might be of advantage to

<sup>1</sup> “Braes of Mar,” p. 230.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*



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many to-day. The desire to make butter and sell it has induced many a mother to feed her bairns on skimmed milk, if not on the fuarag out of the churn.

At this time the Duffs had acquired the greater part of the Braemar estate. They were rigorous in putting down poaching; but in spite of their utmost endeavours, poaching abounded on their best moors and in their finest forests. The Earl of Fife, wishing to enlist Father Charles in the cause, and sure that his advice would do much with the people, determined on paying him a visit to talk over the matter. He went over to Ardearg accordingly, and found the priest busy in raising a bulwark to keep the Dee off his little croft.

"How is all to-day, Mr Farquharson?" was his lordship's salute.

"I hope I see your lordship well," replied his Reverence; "I am busy at work, you see."

"Well, I am come to ask a favour. I wish to dine with you to-day, if you will allow me that honour."

"With great pleasure; but permit me to go and inform my housekeeper."

"No, no, sir," replied the Earl; "he who invites himself must take pot luck."

Father Charles, if it had been possible, would have ordered a haunch of venison making ready that day to be set aside, and some substitute served, as the history of the haunch might not prove satisfactory. What would he have thought had he known the errand that brought the Earl to his house? Well, in due time they sat down to dinner, and in due time the haunch made its appearance.

“What!” exclaimed the astonished nobleman; “how comes this to your table?”

“Well, when any one,” returned his Reverence, “comes to my house with his arm supporting any present, I never enquire what it encircles.”

“Quite right,” returned his lordship, changing his tone; “and when a man invites himself to dine, he has little right to enquire how the good things on the table came there.”

Of a verity who do you think able to overcome a Jesuit! Not the Earl, at all events, for he went home again without mentioning the cause of his visit.

The next meeting of these two that is recorded was as the body of the good priest was being borne to the grave. The Earl met the funeral train as they came down the road. He dismounted immediately, and taking off his hat: “I wish to God,” he said, “I were such as he was; I would willingly lie where he does,” and then assisted in bearing to the grave the remains of this most respected priest. His tomb in Castletoun churchyard, which is also that of his brother and their fellow-priests, bears the following inscription:—

“SACRED  
TO MEMORY  
OF

The Roman Catholic Clergymen  
who are interred here.  
The Rev. FORSYTH died  
8th Novr. 1708.

The Rev. JOHN FARQUHARSON  
spent the evening of his days  
as chaplain to his nephew,

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ALEXR. FARQUHARSON, Esqr. of  
Inverey, and died at Balmoral  
22nd August 1782.

The Rev. CHARLES FARQUHARSON  
served the Catholic Mission in  
Braemar for many years, and died  
at Oirdearg, 30th Novr. 1799.

The two former were sons of  
LEWIS FARQUHARSON, Esqr. of  
Auchindryne.

The Rev. WILLIAM M'LEOD, died  
3rd June 1809.

Much and justly regretted.

They Died to live that Living  
worth regard,  
And with like Virtues seek the  
same reward."

Many memories of Father Charles still exist. The chapel at Ardearg where he celebrated is still standing—used at present as a dwelling-house. It is in a most picturesque and secluded position, almost at the foot of a very steep bank some hundred yards and more below the present road, a position especially chosen for secrecy. About a hundred paces distant is the priest's house, also still inhabited. Here may be seen his old-fashioned cupboard bed, a form so common in the Highlands a hundred years ago, and still to be found in the older cottages. Midway between the church and house is Father Charles's "seat"—a comfortable recess in the mossy bank on which the present incumbent of the Braemar Mission has placed a stone slab with suitable inscription; whilst outside the present chapel is the baptismal font in which the forefathers of the present Braemar Catholics received their christening.



FATHER FARQUHARSON'S HOUSE AND CHAPEL, ARDEARG.

The high road keeps along the top of the hill.

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In 1795 another church was built on the outskirts of what was then the little village of Auchindryne. This chapel is now the Catholic school and teacher's house, the old stone in form of a cross and bearing the above date having been inserted in the east gable, when the school was recently enlarged. The house which the priest used at the time of this chapel stands within a few yards of it, in a position which affords most beautiful views of the whole district.

Once again, in 1839, the site of the church was changed, and the present chapel—which cannot fail to please all who visit it—was built on a site which could scarcely have been better selected.

The following interesting notice regarding the timber required for this chapel appeared in the *Edinburgh Catholic Magazine*, Feb. 1838. It is written in the style of the period, which needs but little apology. Indeed, even as I write these lines, amid the scenes herein described, the roaring of the stags from the hills around makes me realise the force of much that follows. "From time immemorial the inhabitants of the romantic glens and hills of Braemar, the wildest and at the same time the most beautiful district in the whole range of the Grampians, have enjoyed the benefit of a Catholic Mission. The inaccessible wilds, which are innumerable here, offered to the zealous priest a secure retreat when persecution raged with the greatest violence. He always found means to assemble his flock in some cavern or fortress under the cover of night, far from the reach of the most active priest-hunters of former days. In this way religion was preserved until the growing liberality of the age urged

## 118 CATHOLIC HIGHLANDS OF SCOTLAND

a relaxation of the penal laws and enabled the fervent pastor to appear in open day and exercise his holy ministry without concealment or disguise. A chapel was at length built, very modest in appearance and small, not to alarm the prejudices or awaken the hostilities of the adversaries of the Faith. Yet it was a great blessing to the poor people. They had long been accustomed to assist at the holy mysteries in the open air, and many of them had to travel many miles during the tempestuous winter nights of these stormy regions to attend their celebration. Any chapel, then, however mean, that gave them but a partial shelter from the storm, was a great boon. The chapel is now in a dilapidated state, and too small to contain the congregation. General the Hon. Sir Alex. Duff, brother to Lord Fife, offered to give the Catholics a present of all the timber required for a more suitable chapel. The Rev. Mr Lovie, formerly incumbent of the Wick and Keith Missions, already so well known for his almost superhuman exertions during the dreadful cholera visitation, was thereupon appointed to the charge of the Braemar district. He gave notice to his new flock to assemble in the woods on a given day with their axes and saws to fell timber.

“It was a joyous day. They set about the work like men determined to do their duty. The crashing of the falling trees, the joyous shouts of the men, the bustle of the numerous horses employed in dragging the timber, the merry pibrochs of the hardy Highlanders, formed altogether as merry a scene as these hills ever witnessed. At the conclusion of the day’s labour all assembled to congratulate one another on the auspicious



commencement of the work. When all was over, they gave three hearty cheers for the gallant General. The shout startled the wild deer, which bounded in herds to the top of the distant hills. Cairngorm caught the echo from the rugged Lochnagar, 'Round whose white summits wild elements war,' and it passed from hill to hill, until it was lost in the distance. His health was also drunk in a bumper of mountain dew, and at parting three cheers were given for Lady Carmarthen—later Duchess of Leeds—a great benefactress to the proposed chapel."

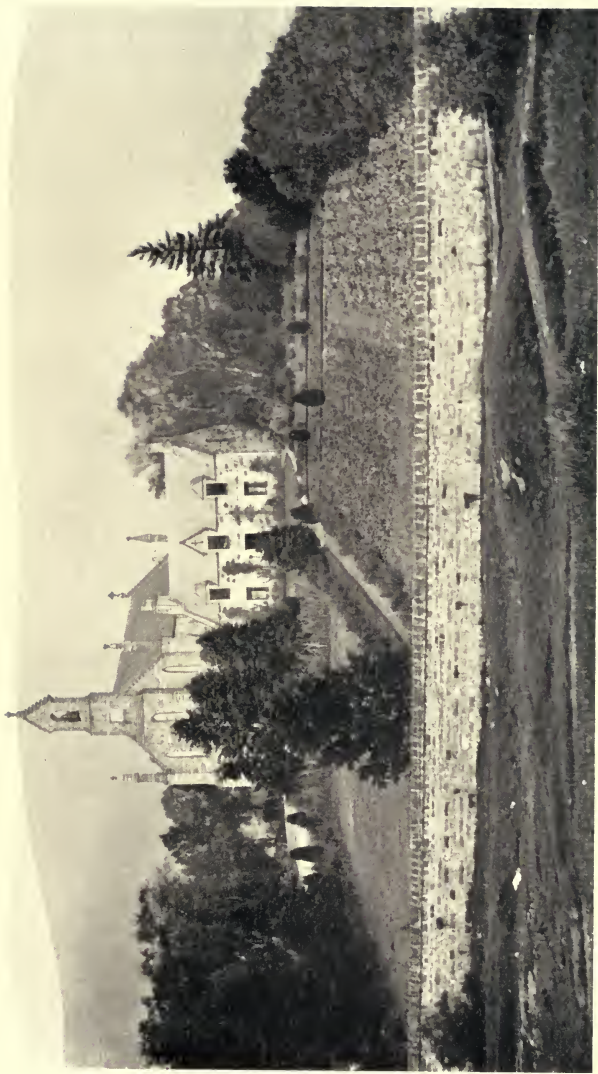
In Mr Lovie's time there was a worthy in the district known as Jimmie Monie, or "Captain Grant." He was a little weak of intellect, and one of his chief duties was to warn the people in the district when any death occurred and when the funeral was to take place. For this he received no money reward, but went round from house to house at Easter and New Year to receive gifts in kind. The coffin at that time was always carried all the way to the grave, and the men of the place assembled to help in bearing the burden. "Captain Grant" would arrive on the day of the funeral with the poles which bore the coffin. Fine tall man that he was, he headed the procession, walking about twenty yards in front. His duty was to call "Ceithir eile!" "Change places!" and at this signal the four bearers fell to the rear and four others stepped forward to bear the coffin. The "Captain" knew well who had been kind to him at New Year, and those would have a very short journey, whilst those who had not propitiated him well were allowed to bear the load till their backs and shoulders

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ached—a fact which was easily recognised by the company present.

Between Father Charles Farquharson and Mr Lovie, the builder of the present chapel, were Messrs William M'Leod (M'Hardy), S.J., 1804; Colin Grant, 1810; Evan M'Eachan, 1818; whilst those who succeeded him were Messrs Angus Gillis, 1840; John M'Corry, 1842; John Macdonald, 1844; Angus Macdonald, 1845; Peter Grant, 1848; Donald M'Rae, 1863; James Stuart, 1879. The dates indicate the beginning of their ministry in Braemar. Father M'Eachan was a fellow-student at Valladolid with Father Lachlan Mackintosh—of whom see under "Glengairn"—and was one of the first Gaelic scholars of the day. His translation of the Imitation of Christ and of the New Testament are more esteemed than the versions at present in use. He is still remembered as preaching very "strong sermons"; yet he made no gestures, but stood with his hand stretched out and the palm upward, his eyes half shut. He was, however, very far from being asleep, as those who first saw him sometimes thought.

It is pleasing to note that the Catholic population of the Braes of Mar—in marked contrast with those of Glengairn—have always numbered at least 400. This was the number which Bishop Nicholson found here in 1706, whilst in 1763 the number is given as 700 to 800, attended by two Jesuits. In 1772 as many as 62 persons were confirmed by Bishop Gordon, who writes of this ceremony: "It was three before we could get ready for the function and five before we had done, but by presumed licence from the venerable



SAINT ANDREW'S, BRAEMAR.

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gentleman at Old Town (Rome), I even ventured without scruple to say Mass."

At the present day the Catholic population of the district still numbers about 500, the pretty little village of Inverey having still the distinction of being almost wholly Catholic.

## BADENOCH

BADENOCH, which extends from Craigellachie on the east to the confines of Lochaber on the west, is a district about 40 miles in length. Its breadth, from Mar and Atholl on the south to the watershed of the Findhorn in Strathdearn on the north, is about 20 miles. Of this country the lowest level is still 700 feet above the sea, whilst the highest point is a shoulder of the Braerich ridge, 4,149 feet ; and within 2 miles is Ben Macdhui, the second loftiest peak in the Highlands of Scotland.

The western portion of this district, that bordering on Lochaber, has long been the home of a Catholic population, descended for the most part from Lochaber ancestors, who at different times settled in the country. Indeed, according to the generally received opinion, Catholicity was almost uprooted in Badenoch after the so-called Reformation, and the revival of the Catholic Faith in the district dates from the period when one or two members of the family of Keppoch occupied the farms of Gellovy, Aberarder, and Tullochrom on Loch Laggan side. These in taking possession of their farms were accompanied by some retainers, who in the course of time increased into a numerous and respectable

congregation. So much so that from Dalchully House on the south side of Spey, and Coul on the north, there was scarcely a single non-Catholic house, except one or two in the little village of Crathie. At this period there were large Catholic tenant farmers at Dalchully and Coul, Sherrabeg and Sherramore, Garvabeg and Garvamore, besides the old-established residents at Gellovy, Aberarder, and Tullochrom.

As was only to be expected, the Catholics of this portion of Badenoch looked with veneration on the remains of ancient chapels and burial-grounds, which were known to have existed previous to the change of religion. Of these the oldest is at Rabellick, on the north side of the Spey, about a mile above the village of Crathie. It is situated on the top of a small knoll at the side of the Markie Burn, and has slight indications of having had a rough fence of turf and stone around it. There are no indications of grave-stones, either standing or horizontal. Tradition says that it was last used about the time of Montrose's wars, and that so few able-bodied men were left in the glen that the women carried the bodies to the burial-place. It was also used at a later period for the interment of unbaptized infants, but not within the last hundred years or so.

From the fact that when the old Crathie people fell out, one of their favourite maledictions was, "May you be buried in Rabellick," it would appear that it was unconsecrated ground. There is no tradition of a church having existed anywhere near it.

About a mile distant is St Michael's Chapel, as the next oldest burial-ground is called in Gaelic. This is



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undoubtedly a very old site, and the burial-ground is filled with the oldest possible looking tombstones, many of them with rude inscriptions, not now decipherable, and no dates can be fixed further back than 1800, though all the old people say that "their forbears had been buried there very far back."

In this churchyard there is a stone which deserves special mention, the tradition being that it marks the grave of a priest. It is certainly a good specimen of an ancient sculptured stone, and was unrecorded until brought to the notice of the Society of Antiquaries in Edinburgh by Major A. H. M'Nab, to whom I am indebted for many interesting details of the Laggan of olden time. He writes that there is a curious legend connected with the stone. At one time it had a short arm at each side at the top, thus forming a rough cross. One of those arms had been broken off at a very distant date, but the broken portion is still always to be found resting on the top of the stone where I saw it on the occasion of my visit.

It was firmly believed by the older people of the glen that if this piece of stone were removed to any other part of the churchyard, it would be invariably found in its usual place next morning. Several of the old Crathie people asserted that they had often tried it and found it quite true.

Where the chapel itself stood is a matter not so easy to determine; but after careful examination one is forced to the conclusion that it stood on a flat-topped knoll called the "Spardan," about fifty yards from the burial-place. There are distinct traces of the foundation of an oblong building at this point, and the door

appears to have been on the south side, near the west end, which would point to the probability that the altar stood at the east end, as was usual in these old churches. The foundations are due east and west, and are too large for any cottage likely to be built at that time. The burial-place has been used at rare intervals within the last half-century, and was undoubtedly consecrated ground.

Next in antiquity to St Michael's is St Kenneth's; and here there is no difficulty in locating the ruins, as the walls and one entire gable are standing within the churchyard. This chapel is always said to be one of the seven expiatory chapels built by the celebrated Allan-nan-Creach—Allan of the Spoils. Another of his chapels is that of St Cyril, in the neighbouring district of Lochaber.

St Kenneth's Chapel has been a building of some size, and is constructed of stone and lime of excellent quality. The interior of the ruin has been the burial-place of the old Catholic families of Laggan, who still devoutly prefer it to any other. Here near the doorway there exists a large font or receptacle for Holy Water, cut out of solid granite. When the present chapel of Stròn-an-Duin was being built, it was proposed to remove this font to the new building, but the bishop decided that it was better to let it remain in the old site as a standing proof that the ruin had been a Catholic chapel.

The burial-place has been much larger at one time, as many flat grave-stones exist outside the present enclosure, which is now very crowded. There was a curious old custom at funerals at St Kenneth's in

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former times. The poles which formed the bier were broken in two and placed at the back of a large upright stone near the gate, said to be the burial-place of a priest long ago. The stone certainly has a well-cut cross upon it, but no inscription is visible. No explanation of this curious old custom is forthcoming.

The next chapel seems to have been at Coil-an-Tiun, about two miles from St Kenneth's on the road to Glenshero. From the description of the old people who remembered the ruins, it must have been a very humble structure, built of dry stone and turf and thatched with heather. At this time there was no fixed residence for the priest, who lived in turn with the families of the better class in his congregation, as was then customary throughout the Highlands.

The last of the old thatched chapels was the one which stood on the site of the present St Michael's. It is still remembered as being built of dry stone, plastered inside. The walls were very low and the earth had been excavated to give greater height, so that one had to descend two steps on entering. It was built about 1803, and was in regular use until the building of the present chapel.

In those days a great many shepherds from the upper glen attended the chapel and brought their dogs with them. These often entered the chapel with their masters, and it was no uncommon thing for them to fight; their owners would then try to separate them with their sticks, whilst the rest of the congregation stood up on their seats, the priest quietly waiting until peace was restored and then going on with the service as if nothing unusual had happened. He would, it





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SAINT MICHAEL'S, LAGGAN.

is true, occasionally remonstrate, but with little lasting effect. This recalls a case which occurred in Ross-shire within the last twenty years. A minister had recently been appointed to the parish and had owed his "call" to the fact of his having acquired a great name as a preacher, as a cyclist, and as a good hand at tale and song. After the first Sunday his fame went abroad as a great preacher, and the following "Sabbath" the kirk was crowded with shepherds from the distant straths and glens with their full retinue of collie dogs. Whilst the minister was engaged in his sermon, the dogs began to fight in different quarters of the church, whilst under the very shadow of the pulpit a collie and a terrier were fighting their liveliest. The people nearest beat the dogs with sticks, shouting their loudest, "Thig stigh gu mo chois!" "Come to heel!" and caused such an uproar that the minister ceased from his sermon with the words: "My brethren, I see you're more interested in the dog fight than in the Word of God, but to show that I am in sympathy with you, I'll bet a bob on the collie."

The present chapel at Stròn an Duin (the point of the Fort) was erected in the palmy days of the Laggan mission, when the many neighbouring farmers were well able to contribute a large amount of labour in carting, quarrying, and other manual work. Foremost amongst these was Mr John M'Nab, of Dalchully, who took a leading part in designing and carrying the work into effect. The result was a chapel of most pleasing proportions, in a situation which it would be difficult to equal for picturesqueness. Above is the



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ancient Celtic Fort—one of the most perfect in Scotland—situated at the top of a precipitous cliff, which rises to the height of 600 feet above the plain. The hill is now beautifully wooded, so that it is difficult to gain a view of the chapel until one is almost within a stone's throw of it.

Shortly after the completion of the chapel, Mr M'Nab, of Dalchully, was successful in collecting funds for the erection of a bridge over the Spey to enable the inhabitants on the north side of the river to get to the church in comfort. Previous to this there was no way of getting across to the chapel, except by fording the river—a severe ordeal in winter or when the river was in flood. Indeed even now, since the bridge is only for foot-passengers, dog-carts and carriages have to be driven across the ford, which at Sherrabeg is fully 100 yards wide.

Close to the present chapel flows the little Mashie river, and about two miles up the valley there is a small ravine, called the priest's hollow or den. There is a tradition that in the times of persecution the priest hid there, and used to say Mass in the open air, when opportunity offered. It is a place admirably suited for concealment, and one can picture the hardy old Highland men and women kneeling amongst the rocks and heather at the services of the Church they loved so well and truly.

Regarding the priests who served the mission of Badenoch, these for a long time came from Lochaber, and it is well known that Revs. John Macdonald, Eneas Gillis, and M'Kenna, paid frequent visits to the district. The first priest permanently stationed



in Badenoch was Rev. Alex. M'Donell, who was a native of Glengarry and afterwards became Bishop of Kingston in Upper Canada. The year in which he came to Badenoch is uncertain, but he left it in May 1792.

After his departure the mission seems to have been vacant for about a year, when a successor was appointed in the person of Rev. Roderick M'Donald, a native of South Uist and a scion of the House of Clanranald. Mr M'Donald remained in Badenoch until May 1803, when he was removed to South Uist, and had charge of the Ardkenneth and Benbecula congregations until his death in 1828.

The next priest in succession was Father Evan M'Eachan, who had charge of this congregation for three years, 1803-1806. It was he who built the chapel at Stròn an Duin—the predecessor of the present church—and was remarkable for his knowledge of Mathematics and of the Gaelic language.

Father M'Eachan was known amongst his brethren as "Old Roules" (rules). The late Father David Macdonald, the much respected Rector of Valladolid, used to give the following origin for this nick-name. Father M'Eachan was perhaps the very first priest in the Highlands to wear a top-hat, and there was a standing rule in Blairs at the time that whenever a cleric with a top-hat appeared, the boys shelved their books—the wearer of the hat had the privilege of facing the President to ask a holiday. Father M'Eachan, on his arrival on a visit, was duly informed of the custom, but before approaching the great man in the Chamber of Horrors, he insisted on seeing it so nominated in the "Roules," a stiffness which was not at all to the boys' liking.

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After Father M'Eachan came Father William Chisholm (1806-1811), who continued in Badenoch for five years, and after his removal to Lochaber—where he died in 1826—had still charge of the Catholics of Badenoch, until the appointment to that mission of Father Donald Forbes in 1816. Father Forbes, however, had at the same time the charge of the missions of Glengarry, Glenmoriston, and Stratherrick—a terrible labour for any one man. Indeed in later life he would tell of the fatigues of his journeys during these years as of experiences never to be forgotten. Those who have journeyed—as the present writer did at the time he was engaged on these pages—through Badenoch in the midst of winter, with the wind bearing its heavy burden of drifting snow, will realise what it must have meant to serve these missions once in the month, and to pass the twenty miles from one to the other during the week. The road over Corryarrick, which the good priest must often have walked, rises to the height of 2,500 feet, and although it is a memorial to the genius of General Wade, yet the storms, which almost invariably meet the wayfarer as he crosses the ridge, make the journey one not lightly to be undertaken.

Indeed on one occasion, on 27th December 1819, Father Forbes is remembered to have crossed the hill when the storm was so severe that he took with him four men and a pony. As the snow became deeper and deeper they lost the road, and in this predicament they placed the pony in front and marched in single file, the foremost man holding on to the pony's tail, trusting that the animal's instinct would bring it through, as indeed it did. This was considered the



THE PASS OF CORRYARRICK IN MAY.

The road passes over the dip in the centre of the ridge.

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greatest feat of this worthy priest's many stormy journeys.

From 1824-1827 Father Angus M'Donald was in charge of the Badenoch mission, and he in turn was succeeded by Father Ronald Rankin, who remained till 1838. It was through his zeal and indomitable energy in travelling about collecting subscriptions that the money was collected with which the present church was built. He was one of the best and most popular priests that ever came to the parish, with both rich and poor. According to the description of one well acquainted with the old traditions, "he was a little wee man like myself, but awful quick and very good at the shinty." Before the completion of the chapel, however, Father Rankin was removed to Moidart, whence he later emigrated with a large part of his exiled crofter congregation to Australia. Father Rankin, however, was granted the favour of saying the first Mass on a temporary altar in the new chapel, in the erection of which he had had so large a share.

The next priest was Father Charles Macdonald, who was the last to say Mass in the old thatched chapel. Father Macdonald was an eccentric, but worthy old man, with a singularly fine presence and most polished manner, which he had acquired in Spain, where he was educated. He had a tall, erect figure, very spare, and was always a perfect picture of neatness in his dress. He ruled his congregation with a firm hand, and had a very pessimist opinion of their spiritual condition, which led him at frequent intervals to inform them when he was preaching, that they were certainly the worst congregation in the diocese, and that he had

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but limited hopes of their future welfare. Knowing his many good qualities, his people received his denunciations with amusement, and without a trace of resentment.

In 1845 Father M'Nab succeeded. He was a relative of the family at Dalchully, but remained in Badenoch only two years, when he removed to Airdrie, and thence to Australia. Here he is still remembered as doing most excellent work amongst the aborigines, and died in 1896, greatly esteemed by those who knew him. Amongst these was the priest with whom he was living, who relates that the old man, though still hale and vigorous, one day begged the younger priest not to go on the day's journey which his office of military chaplain required of him. The younger man expostulated for some time, but Father M'Nab insisted that he would die that day at two o'clock. Seeing the old priest so decided, and well knowing that at his age a sudden collapse was by no means impossible, my informant decided to stay and to put off the journey. Soon after midday the old man sickened, and after receiving the last Sacraments, passed quietly away.

The last priest with whom we have to deal is Father Alex. Campbell, who, in strange contrast to all who preceded or followed him, resided in Badenoch the long period of twenty-three years. It was he who opened a small chapel at Kingussie, "the capital of Badenoch," where Mass has been said at intervals for the past fifty years. This primitive little chapel, to which the approach is up a flight of stairs at the back of the house, will shortly be replaced by one more suitable to the times, for which the present incumbent earnestly desires assistance.



Father Campbell's memory is still in great veneration with both Catholics and Protestants, and many are the tales that are ascribed to him, as he chatted with the good folk in their quiet homes, or at the festive meetings which ended the shinty matches and other festive gatherings. A few are given below. One of his stories is that of the Lismore students. As is well known, there was long a college here—it was united with Blairs College in 1829. One time the old house-keeper, who was no great favourite with the boys, fell ill, and as she lay on her sick-bed, some of the students gained access to the room, and after condoling with the patient, pretended to say the Litany for the Dying. Their Litany took the following form:—

“A Phegaidh, ruadh, chruaidh, chrosd,  
     'S fhiar sin, 's fhiar sin.  
 Tha 'm bas ga d'iarraidh,  
     'S fhiar sin, 's fhiar sin.  
 Bho nach toir thu biadh dhuinn,  
     'S fhiar sin, 's fhiar sin.”

which may be rendered in similar school-boy fashion:—

“Peggie carping, crusty, cross,  
     That thou art, that thou art.  
 Because of food thou wast so stingy,  
     That thou wast, that thou wast,  
 The hand of death is close upon thee,  
     That it is, that it is.”

The first few words drew tears from the poor house-keeper, but at the last lines she gave a shriek of despair, which brought the Rector hurrying to the room, only, of course, to find the boys fled and the poor creature in the depths of misery.



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Alastair Mor used to boast of his devotion to Cluny Macpherson—the chief of the Clan Chattan and long the owner of the greater part of Badenoch. After often hearing his retainer boast of what he was ready to do for the laird, Cluny himself one day asked Alastair: “Well, Sandy, and whom do you like best, Cluny or the Almighty?” “Weel, Cluny,” said Sandy, “by your leave, I’m better acquaint with yourself than with the other.”

Another of his tales was the following: “A conceited young lassie in the district, whose father had risen from the despised occupation of packman to that of farmer, one day got angry with her companion, whose family had long resided on one of the best crofts in the place. The girl’s abusive language took somewhat of the following form: ‘You nasty, low creature! why, it’s in a wee black house that your father stays.’ ‘It may be in a wee black house that my father stays,’ replied her companion, ‘but my father canna carry his house on his back, as yours did awhile ago.’”

Of the chief families who owned the land in the parish of Laggan, the Dukes of Gordon held, of course, the foremost position, and ever showed the greatest friendliness to the large tenant farmers or tacksmen, and the greatest consideration to the numerous crofter families. In bad seasons, when these needed help, it was freely given, and it was under the liberal and kindly ownership of the Gordons that Laggan attained its maximum of population and of prosperity. From the day the property passed from the Gordons, decadence set in, and judging from present appearances, the present generation will see the last of

Catholic Laggan, and the chapel will be without a congregation.

Cluny Macpherson was the next largest proprietor in the district. Of the sufferings of Cluny of the '45 we cannot treat here, but the whole district is full of memories of him. For nine years he wandered without home or shelter in the mountain fastnesses of Badenoch, taking refuge in caves amongst the rocks and enduring the most terrible hardships, which his wife to a great extent shared with him. So watchful and alert were his clansmen in the way of ascertaining and apprising their "outlawed" chief of the movements of the enemy, that during that long period he succeeded, with many almost miraculous escapes, in eluding the unceasing vigilance and activity of his pursuers.

One of his most memorable escapes was at Dalchully House, where there still exists a secret cellar, about seven feet square. In this the fugitive chief often took shelter. On one occasion, Sir Hector Munro, the commander of the party in search of the "arch-rebel," called at the house, when Cluny himself appeared as the scalag, or herd-boy, and actually held Sir Hector's horse. The gallant officer asked whether he knew where Cluny was: "I do not know, and if I did, I would not tell you," replied the would-be herd. The officer was so pleased with the honest answer that he gave the herd a shilling. This tale has been well reproduced in the handsome piece of silver plate presented to the late chief on his golden wedding.

Cluny Castle, the residence of the chief, is full of relics of Prince Charlie and his times. Here is the Prince's targe which he used at Culloden, his two

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pistols and sword, his lace ruff and sleeve-links, besides the more important ones, viz., a letter of the Prince inviting Cluny to join his standard, and another authorising him to raise a regiment in his service.

There is a pretty story current of the affection of the Prince for his two most devoted adherents, Cameron of Lochiel and Cluny Macpherson. As the Prince was leaving Scotland for France, he searched for one last token to bestow upon them, but the only thing which could be found was the musket which he still carried. To divide this between the two was no easy matter, but the Prince without much difficulty detached the lock, which he bestowed on Cluny, and gave the stock and barrel to Lochiel.

To pass on to the large tenant farmers, or tacksmen, the oldest Catholic family were the Macdonalds of Gellovy. They had settled on Loch Laggan side as early as 1602, Allan Macdonald I. of Gellovy being grandson of Ranald Glass of Keppoch. In the Rising of 1716 we are told: "As the army passed through Badenoch an uncivil return was given to a message sent from the General by Macdonald of Gellovy upon Loch Spie in Laggan; whereupon a detachment of 200 men was sent to that country, who burnt his house and corn, killed all his sheep, and carried off his cows."<sup>1</sup> Macdonald of Gellovy, who had fought at Sherriffmuir, was crippled financially by these severe measures and sold his property to his cousin Donald, whose grandchildren at the beginning of last century emigrated to Australia, after the family had been settled at Gellovy over two hundred years.

<sup>1</sup> Letter of Mr Robert Baillie, Inverness, 6th April 1716.

Half a century after the settlement at Gellovy, Donald Macdonald, great-grandson of Ranald of Keppoch, settled at Aberarder. Of this family the best known to history was Ranald, who joined Prince Charlie at Glenfinnan, fought at Prestonpans and Falkirk, and joined the march into England. He sheltered the Prince for a night on his way to join Cluny in his extraordinary retreat known as "The Cage," on Ben Alder, and from him the Prince accepted a change of garments to ensure disguise. Aberarder was included in the Forfeited Estates Act, and though he contested the case before the Court of Session and the House of Lords, he finally lost his lands.

Another old Catholic family were the Macdonalds of Tullochrom, who were also a branch of the Macdonells of Keppoch, and like all that clan were staunch Catholics and devoted Jacobites, losing their estates through participation in the Rising of 1745. Alastair Ban, second son of John Macdonald of Aberarder, settled at Tullochcrom about the year 1700. His son Alexander, by his third marriage, had four soldier sons out of five, viz., Ranald, a captain in the Gordon Highlanders. He was at Waterloo, and saw besides a good deal of service in India and Ceylon, where he greatly distinguished himself. The fort, which he saved from the rebels, was named after him, Fort Macdonald; Allan, who was also a captain in the Gordon Highlanders; Archibald, an officer in the Army, who left issue in America; Donald, a captain in the Army; Angus, who went to America. Such soldier families were not uncommon in this district, and indeed in many parts of the Highlands, at a time

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when the wars with Napoleon called forth the whole energy of the nation. It is said that there were at this time 35,000 Highlanders on active service.

The Macdonalds of Garvabeg were a younger branch of the Tullochchrom family, and the last of them married Charlotte, youngest daughter of Alexander Macdonell of Keppoch, who was killed at Culloden. This lady was called Charlotte in honour of Prince Charles, who was staying at Keppoch when she was born.

Garvabeg's daughter, Jessie, married John M'Nab of Shennagart in Argyllshire, and after their marriage they came to live at Sherrabeg. Their son also took the farm of Dalchully, but he and his brother, who had succeeded to Sherrabeg, became involved in money difficulties, which forced them to withdraw from the district.

The Macdonalds of Garvamore were another old Catholic family, closely related to the two last named. The old house at Garvamore, which at one time was an inn, is of interest as having been built by General Wade at the time he was making his great road over Corryarrick. Over this road a carriage and four could pass without difficulty, and the celebrated Glengarry is known often to have driven across when visiting Badenoch, whilst the well at the top is still known as Lady Glengarry's Well.

An anecdote characteristic of the times is told of the house at Garvamore. Half a century ago it was the residence of a much respected Catholic family, who were justly proud of their distant home amid wild and romantic scenery. They had often spoken of its charms to one of their relatives resident in the

south of England. At their earnest entreaty he one year came up to visit them at the Garvamore of which he had heard so much. Arriving late in the evening, he saw little of the surroundings till morning, when, before breakfast, he strolled round the place. Three times he sadly walked all round the house, and at last was heard to repeat to himself: "Good God! good God! Is this Garvamore?" This, however, was at a time when the Highland houses were built for warmth and comfort, and intended to be lived in throughout the year. They were often small enough, and wanting in architectural beauty; but to those who knew the storms which raged around them, they were far dearer than the stately mansions which have since appeared in almost every district. Indeed, to those who know the Highlands, year in year out, there is no more cold and dismal object than the "Shooting Lodge" in winter, or even in spring, with its air of desolation, its blinds drawn down, its gates often locked, as though it were no part of the life around it.

Another family of influence were the Macdonalds of Sherrabeg. They were originally M'Killops, but took the name Macdonald on their marrying into the Keppoch family. Closely related to them were the Macdonalds of Coul, from whom was Colonel Reginald Macdonald. As a young man he attracted the attention of "the friend of the Highland soldier," the Marquis of Huntly, then commanding his regiment the 92nd. From various appointments Macdonald rose to the post of Adjutant-General of the Bombay Presidency, but died 31st May 1848, at the early age of fifty-four. He

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had seen much active service in India, besides having been wounded at Waterloo. In India he was greatly beloved and esteemed, so that a comrade in arms related that "a more excellent man in every relation I never knew." He was devotedly attached to his native parish, and sent a sum of money every year to the poor of Laggan: When the last of his sisters died, the Colonel's portrait was sent from Coul to Cluny Castle and hung there in a prominent place. This portrait proves Colonel Macdonald to have been of fine physique and handsome features, a worthy type of the many gallant officers whom the district produced at the time of the French wars and later. The following lines, placed over the grave of another devoted soldier-son of Laggan, might well have adorned the tomb of Colonel Reginald Macdonald:—

"Lord, whilst for all mankind we pray,  
Of every clime and coast,  
Oh, hear us for our native land,  
The land we love the most.

"Our fathers' sepulchres are here,  
And here our kindred dwell,  
Our children, too;—how shall we love  
Another land as well."

These lines remind one of the poetic genius, who is perhaps the greatest pride of Laggan, Mrs Annie Grant, wife of the parish minister. The daughter of the barrack-master at Fort Augustus, she married the chaplain of the garrison there, who in 1779 was appointed to the charge of Laggan, where Mrs Grant spent over twenty years of married life. From Laggan





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she wrote her "Letters from the Highlands" and the greater part of her poems, all of which breathe a purity of idea and a devotion to her native scenes which make them most delightful reading even after a century has passed. The now popular song, of which the authorship and the scenes are often enough overlooked, is so full of memories of Laggan and of the splendid men it gave to Britain, that it will find a fitting place in these pages :—

" Oh, where, tell me where, is your Highland Laddie gone ?  
Oh, where, tell me where, is your Highland Laddie gone ?  
He's gone with streaming banners, where noble deeds are done,  
And my sad heart will tremble till he come safely home.  
He's gone with streaming banners, where noble deeds are done,  
And my sad heart will tremble till he come safely home.

" Oh, where, tell me where, did your Highland Laddie stay ?  
Oh, where, tell me where, did your Highland Laddie stay ?  
He dwelt beneath the holly trees, beside the rapid Spey,  
And many a blessing followed him, the day he went away.  
He dwelt beneath the holly trees, beside the rapid Spey,  
And many a blessing followed him, the day he went away.

" Oh, what, tell me what, does your Highland Laddie wear ?  
Oh, what, tell me what, does your Highland Laddie wear ?  
A bonnet with a lofty plume, the gallant badge of war,  
And a plaid across the manly breast that yet shall wear a star.  
A bonnet with a lofty plume, the gallant badge of war,  
And a plaid across the manly breast that yet shall wear a star.

" Suppose, ah, suppose that some cruel, cruel wound  
Should pierce your Highland Laddie, and all your hopes  
confound !  
The pipe would play a cheering march, the banners round him  
fly,  
The spirit of a Highland chief would lighten in his eye.

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The pipe would play a cheering march, the banners round him  
fly,  
And for his King and country dear with pleasure he would die !

“ But I will hope to see him yet in Scotland’s bonny bounds :  
But I will hope to see him yet in Scotland’s bonny bounds ;  
His native land of liberty shall nurse his glorious wounds,  
While wide through all our Highland hills his warlike name  
resounds !  
His native land of liberty shall nurse his glorious wounds,  
While wide through all our Highland hills his warlike name  
resounds.”

The nobleman in whose honour these lines were written did indeed return to “Scotland’s bonny bounds,” where he later succeeded his father as fifth and last Duke of Gordon. Not only his warlike name, but his kindness and hospitality also, resounded far beyond his own possessions in Badenoch and the other Highland districts, where he was immensely popular.

But to return to the tenant farmers of Laggan. Many are the tales related of Mr John M’Nab—Dalchully, he was generally called. At one time he attained to no small prosperity, and was accustomed to drive a very fine pair of greys the twenty-four miles into Kingussie and back. Nothing pleased him better than to meet Cluny on the road, for then he would whip up his pair, and with a deal of whistling and a grand hallabaloo, would pass the chief, whose quiet pair were no match for Dalchully’s. After driving on a mile, he would slow down and let Cluny pass him. Then for a second and third time he would whip up his horses and pass the laird, between whom and himself there was little love lost,

Another time Richard Hobb—his mother had the hotel at Kingussie—was driving along a narrow and dangerous piece of road. Cluny came up behind and whistled and shouted, but all to no effect, for Hobb pretended not to know it was the chief who wanted to pass. At last they reached the entrance to Cluny Castle, when the laird shouted to Hobb and demanded who he was that thus stopped the road: "Ah, Laird, Laird," said Richard, "I was thinking it was M'Nab and his pair that were in it." "Did you now," replied Cluny; "and here's half a crown for your trouble."

There was considerable jealousy between Dalchully and Macdonald of Strathmashie, a large farmer a mile or more distant. At a sale of furniture in some small cottage Dalchully bid 5s. for an old chair that was certainly worth no more. Strathmashie bid 6s., which so annoyed Dalchully that he went on with his bidding until £5 was reached, when the chair was knocked down to Strathmashie. "Ah, ah! Macdonald Strathmashie," shouted Dalchully before all the company, "you've got the chair, and a fine price you've had to pay for it."

The old tenant farmers are, however, all out of the district now. They had lived over a century on their lands, but they gave way in the middle of last century to large sheep farmers from the south, who offered high rents for the lands, but had no interest in the district. It has been truly said that these seldom got much benefit, only a very few seeing the end of their leases.

From the tenant farmers, if we pass to the crofter population, the same story has to be told. Many of them were of very old descent, and often nearly related

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to the upper classes, but few of them are now represented in the chapel. They either died out or emigrated, when their holdings were at once put under sheep or deer. The Catholic hamlets had indeed at one time been numerous in the Upper Glen. Achnashellach at one time had probably twelve or fourteen families; not a vestige now remains except a few stones to mark its site. Western Crathie had about an equal number, now only two houses remain. Sherradune had a dozen families at least—not a house remains. Sherramore had eight or ten families—none remain. Garvabeg had several families—only a shepherd's house remains. Easter Crathie had thirty or more houses; at present about eight remain.

Of these, inhabitants of a once productive and prosperous district, many have emigrated in the hope of doing better—a hope in which we all unite. But many have undoubtedly done worse, and at present one cannot help feeling that the days will soon come back when the holdings in the upper valley of the Spey will again be tenanted, and the homes which produced so many gallant officers and such numbers of the best rank and file will again be the happy scenes of youthful mirth and of joyous gatherings, so that the lines, already quoted, on the tomb of the old soldier in Laggan Churchyard may again come true:—

“Our fathers sepulchres are here,  
And here our kindred dwell,  
Our children, too;—how shall we love  
Another land as well.”

# LOCHABER

## I

“O Lochaber, dear Lochaber,  
Thy wooded glens and braes,  
Teem with the tales of chivalry  
That speak of other days.

“Across the hazy distance  
Thy children look and long,  
For thy spell is found resistless,  
And their hearts beat true and strong.”

Miss ALICE MACDONELL, of Keppoch,  
*Loyal Lochaber*, xxvii.

TRULY do the Glens and Braes of old Lochaber teem with the tales of chivalry, for from the year 1431—the date of the first battle of Inverlochy—till 1746—the year of Culloden—the men of Lochaber had little other occupation than that of defending their own bounds, or of carrying on war beyond the limits of their own country.

Having in the previous chapters dealt almost exclusively with the ecclesiastical history of the several districts, it will not be out of place to take a somewhat lengthy survey of the history of Lochaber. This will enable the reader to understand better the life



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throughout the whole of the Highlands during this period, for if the restless spirit was rather more prevalent in Lochaber than elsewhere, the difference was only one of degree, and that probably not very marked.

During these three hundred years the chief families of Lochaber, the Camerons, under their chief Lochiel, and the Macdonalds, under the Laird of Keppoch, were generally found fighting side by side. Indeed, the sympathies of the two clans were largely the same. Both were ardent Jacobites, both had long-standing enmity against the Earls of Argyle and the Clan Campbell. Moreover, even in religion there were often good reasons for united action, the Camerons having been Catholic for several generations after the Reformation, whilst later they were supporters of the Episcopal Church of Scotland against the Covenant; whilst the Macdonalds were always staunch "Papists." Indeed the Camerons, surrounded as they were on three sides by the great Catholic clans of the Macdonalds of Clanranald, Glengarry, and Keppoch, had early learned those principles of toleration which distinguished many districts of the Highlands long before they were known elsewhere in Britain.

The battle of Inverlochy mentioned above was followed in 1460 by that at Corpach on Loch Eil side, in which the Camerons drove the intruded M'Leans from the lands which the former have not ceased to occupy down to the present day. In 1493 Alex. Macdonald, Lord of the Isles, and Donald, of Keppoch, his cousin, were forfeited for rebellion, and the ancient title of the Lord of the Isles was suppressed. Twelve years later, Donald Dubh of the Isles again rose in

rebellion to recover his forfeited title and possessions, and Donald Glas, of Keppoch, supported him. They marched through Badenoch, which they laid waste, and reaching Inverness destroyed it by fire. It needed the utmost efforts on the part of King James IV. to put down this revolt from his authority; but at last Donald Dubh was taken prisoner and his forfeited lands were given to other Highland chiefs. It was Donald Glas, above mentioned, who built the old castle of Keppoch, which stood on Tom Beag at the foot of the River Roy, where it joins the Spean, close to the site where his descendants, three hundred years later, built the present house of Keppoch.

It was immediately after the insurrection of Donald Dubh that the Gordons began to acquire influence in Lochaber, an influence which in this, as well as in so large a portion of the Highlands of Scotland, was to have a large share in saving the Catholic Faith from total extinction in those parts. Alexander, Earl of Huntly, at once restored the Castle of Inverlochy, a fortress which was long the key to the military power of Lochaber, until it was superseded by the one which gave its name to the present town of Fort William.

In 1544 George Gordon, Earl of Huntly, tried to enforce the claims of Ranald Galda to the chieftainship of Clanranald, claims which were resisted by the majority of the clansmen, to whom support was rendered by Ranald Macdonell, Chief of Keppoch, Alaster Macdonald, of Glengarry, and by the Camerons under Lochiel. On the other hand, Huntly had the support of the Frasers, amongst whom Ranald Galda had been

educated, of the Grants of Strathspey and Glenmoriston, and of a large number of the Mackintoshes from Badenoch. A show of submission was made to the authority of Huntly, who thereupon departed with part of his forces, leaving the Frasers and the Grants to make their way home through Glen Mor. At the far end of Loch Lochy these two clans were met by the whole body of the Macdonalds, whom they had considered disbanded, and a battle—one of the most sanguinary in the history of the Highlands—took place. From the fact that the July heat made the combatants doff the major part of their garments, this battle has been ever after known as Blar nan leine (the Battle of the Shirts). Lord Lovat, his eldest son, and over eighty gentlemen of the clan were massacred, besides a great host of their followers.

The unhappy cause of the dispute, Ranald Galda, was slain by treachery, whilst the leaders of the victorious side, Lochiel, Keppoch, and Iain Moirdartach of Clanranald, were outlawed at the instigation of Huntly. The last-named chief succeeded in gaining Castle Tirrim, from which he could laugh at all efforts to dislodge him, but the other two were taken prisoners and executed at Elgin in 1547.

Another chief of Keppoch whom good fortune alone saved from a similar fate was Alasdair nan Cleas (Alexander of the Tricks). He is said to have been educated in Rome, and was one of the most accomplished men of his day. Indeed, his dexterity in tricks of conjuring procured for him his by-name "Nan Cleas," as well as the less desirable reputation for sorcery, which he was said to have learned during his

stay abroad. "The stormy career of this rebellious chief"<sup>1</sup> opened with his entering heartily into the quarrel between the Earls of Huntly and Moray. In 1588 letters of fire and sword were granted against him to Huntly, who, however, preferred to protect his allies of Lochaber in order to play them off against his personal enemies. In 1592 Alexander of Keppoch laid waste the lands of the Grants and of the Mackintoshes, and again a commission of fire and sword against him was granted to Lord Lovat, Mackintosh, Grant of Freuchie, etc. In 1594 Keppoch was present at the battle of Glenlivet, where the Earl of Argyle, the King's Lieutenant, was defeated. Again in 1602 Keppoch was denounced rebel for her ship and fire-raising at Moy, the residence of Mackintosh; whilst in 1608 a remission was granted him under the Privy Seal of a very serious catalogue of crimes, namely, slaughter at Strathardle and Glenshee, slaughter in the town of Inverness, and the burning of the house of the Commissary, fire-raising in Athole, and the burning of the house of Neil Stewart MacGillechallum, in which perished John Dow MacGillechallum.

In 1615 this same chief was the principal agent in the escape of Sir James Macdonald of Dunnyveg from Edinburgh Castle; and having supported Sir James in his rebellion, a reward of no less than 5,000 merks each was offered for Keppoch and his son, dead or alive, so that these two were both forced to seek refuge on the Continent. In 1620 they returned to London, however, and were received into the favour of King

<sup>1</sup> "The Clan Donald," Rev. A. & A. Macdonald, vol. ii. p. 618 *et seq.*

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James, this time for disclosing to the English Government the details of a contemplated Spanish invasion. Alexander of Keppoch was now allowed to return to Lochaber, where he lived in peace during the rest of his life.

It is of him that the story of the candlesticks is told. On his return from exile in Spain, he was entertained at the house of an English gentleman, who had been the companion of his college days. While they sat at dinner, the conversation turned on the massive plate displayed by the host, amongst which were some very handsome silver candlesticks, of rare workmanship and of great value. The host drew the attention of Keppoch to them, remarking that in his Highland home he could not boast of such magnificent candlesticks. Keppoch replied by saying that in his house he could produce candlesticks that surpassed them far, both in beauty of design and in intrinsic value, and if he could not prove his assertion he was prepared to pay three times the value of the candlesticks. In course of time, on Keppoch's return home, his English friend was a guest at his house, when he reminded him of his boasted candlesticks and his wager. "You shall see them immediately," replied Keppoch. Dinner soon followed, when into the banqueting-hall marched twelve stalwart Highlanders in their picturesque native garb, and ranging themselves round the hall, they held aloft flaming pine torches. "These are my candlesticks," observed the proud chief, "and all the gold in England would not buy them." The Englishman at once acknowledged that he had lost the wager.

This brief sketch of the life and exploits of Alexander





KEPPOCH'S CANDLESTICKS.

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of Keppoch will serve as a sample of the lives of the Lochaber chieftains. The cultured tastes which they acquired had a difficult task to overcome the savage disposition which their constant warfare fostered, and hence the extraordinary contrasts which these men exhibited even at the time of the Rising of 1745.

In 1613 the Chief of the Camerons was by fraud won over to submit to the overlordship of Argyle in opposition to that of Huntly. A large part of the clan, however, refused to follow their chief in this alliance with the hereditary enemy of their race, and declared their adhesion to Huntly. They even plotted the death of Lochiel, who would undoubtedly have fallen a victim, had he not got wind of the conspiracy, and coming to the meeting-place with a large body of retainers, overpowered the malcontents. For this he, as well as Macdonell of Keppoch, was outlawed, but on the death of Mackintosh — always a willing party in fomenting discord in Lochaber — the outlawed chiefs were pardoned.

From mere clan battles, such as the preceding, the warriors of Lochaber now became engaged in the national quarrel between King and Covenant. It would appear that Charles I. was in the early years of his reign beloved by the bulk of the people of Scotland, who would not have been averse to Church Government by bishops. But such an idea meant that the nobles would be called upon to disgorge the rich lands which they had seized from the Church, and they were in consequence much opposed to it. Then followed the unwise proceedings of Archbishop Laud, who sought to force the English Church liturgy on the Church

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of Scotland. In self-defence the Presbyterians of Scotland bound themselves by oath to eradicate prelacy, and to defend their separate church. This bond was known as the National Covenant, and was signed by rich and poor throughout Scotland. Amongst those who signed it was James Graham—the “Great Marquis” of Montrose—a man whose history appeals so strongly to the sympathy of the Highlander, be he Catholic or non-Catholic. Indeed to the Catholic Highlander he is the “beau ideal” of the cavalier who defended what he thought to be the right, was willing to sever himself from the Covenant when he found it to be disloyal to the King, and continued in unswerving fidelity to the throne, until he died—excommunicated by the Kirk of Scotland—a martyr on the scaffold for his principles.

And indeed few characters can more justly lay claim to be a “beau ideal.” Here is a description of him at the age of twenty:—“a bodie not tall, but comely and well composed in all his lineaments; his complexion nearly whitee with flaxin haire; of a stayed, grave, and solide looke, and yet his eyes sparkling, and full of lyfe; of speache slowe, but wittie and full of sence; a presence graitfull, courtly, and so winneing upon the beholders, as it seemed to claim reverence without sewing for it.” Of his military exploits the following are the more noticeable. In 1639 he, in command of the forces of the Covenant, took the town of Aberdeen, which he obliged to accept the Covenant. Lord Aboyne in the next year being sent against him, Montrose defeated him totally at Bridge of Dee. In 1640 he had command of two regiments in the army which

marched into England. He led the van of that army across the Tweed, when, alighting from his horse, he marched through the river on foot, and contributed to the victory at Newburn, 28th August 1640. In 1644 he was in command of the King's forces, and was in consequence excommunicated by the General Assembly of the Kirk. In May 1644 he was raised to the dignity of Marquis, routed the parliamentary garrison at Morpeth, and threw provisions into Newcastle; on the defeat of Prince Rupert at Marston Moor he left his men with that General, and returned to Scotland to recruit further forces for the King.

Disguised as a groom, with only two attendants, Montrose arrived in Strathearn, where he continued until rumour announced the approach of 1,500 Irish, who, after ravaging the extreme north of Argyllshire, had traversed the extensive range of Lochaber and Badenoch. On descending into Atholl in August 1644 they were surprised by the unexpected appearance of their General, Montrose, in the garb of a mountaineer, with a single attendant, but his name was sufficient to increase his army to 3,000 men. He attacked an army of the Covenanters of over 6,000 foot and horse at Tippermuir, in Perthshire, totally routed them, and took their artillery and baggage, without losing a man. Perth immediately surrendered to him, but on the approach of Argyle, Montrose abandoned that place and went north. He defeated the Covenanters under Lord Lewis Gordon at the Bridge of Dee, and continued the pursuit to the gates of Aberdeen, which the victors entered with the vanquished.

As Argyle was advancing with a superior force,

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Montrose retreated northward, expecting the support of the Gordons. But in this he was disappointed, and finding the banks of the Spey guarded, he retreated over the mountains into Badenoch, burying his artillery in a morass. He next descended into Atholl and Angus, pursued by Argyle, but by a sudden march repassed the Grampians and returned to rouse the Gordons to arms. At Fyvie he was almost surprised by Argyle, but he maintained a situation advantageously chosen against the reiterated attacks of a superior army till nightfall, when he made good his retreat into Badenoch. He immediately proceeded into Argyllshire, which he ravaged with fire and sword, whilst sentence of forfeiture was passed against him in Parliament. Argyle, exasperated by the devastation of his estates, marched against Montrose, who, without waiting to be attacked, surprised the army of the Covenanters at Inverlochy, in Lochaber, 2nd February 1645, and totally routed them, no less than 1,500 Campbells perishing in the battle, while Montrose lost but four or five men. He now proceeded into Moray, where he was joined by the Gordons and Grants; they marched to the southward, taking Dundee by storm; but being attacked by a superior force under Generals Baillie and Hurry, Montrose began to retreat. Baillie and Hurry divided their forces to prevent his return to the north, but by a masterly movement he passed between their divisions, and regained the hills. He defeated General Hurry at Aldern, near Nairn, on 4th May 1645, when 2,000 of the Covenanters were left dead on the field of battle. Following up that victory Montrose encountered and defeated General Baillie at

Alford. His victories attracted reinforcements from every quarter, and he marched south at the head of 6,000 men. He again encountered the Covenanters at Kilsyth, and defeated them with great slaughter. Edinburgh and Glasgow now submitted to him, and he prepared to march into England; but on 13th September 1646 he was surprised and totally defeated at Philiphaugh by General Leslie, and his brave army dispersed.

In 1650 he was again in command of an army in the Highlands, but was defeated at Invercharron, when Montrose disguised himself as a common private and, swimming across the Kyle, fled up Strathoikell to Assynt, where he was betrayed to General Leslie.

Every possible indignity was now heaped upon him. He was received by the Magistrates of Edinburgh at the Watergate, placed on an elevated seat in a cart, to which he was pinioned with cords, and, preceded by his officers, coupled together, was conducted bare-headed by the public executioner to the common gaol. But his magnanimity was superior to every insult. In reply to a most degrading sentence passed upon him, he vindicated his dereliction of the Covenant by their rebellion against the King, and his appearance in arms by the commission of his sovereign, and he declared that as he had formerly laid down, so he had again resumed, his arms by His Majesty's command. With dignified magnanimity he replied that he was prouder to have his head affixed to the prison walls than his portrait placed in the King's bedchamber, and that "far from being troubled that my limbs are to be sent to your principal towns, I wish I had flesh enough to be

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dispersed through Christendom to attest my dying attachment to my King." It was the calm employment of his mind that night to reduce his extravagant sentiments to verse, and he wrote with his diamond ring on his prison window, these verses:—

“Let them bestow on every airth a limb,  
Then open all my veins that I may swim  
To Thee, my Maker, in that crimson lake,  
Then place my parboiled head upon a stake ;

“Scatter my ashes, strew them thro’ the air,  
Lord, since Thou knowest where all these atoms are,  
I’m hopeful Thou’lt recover once my dust  
And confident Thou’lt raise me with the just.”

The “Great Marquis” appeared next day, 21st May, on the scaffold in a rich habit, with the same serene and undaunted countenance, and addressed the people to vindicate his dying unabsolved by the Kirk. “He stepped along the street,” wrote an eyewitness, “with so great state, and there appeared in his countenance so much beauty, majesty, and gravity, as amazed all beholders. And many of his enemies did acknowledge him to be the bravest subject in the world, and in him a gallantry that graced all the crowd, more beseeming a monarch than a peer.” Thus perished, at the early age of thirty-eight, the gallant Marquis of Montrose, with the reputation of one of the first commanders of the age (Douglas Peerage). His chief victory was that of Inverlochy in Lochaber, and the greatest of his military feats were his marches and counter-marches from Badenoch into Lochaber and Argyll.

Ranald Macdonell, Alexander’s son, was chief of

Keppoch when the Earl of Argyle paid Lochaber an unwelcome visit. The Earl had received orders from the Committee of Estates to force the Earl of Airly to subscribe the Covenant, and then to fall upon "the Highland limmers, broken out of Lochaber, Brae of Athol, Brae of Mar, and diverse other places. . . . From Athol, Argyle goes to Lochaber; and as he marches, he gets due obedience from barons, gentlemen, and others through the country; he plundered and spoiled all Lochaber, and burnt Macdonald's house of Keppoch, holder of the House of Huntly. He left a captain with 200 men to keep this country; but they were all killed by the people of that country. Thus Argyle goes through all, men offering subjection and obedience to him, whereof he sends some to Edinburgh to the tables, others he takes to swear and subscribe the Covenant, band of relief, and contributing to the good cause, and suffered them to stay at home. This done he disbands his army, and comes down Deeside, about 1,200 men; but what order he took of the broken men, oppressors of the country, was not mickle heard, so forward was he for the Covenant."

Spalding is probably correct enough in suggesting that Keppoch's refusal to subscribe the Covenant was the main fault for which he had to bear the destruction of his home. Five years later, however, the Lochaber men had their full revenge on the Campbells at the battle of Inverlochy above mentioned, for in this, as well as in the other engagements of Montrose, Keppoch and his clansmen always took a prominent share.

The next commander who led the military spirits



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of Lochaber was Sir Ewan Cameron, of Lochiel. He alone of the neighbouring chiefs refused to submit to General Monk, whose far-seeing talent had determined him to place a strong permanent garrison in the heart of the rebellious district. Materials for the construction of the fort were brought by sea, and several hundred men were installed under Colonel Bryan at the new stronghold at the foot of Ben Nevis. Sir Ewan Cameron had wished to join Montrose, but the Marquis's capture put an end to that project; in 1652, however, he served under the Earl of Glencairn, to whom he rendered much assistance. Almost immediately on his return to Lochaber Lochiel had an engagement with the Government troops and drove them with considerable slaughter from a wood on Lochiel side which they were clearing. Towards the close of this combat, an English officer, noticing that Lochiel had been separated from his companions, sprang forward and engaged him in single combat. After some moments Lochiel disarmed his opponent, when the powerfully-built Englishman closed with his Highland antagonist, and after a desperate struggle both fell to the ground, clasped in a deadly embrace. It chanced that the officer was uppermost, and seeing his sword lying within a few paces, he made a frenzied effort to gain possession of it; while in the act of stretching his arm in the direction of his weapon, he left his throat unprotected, and Lochiel, with the desperation of a man in mortal peril, immediately fastened his teeth in it, and, almost mad with passion, bit right through the windpipe, and did not let go until his enemy's hold loosened, and he died where he lay.

Sir Ewan's severe punishment of the garrison at Achdaliou was followed not long after by another engagement, in which at least a hundred Englishmen were slain, and the remaining three hundred driven in hopeless confusion back to the Fort. These incidents made so great an impression that a formal treaty was entered into between the Chief of the Camerons and the English commander, who accepted Lochiel's promise that he would live at peace with his neighbours; and on this condition he and his clansmen were not only allowed to retain their arms, but he was to receive an indemnity in money for all the losses he had sustained at the hands of the garrison.

Another character who left his name in the traditions of Lochaber at this period was "Iain Lom," the Bard of Keppoch. He is generally thought to have been intended for the priesthood, and with this object in view to have been sent to the Scots College in Spain. But he was not found suited to the ecclesiastical state, and returned to his native Lochaber. Here he acquired immense influence by his powers of minstrelsy, and was a most powerful ally to Montrose. It was he who first carried the news of the occupation of Inverlochry by the Campbells to Montrose, and he afterwards acted as guide to the Great Marquis in his difficult marches through the almost inaccessible passes of Lochaber. His poem on the battle of Inverlochry is a masterpiece of Gaelic verse.

In 1663 Iain Lom was busy in avenging the murder of the two sons of Donald Glas, XI. Chief of Keppoch. These two youths had been educated in France, and during their absence, seven of their cousins assumed

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the management of the estates. The return of the young chiefs was looked upon with ill favour by these seven brothers, and a trifling incident at the home-coming banquet became the cause of their murder. The great body of the clan seemed to be little concerned about the matter, but Iain Lom applied to one chief after the other to avenge the murder. At last Macdonald of Sleat promised to do so, and placed a body of men at Iain's disposal. The house of the murderers at Inverlair was surrounded, and the seven brothers slain. But the bard's vengeance was not yet satisfied. He had carefully preserved the dirk with which young Keppoch had been killed, and with it he now cut off the heads of the seven murderers, washed them in a well at the side of Loch Oich, presented them to the Chief of Glengarry—who had refused Iain Lom's request for assistance—and then sent them to Sir Alexander Macdonald of Sleat, as proof that justice had been done. The Bard of Keppoch continued by his satirical effusions to inflame the already restless spirits of Lochaber against the garrison at Inverlochy, and in general against the House of Orange. He was present at the battle of Killiecrankie, and died in 1709. He is buried at Killechyrylle, where in recent years a monument has been raised to his memory.

The character of this famous Bard of Keppoch is well described in the following passage. "His talent, however, lay much more towards railing, which was likewise much more to his taste, and better suited to the stern, sullen, and inexorable nature of his character; and many epigrammatic sayings of that



CEMETERY AND ANCIENT CHAPEL OF KILLECHYRILLE.

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description, both by him and of him, are still remembered. One of the latter kind, by a Robertson of Straloch, is a tolerably good account of the general mode of life led by the bards of the period:—

“‘John Lom, the greedy,  
A bard from his birth,  
Ever railing and needy,  
A night in each hearth.’

“He was naturally taciturn and little disposed to contribute that species of amusement, by singing and reciting, which the bards usually reckoned it their duty to furnish in return for their fare and accommodation; and in one particular, like the singer Tigellus, he never sang when called upon. Those who were fond of that amusement, and understood the bard’s humour, commenced a blundering recitation of some favourite song or poem, upon which the bard, after exclaiming, ‘Silence, beast! it was thus said by the author,’ proceeded with the recitation in the proper manner. Being a keen Jacobite, like the generality of his clan, and a mortal hater of the Saxons, the public events of his time afforded him abundant subject and provocation for the exercise of his railing art.”<sup>1</sup>

Lochaber has the peculiar distinction of being the last district wherein was fought a clan battle, namely, that of Mulroy. For over two hundred years the chief of the Mackintoshes at Moy had laid claim to overlordship of the lands of Keppoch. A charter to this effect had been granted in 1447 by the Lord of the Isles, and this charter had been confirmed in 1688.

<sup>1</sup> “Sketch of a Tour in the Highlands,” 1818.

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Coll of Keppoch, however, when asked by what authority he held his lands, replied that his charter was not a paltry sheepskin, but his trusted sword. Enraged by this answer Mackintosh assembled his men to the number of over one thousand and received additional assistance from a party of Government troops under Captain Mackenzie, of Suddy. Exulting in the certainty of success, the Mackintoshes marched through Badenoch into Lochaber, along the beautiful banks of the Spean River. They expected to find Keppoch defending his house on the river-side, but the wary chief was a couple of miles away on the hilltop. Besides his own 500 men, strong detachments of Macdonalds came to his assistance from Glengarry and Glencoe, so that there must have been about 1,000 men on either side. "From the heights above, the Macdonalds swept down upon their foes like an avalanche of destruction, shouting their war-cry, 'Dia 's Naomh Aindrea,' with deafening clamour, to which the Mackintoshes replied with 'Loch-na-Maoidh,' the slogan of the clan, and stood firmly waiting the onset. Amid this terrible din the battle raged, the rock and mountains re-echoing the fearful sounds, as steel met steel, and the great war-pipes (Piob Mor) of the opposing clans sounded the ancient pibrochs which had rung out on many a field of slaughter such as this." The battle was at its fiercest when a herdsman of Keppoch's of prodigious size joined in the fray, shouting for all he was worth: "They fly, they fly! Upon them, upon them!" This ruse lent fresh vigour to the Macdonalds, who, "slashing and hewing with axe and claymore, drove their enemy



over the steep banks of the river Roy, to meet a terrible fate among the great boulders forty feet below.

Such was the last clan battle in Highland History, a battle which justly surprised the philosophic Dr Johnson, when he passed the spot one hundred years later. The feud between Keppoch and Mackintosh continued as long as the former chief had an inch of ground which he could call his own. Keppoch, without other assistance than his own clansmen and their relatives of Glengarry, seized every opportunity to ravage and destroy the lands of the Mackintoshes. At last in 1680 Mackintosh complained to the Privy Council that his losses exceeded 40,000 merks, and commissions of fire and sword were issued against Keppoch. Letters were sent to the Sheriffs of Ross, Inverness, Nairn, Aberdeen, and Perth, charging all men within these bounds to join Mackintosh against the Lochaber chieftain, whose fate at last seemed sealed. Just at this moment, and indeed most opportunely for Keppoch, the Government of William and Mary issued a proclamation offering pardon for all past offences to those who would make their submission before the last day of 1691. Keppoch eagerly availed himself of this opportunity, and to the great remorse of his kindly friend, Mackintosh, received a full pardon from Government. Of this, Mackintosh bitterly complained long after. It was fortunate, however, for Keppoch that his submission to Government was made in good time—for he had undoubtedly been marked out for destruction along with Glencoe!<sup>1</sup>

As far as Lochaber is concerned the campaigns of

<sup>1</sup> Rev. A. & A. Macdonald, "The Clan Donald," vol. ii. p. 651.

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“Bonnie Dundee” were almost a repetition of those of his kinsman Montrose. The accession of William of Orange was most distasteful to the greater part of the Highlandmen, and especially to those of Lochaber, who joined King James’s Lieutenant at the rendezvous on the side of the Lochy River in even greater numbers than they had joined Montrose. Sir Ewan Cameron, the familiar friend and devoted adherent of King James, was, with Keppoch and Glengarry, the chief adviser of Dundee, and to him is due the victory of Killiecrankie. The lowland officers advised other plans of attack, but Lochiel was strong on at once attacking the Government troops. “Fight, my lord, fight immediately; fight, if you have only one to three. Our men are in heart. Their only fear is that the enemy should escape; give them their way, and be assured that they will either perish or gain a complete victory. But if you restrain them, if you force them to remain on the defensive, I answer for nothing. If we do not fight, we had better break up and retire to our mountains.” Words which the brilliant victory of Killiecrankie fully justified; words which were later the key to the victories of Prince Charlie, as well as the explanation of his failure at Culloden.

But before passing on to that date, the Rising of 1715 needs a brief notice. As in the '45, so now the first blow was struck in Lochaber, where General Gordon, with 4,000 or 5,000 Highlanders, made a most savage onslaught on the Government troops in Fort William—a structure which they had long wished to see at the bottom of Loch Linne. But the fort was too

strong for them, so leaving it, the men of Lochaber joined the forces of the Earl of Mar at Sheriffmuir.

I have stated elsewhere that it was to the Clanranalds that is due the honour of first taking up arms in support of Prince Charlie. Certain as this is, it is to the men of Lochaber that belongs the honour of providing almost the whole of the army of 1,100 men that assembled at Glenfinnan, as well as that of striking the first blow of the campaign. This occurred at Highbridge, five miles from Keppoch, Donald Macdonell, the chief's brother, and Donald Macdonald of Terndrieich, cousin to Keppoch, having had the pluck with their ten or twelve men to dispute the passage of the bridge with Captain Scott, in command of two companies of regulars. Terndrieich manœuvred his men so cleverly amongst the "wooded glens and braes" that Captain Scott was led to believe that a strong force was opposed to him. He ordered a retreat, intending to make his way back to Fort Augustus, but before he had covered half that distance, he was indeed opposed by strong detachments of Highlanders under Keppoch and Glengarry, to whom he surrendered.

It will be well to mention here that in the preceding pages, where no other reference is given, I have followed Mr Drummond Norie's "Loyal Lochaber," a work full of interest and of Jacobite sympathy. The remainder of this chapter on the civil history of Lochaber—military, perhaps, I should have said—will be taken from "A Memoir of Macdonald of Keppoch," which was printed for private circulation, and of which the author was Dr Macdonald, of Taunton.

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To return to the opening incident in the campaign of '45. In the scuffle which followed on the surprise of Captain Scott by Keppoch's men, the Captain himself was wounded, several of his men were slain, and the whole party were taken prisoners. Expresses were sent to the garrison of Fort William for surgeons on Captain Scott's account, but they refused to assist him, on which Major Macdonald took him on his own horse and carried him to a place of safety, till he was conveyed to the garrison on his parole of honour, which he faithfully kept—to the great mortification of the Duke of Cumberland and others—after the cure was completed. Soon after, Captain Scott went to London, and such was the state of parties at the time that he was immediately waited upon and admitted to the highest company, such as the Duke of Bedford, Lord Gower, etc. This was the foundation of his future fortune in the world; and he is said to have been the only man who kept his parole with the Highlanders. Long after that unhappy period, Captain Scott was visiting at the Countess of Dundonald, who had benevolently adopted Mary, Major Macdonald's second daughter. Upon asking who she was and being told, he immediately replied that he owed his life to her father, and often after he repeated the same thing. General Scott's great fortune, chiefly made by gambling, was inherited by his two daughters, the Duchess of Portland and Lady Canning.

When Terndriech embarked with his clan, he was in the flower of his age, of great strength of body, and, as his conduct proved, of undaunted courage. At the battle of Prestonpans and Falkirk he is said to have

behaved with great intrepidity, prudence, and humanity, encouraging his friends and sparing the King's forces. This part of his conduct was proverbial. Even those into whose hands he unfortunately fell treated him with great attention, for which they were said to have been in some degree censured, such was the rancour of the day. By a sad fatality, as he distinctly mentioned before his death, Major Macdonald was taken after the battle of Falkirk, through falling into the hands of a party of General Hawley's force, which he mistook for Lord John Drummond's French picket. It occurred at the end of the day, when the Highlanders had conquered all before them, and from every account might have destroyed the Royal army completely, had the clans been allowed to engage in their own manner. The brutal General Husk ordered Macdonald to be shot, and refused to receive his arms, but Lord Robert Kerr politely stepped forward and accepted them. Major Macdonald afterwards referred with gratitude to Lord Robert's generous civility. Major Macdonald was sent to Carlisle, where his confinement was strict and severe. At his trial his conduct was respectful and dignified. When an appeal was seen to be useless, he and all those who shared the same unhappy fate submitted with a degree of firmness and composure which affected all present. The severity of his confinement, and the sad effects of being carried from his own country — his trial at Carlisle instead of at Edinburgh was illegal — are manifest from his letters to his wife. The following sample must suffice :—

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“ Mrs MACDONALD of Terndriech, at Edinburgh. To the care of Mr John Moir, merchant at Edinburgh, at Mr Stirling’s shop near the Lecker Booth.

“ CARLISLE CASTLE, *September* 1746.

“ MY DEAR LIFE,—I yesterday had the agreeable account of your being in health, and of your stay in Edinburgh, for which I thank God, and your dear self for complying ; and though Kinloch’s lady came here yesterday, she will not get access to see her husband ; and as a short time will discover the event of most of us here, we are all hoping for the best and prepared for the worst. In any event I shall acquaint you as soon as my trial comes on, therefore, my dear Life, put your whole trust in God’s mercy and Providence, in whom I put my entire hopes and confidence. My dear Life, I was surprised I got no letter from you, and you cannot imagine what joy and satisfaction it gave me, when I heard by Mr Stewart that you complied to stay, for you would regret much your coming here, since you could not have access to me. . . . I pray God to direct you in all circumstances, and to comfort you in your present situation, and may we both submit to the decrees of Almighty God ; therefore, my dear Life, be of good courage. — Ranald, nor the other witness, I believe, have not yet come to town, but Mr Stewart expects them this night. I shall despatch Ranald, or the other witness, to you, as soon as my trial is over. . . . Your most affectionate husband and most obliged servant by your staying,

“ DONALD MACDONALD,”

Some extracts from the speech—intended to be delivered on the scaffold, but forbidden—as they doubtless represent the deep-rooted feelings of the great number of gentry who engaged in the Rising will not be out of place.

“As I am now to suffer a public, cruel, barbarous, and in the eyes of the world an ignominious and shameful death, I think myself obliged to acknowledge that it was from principle, and through conviction of its being my duty to God, my injured King, and oppressed country, that engaged me to take up arms under the standard and conduct of Charles, Prince of Wales. It was always my greatest concern to see our ancient race and lawful sovereign restored, and, if such was the will of Heaven, to lose my life cheerfully in promoting it. I solemnly declare that I had no view in drawing my sword in that laudable cause but the restoration of the Royal family and the recovery of the liberties of these unhappy islands, now too long oppressed with usurpation, corruption, and bribery; being sensible that nothing else but the King’s return could make our country flourish, under all ranks and degrees of men, and recover Church and State from those too many dismal consequences naturally flowing from revolutionary principles. . . . I thank God, since I drew my sword in that laudable cause, I have acted not only in obedience to the commands of my merciful and generous Prince, but also in compliance with my private disposition, behaving with humanity and charity towards my enemies, the Elector of Hanover’s troops, both in the field and in prison, to the utmost of my



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power, without receding at the same time from the duty and fidelity I owe to my Prince and the common cause.

“For my part, when I reflect on my innocence as to what has been laid to my charge, I cheerfully give up all murmurings, resigning myself to the divine Providence, and I am hopeful of mercy, through the merits of Jesus Christ. I die an unworthy member of the Holy Roman Catholic Church, in the communion of which I have lived, and however ill spoken of, or misrepresented, I am confident of happiness through the merit and sufferings and mediation of my only Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; and I here declare, upon the faith of a dying man, that it was with no view of establishing that church or religion in this nation that I joined the Prince, but purely out of duty and allegiance to our only rightful and native sovereign. . . . I conclude with my blessing to my dear wife, family, relations, and friends, heartily and earnestly begging that the Lord may grant success to the Prince’s army and restore the Royal family. . . . Forgive, O Lord, my enemies, and receive my soul. Come, O Lord Jesus! come quickly; into Thy hands I resign my spirit.

“(Signed) DONALD MACDONALD,

“*Saturday, ye 18th October*”—the day before his execution.

Dr Macdonald adds:—“Their solemn but magnanimous conduct on the occasion of their execution was long the theme of universal admiration; whilst the contempt of their punishment recalled to memory the last scene and unjust sufferings of the immortal Marquis of Montrose.”



LOCH EIL IN APRIL.

[To face page 170.]



The 127 prisoners who were to be tried for their lives were heavily ironed and thrust into one room in the keep of Carlisle Castle. This shocking act of wanton barbarity was perpetrated previous to their trial; "they were huddled together into places which we now almost shudder to look into. On Saturday, 18th October, Major Macdonald, Kinlochmoidart, a minister of religion named Cappach, and six others, were taken from Carlisle Castle to Gallows Hill, a mile south of the town, in a slow procession through the East Gate, over which were the gory, wasting heads and mutilated remains of their gallant companions in arms. All declared that they died under the conviction that their cause was just. They then engaged briefly in prayer; all behaved with unshaken fortitude. The hideous sentence that they should be hung, drawn, and quartered while still alive was executed to the letter. Their bodies were interred in the cemetery at Carlisle. The heads of Major Macdonald and his cousin Kinloch were stuck on the Scotch Gate of Carlisle, where they remained for many years.

Poor Terndriech's son, a tender lad of seven, was hunted across the hills of Lochaber, and his experiences, written by himself while still a boy, are charming reading. He ultimately reached Traquair, where he spent eight months, and proceeded thence to Warwick Hall, in Cumberland, where he was adopted and educated by Mr Warwick. He later went to complete his education at Douai, with the intention of becoming a priest. He died there, however, before he was old enough to be ordained.

We have the authority of Bishop Geddes<sup>1</sup> for

<sup>1</sup> "Account of the State of the Catholics in Scotland in 1745-1747,"

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saying that Kinlochmoidart and Terndriech found means of applying to Bishop Smith for spiritual assistance. At his desire Mr George Duncan, who had been missionary in Angus, and had been a prisoner for some short time, went cheerfully upon this delicate and dangerous expedition of charity. He got admission to the prisoners as a friend of theirs, heard their confessions, as well as those of some English gentlemen who were in the same situation, communicated them to their great comfort, having carried with him the Blessed Sacrament for that purpose, and got safely out of the town and back to Scotland without any interruption; but an information had been lodged against him by the magistrates, and a search was made for him a few hours after his departure.

For many years Macdonell of Keppoch was considered the hero of Culloden, though quite recently Mr Andrew Lang has endeavoured to prove that the chief circumstance in the generally accepted narrative really never took place. All accounts agree, however, that Keppoch died at the head of his men, the point in controversy being whether the clansmen refused to follow their chief, or really did follow him, and even passed on to engage the enemy after the chief had fallen.

This sketch of the history of Lochaber being especially from a Catholic point of view, it will not be out of place to mention that it is not in accordance with the tradition of the family that Keppoch was at variance with his clan on the question of religion. The statement was apparently first made by Murray of Broughton—in many cases a most untrustworthy, not to say con-

temptible, informant—and was accepted by Sir Walter Scott. The following is his note in chapter lxxvi. of “Tales of my Grandfather.” “Keppoch, it is said, would have brought more men to the field, but there existed a dispute betwixt him and his clan—a rare circumstance in itself, and still more uncommon, as it arose from a point of religion. Keppoch was a Protestant, his clan were Catholics, a difference which would have bred no discord between them if Keppoch would have permitted the priest to accompany his hearers on the march. But the chief would not; the clansmen took offence and came in smaller numbers than otherwise would have followed him, for he was much and deservedly beloved by them.”

On the other hand, the tradition in the family is very strong that this whole story originated with Murray of Broughton, and that it had no foundation in fact, but that on the contrary Keppoch was an excellent Catholic and brought up all his family in that Faith. As a recent writer has tried to prove that the hitherto accepted account of Keppoch being deserted by his clan is unfounded, it may not be too late in the day to strive to correct the statement regarding his religion, though proof on this latter point will now be well-nigh impossible.

All through the '45 Keppoch played a leading part; he joined Prince Charlie with three hundred of his clan at the raising of the Standard in Glenfinnan, and in all questions of military policy the Prince gave great weight to his opinion. He had been educated in France, and had early entered the army there, where he was an object of great affection. Keppoch, from his



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military knowledge, was one of the most useful, as he was one of the most indefatigable officers of the Highland army, in training his regiment, and setting as strict an example of military discipline as could be exercised over so many raw men, most of whom were strangers to anything like military subordination. An excellent proof of this worthy man's knowledge of, and influence over, the Highlanders is mentioned by Mr Horne, in his account of the battle of Preston. "On Thursday evening Charles went to Duddingston, and calling a Council of War, proposed to march next day and meet Sir John Cope half-way. The members of the Council agreed that there was nothing else to be done. Charles then asked the Highland chiefs how they thought their men would behave when they met Sir John Cope, who had at last plucked up spirit to give them battle. The chiefs desired Macdonald of Keppoch to speak for them, as he had served in the French army, and was thought to know better than any of them what the Highlanders could do against regular troops. Keppoch said that as the country had long been at peace, few or none of the private men had ever seen a battle, and it was not very easy to say how they would behave; but he would venture to assure His Royal Highness that the *gentlemen* would be in the midst of the enemy, and that the private men, as they loved the cause and loved the chiefs, would certainly follow them. The result of the battle of Preston, and I may add of Falkirk, showed how well he was acquainted with the real character of his countrymen, and how fully he had appreciated their courage and their attachment to their chiefs."



Many anecdotes are told of Keppoch. About 1743 three gentlemen of rank, anxious to visit the Highlands, set out, and were recommended to Keppoch and his relations. He received them with the frankness of a chieftain and with the politeness of the French Court at which he had been educated. His lady, a daughter of Stewart of Appin, presided at the festive board. After dinner six charming children were introduced, dressed in the tartan of their clan. In the midst of their happiness, when French wine and the piper had awakened their best feelings, one of the gentlemen (a Mr Dundas) asked their host what the rental of Keppoch was. "Come," says he, "fill a bumper to the lad over the water and I will tell you. My rent roll is five hundred fine fellows ready to follow me wherever I go." This story is most characteristic, as showing that the Highland laird of a hundred and fifty years ago paid little heed to money rent, but sought to increase the number of his dependants; a policy which resulted in the overcrowding of whole districts, and was the chief cause of the miserable condition to which the lower orders were reduced.

The district of Lochaber was in a sad condition after Culloden. Endless misery was inflicted on the defenceless Highlanders, who were at the mercy of the military garrisons of Fort Augustus and Fort William. Indeed it is surprising to find Prince Charlie so often in concealment within this district, which was alive with military on his track, and where he several times escaped with the very greatest difficulty. Achnacarry, the seat of Lochiel, on Loch Arkaig shore, was given to the flames, the laird having sought a rest with his

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cousin Macpherson in Badenoch. Here he slowly recovered from the dangerous wound he had received at Culloden, and here he was visited by Prince Charlie in August 1846. He escaped to France with the Prince.

Alexander Macdonell, of Keppoch, though he had been mortally wounded and had died on the field of Culloden, was, nevertheless, attainted in due form, his house was burnt to the ground, and his estates forfeited. His son and grandson, however, continued to hold the estates, partly from Mackintosh and partly from the Duke of Gordon; but it is to be feared that the proud boast of Coll of Keppoch that "he would never consent to hold by sheepskin what he had won by his sword," was in great measure the cause why the property about thirty years ago finally passed out of the family.

The last "of the deeds of chivalry" of loyal Lochaber with which we need concern ourselves—and indeed only the briefest mention of it is possible within the scope of this work—is the large part which the district has taken in providing recruits for the newly-formed regiments between 1750 and the present time. Among the officers in the Fraser Highlanders were Captain Donald Macdonald, brother of Clanranald, Ranald Macdonell, brother of Angus XVII. of Keppoch, and Archibald, grandson of Angus; Ewan, Donald, and Alan Cameron, all near relatives of Lochiel. In 1793 the "Cameron Volunteers" were raised. They were all Lochaber men, 300 being adherents of Keppoch. Two years later it was proposed by the War Office of that date to draft this regiment into others. This was hotly resented by officers and men

alike. The Commander-in-Chief threatened to send the regiment to the West Indies if they continued obstinate, to which Cameron of Erracht defiantly replied: "You may tell your father, the King, from me, that he may send us to hell if he likes, and I'll go at the head of them, but he dare not draft us." To the West Indies they did go, and after two years of that terrible climate only one quarter returned to Lochaber. Nearly 800 fresh recruits were at once enlisted. They next served in Holland, Egypt, Portugal, and shared in the greatest victory of the British arms at Waterloo, whilst they have been at the front in almost all Britain's more recent wars.

"Lochaber, on thy heather hills,  
The fame of heroes rest ;  
Each name in Scotia's annals famed,  
Found echo in thy breast :  
Historic Keppoch, desert now,  
Speak from thy ruined mound,  
The days when Claverhouse, noblest chief,  
Thine aid and shelter found."

## LOCHABER

### II

OF ecclesiastical matters in Lochaber a fairly full account occurs in the Scots Directory for 1860. It is as follows. The first priest that we find permanently stationed in Lochaber after the Reformation was Mr John Macdonald, called to this day by the natives Maighstir Iain Mor. This zealous and indefatigable missionary was born in Lochaber, descended paternally from the family of Clanranald, and maternally from that of Bohuntan, Glenroy—a branch of the House of Keppoch. The precise year of his birth cannot now be ascertained. Having, according to the prevalent opinion, received Holy Orders in Rome, he made his way to his native country, where he arrived about the year 1721, and entered immediately upon his pastoral duties. It is said, and also believed as a fact, that upon his arrival in the district of Lochaber he found amongst the whole inhabitants only three families that practised the duties of the Catholic religion; not indeed that they ever lapsed into Protestantism, for they were in reality more ignorant than heretical, but they had in a manner become quite indifferent to the profession of any kind of religion whatever. This state of

indifference arose, no doubt, in great measure, from the scarcity of priests, and thus the people had not the opportunity either of being instructed in their faith, or of complying with the obligations which it prescribed. It is true that previous to the arrival of Father Macdonald the natives were occasionally visited by Father Peter, a holy Irish priest who resided in Glengarry; but these visits were rare, and on that account seem not to have produced any lasting results, so far as the bulk of the people were concerned.

Mr Macdonald's prospects at the commencement of his missionary career were far from being encouraging, for the portion of the vineyard committed to his charge had grown wild and unproductive. The people of Lochaber were at this period, as is well known, lawless and fierce in their nature, savage in their disposition, and prone to plunder and revenge. To such a state of barbarity had they sunk that might had usurped the place of right without even the possibility of obtaining redress. Such being the lamentable state of the people, as the traditions preserved in Lochaber fully prove, we can easily conceive that the task which Mr Macdonald had undertaken to perform was of the most arduous kind, and demanding on his part the most consummate prudence, zeal, and activity. But cheerless as the aspect of matters then looked, he did not despond. On the contrary, difficulties served only to stimulate him to exertion and to bring out the latent energies of his nature. He laboured incessantly, in season and out of season, to stem the torrent of iniquity that flowed over the land. He sowed the seed, but still the soil seemed barren and unproductive. After having

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given to his wayward flock what he considered a fair trial, he was doomed to experience the most bitter disappointment.

The consequence was that he resolved to abandon the mission of Lochaber, and to transfer his services to some other more congenial spot, where his labours might prove more productive. He had even fixed on the day of his departure; but ere that day came round, a sick call was sent to him. It was to attend a woman at Inch. Without loss of time he obeyed the summons; but on arriving at the residence of the sick person, to his great surprise he found her not only in an apparently good state of health, but also decked out like a bride in her best and gayest attire. He was much astonished, and began on the spot to rebuke her roundly with having sought to impose upon him; "for, judging," said he, "by your present appearance, there is not the most distant danger of death; besides, why are you so gaudily dressed on such an occasion?" To this she answered: "I have frequently during my life adorned myself thus with the desire of making myself agreeable in the eyes of the world; and if I acted so from silly vanity, how much the more ought I now to present myself, in the most becoming manner I am able, to receive so great and august a guest as you have brought with you to my humble dwelling—my Lord and Saviour in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar. As to the hour of my departure from this world, I feel it is now near at hand; be pleased therefore, Priest of the Living God, to receive without loss of time my confession—to give me absolution and to administer the other Sacraments appointed by

my Redeemer to aid the dying Christian to appear with confidence before the tribunal of God." Persuaded at length by her entreaties, he did as he was desired, and scarcely had he finished, when she calmly expired without the least appearance of sickness or pain.

A scene so very remarkable and edifying induced Mr Macdonald to pause and reconsider his determination of abandoning altogether the mission of Lochaber, and the happy result was that he would not forsake a congregation, in which, contrary to his expectations, he had found so good and precious a soul. He therefore declared on the spot to those around him that he would not leave them, and that he would gladly spend the remainder of his days amongst them, even should the fruit of his labour be only the salvation of such another soul as that which had then taken its flight to its Maker. It was a happy day for the people of Lochaber that this edifying death-scene occurred; for Mr Macdonald, by his indomitable perseverance, combined with apostolic zeal and great piety, so far triumphed in the end, that he succeeded in softening the wild and fierce temper of many of his people, and thus laid the foundation of the now flourishing and important mission of the Braes of Lochaber.

After a missionary career of forty years, Mr Macdonald departed this life in 1761. His last pastoral act was to baptize, three days before his death, while stretched on his sick-bed, Donald Macdonell, son of Angus XVII. of Keppoch, and Angus Macdonald: the former was the father of Ranald Macdonell, who now (1860) rents the lands of Keppoch; the latter was the father of John, Archibald, Alexander, Colin, and



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Donald Macdonald, conjointly in the occupancy of the farm of Crenachan, Glenroy, a farm which has been held by this family for over two hundred years. All these brothers lived to a great age; the last survivor, Donald, dying in 1907, at the age of eighty-four. He left £500 for the benefit of the mission of Brae Lochaber.

The next priest in this charge was Mr Eneas Gillis, who attended it at stated periods from Glengarry. He was succeeded by the famous Mr M'Kenna, an Irish priest of gigantic stature and prodigious strength. Many anecdotes of his prowess are still related in the country, from all of which it appears that he was the person exactly suited to the times and the kind of people with whom he had to deal; for if any one dared to show him any want of respect, or to disobey his spiritual authority, such a one was sure, in case other arguments failed to produce their effect, to feel the weight of his powerful arm. He governed this mission, which in 1763 numbered 3,000 communicants, for about six years with marked success, and the most beneficial results. Of him it may be said with truth that he completed and consolidated the important work commenced under so many disadvantageous circumstances by his predecessor. On leaving Lochaber he retired from the Scottish Mission, and sailed to Canada with 300 Glengarry emigrants.

Mr M'Kenna was succeeded by Mr Angus Gillis, a native of Morar, who for forty years had charge of the Lochaber mission, where he died in 1812. He was a zealous pastor, and conspicuous for his eminent piety and holiness of life. The deep reverence in which his

memory is still held on account of his many priestly virtues is sufficiently attested by the elegant cruciform monument erected to his memory in 1852, by the Catholics of Lochaber, over his grave in Killechyrille. Of Mr Angus Gillis it is related, that being suddenly struck down by illness he had the Blessed Sacrament in the pyx around his neck. Some laymen begged to be allowed to remove it, but this the good priest would not permit, repeating frequently: "Would that God might spare me for a day, that I might place the Holy Sacrament in safety." It is also remembered that when he was first struck down, there hastened to his side a Mackintosh from Bohuntine, who passed for a doctor in the Glen. Mackintosh asked Mr Gillis to allow himself to be bled, to which the latter consented, and put out his arm for that purpose. But when the new arrival went on to relate how during the previous night he had dreamed that he would be needed next day to bleed the priest, and had accordingly hastened across, Mr Gillis withdrew his arm, and even the certain approach of death would not influence him to accept relief under such circumstances.

At this period we have the following piece of evidence of the relative numbers of the Catholics and Protestants in this district. It is taken from the report presented in 1760 to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. "The parish of Kilmonivaig contains 2,500 Catechisable persons, 1,600 of whom are Papists. Few of them understand a sermon in English. The minister preaches in five different places . . . but there is no Church, Manse, Glebe, or School in the whole parish. In this parish we examined

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one Lauchlan M'Bean, Catechist in Kilmallie and Kilmonivaig ; he has Ten Pounds of the Royal Bounty, and appeared to us pretty well qualified. These two parishes are objects of particular attention, both upon account of their large extent and of the great number of Papists in Kilmonivaig. Two popish priests reside in these bounds. An erection at Fort William would pretty well accommodate the countries of Mamore and Glenevis, and all the country from Fort William to High Bridge, which is six miles. There ought to be another in Glenspean, where the rivers Spean and Roy meet, which would serve the countries of Glenspean and Glenroy. There ought to be another somewhere to accommodate the people upon the side of Loch Lochie and Locharkisk ; Glengarry must be adjoined to Fort Augustus, for it is very discontinuous from the rest of the parish of Kilmonivaig." It is a strange coincidence that with the exception of the proposed erection on the side of Loch Lochy, the above are exactly the sites later selected for the *Catholic* chapels.

In 1794 a chapel was opened at Fort William and was served in turn by Mr, later Bishop, Ranald Macdonald, and by Mr, also later Bishop, Fraser, of Antigonish. Bishop Ranald Macdonald was a native of Lochaber, being of the Crenachan family. At the Scots College, Douai, he gained the reputation of being a first-rate student. After his ordination in 1782 he was stationed for some time in Glengairn, whence he was removed to Glengarry, and thence to the island of Uist. On the death of Bishop Aeneas Chisholm he was nominated Vicar Apostolic of the Highland District, and was consecrated in Edinburgh in 1820.





BISHOP RANALD MACDONALD.

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Dr Gordon says of him most truly: "As a scholar, his attainments were of a very high order, and even in his old age, he wrote and spoke Latin with great facility, purity, and elegance. . . . In private life Bishop Macdonald was amiable and kind-hearted, combining a simplicity and elegance of manners with a quiet vein of humour peculiar to himself which rendered his society delightful.

"He did more by his walk and conversation to soften down religious prejudices and root out religious antipathies than perhaps any man of his time." Bishop Macdonald died at Fort William in 1832, and his remains were interred within the Catholic Chapel there.

Other priests who served this district between 1800 and 1850 were Mr James M'Gregor (1819-1828), Mr William Byrne, Mr Chas. Mackenzie (1832-1839), and Mr Archibald Chisholm (1839-1846).

But to return to the parent mission, the next priest in charge after Mr Angus Gillis was Mr William Chisholm, a native of Strathglass. He continued in the Braes of Lochaber till his death, which took place in 1826. He is buried in Killechyrille, where a grave-stone with a suitable inscription marks his resting-place. After his death Rev. Donald Forbes was appointed to the charge, in which he continued till 1878. He was born in Strathglass, and at seventeen entered the Highland District Seminary of Lismore, and there completed the usual course of studies. Having been ordained by Bishop Aeneas Chisholm in 1816, he was sent in December to take charge of the mission of Badenoch. In February 1819 he was transferred to the more



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important mission of Glengarry, but owing to the scarcity of priests he had still to supply the wants of his former flock. For the next seven years his duties were exceedingly laborious, for he was entrusted with the care of the extensive districts of Glengarry, Glenmoriston, Stratherrick, and Badenoch, in each of which there was a considerable number of Catholics. With a flock so numerous and so widely scattered—his district must have measured at least fifty miles by twenty-five miles—and in so mountainous a region, the sick calls in particular often proved arduous in the extreme; and the hardships which he underwent on these occasions, and the dangers which he often incurred, formed a frequent subject of his reminiscences in after years. In 1826 he was appointed to the mission of the Braes of Lochaber, where he was destined to spend the remaining fifty-two years of his useful and exemplary life. During the whole of his long career he was distinguished by simple and fervent piety, and by unremitting attention to all his duties. In the course of nearly sixty years of his active ministry he never once failed on Sunday or holiday to celebrate Mass and preach. His ability as a preacher and instructor of youth gained him a reputation which extended far beyond the scene of his labours. His heart was wholly set on the well-being of his people, nearly all of whom—as he took pleasure in saying in his later years—he had baptized; and they looked on him as their father and best friend. They gave ample proof of their love and gratitude at the celebration of his golden jubilee in 1866.

Besides the above, it is certain that there were other



priests in Lochaber for short periods, such as Mr John Macdonald, who was afterwards Bishop, and who died on 9th May 1779; Mr James Grant, afterwards Bishop, who died in Aberdeen 2nd December 1778 and Mr Ranald Macdonald, who also became Bishop and of whom mention was made above. But none of these appear to belong to the regular succession of clergymen in Lochaber. They seem rather to have been sent thither either to afford temporary assistance to the resident pastors, or to be initiated into their duties as missionaries.

Among the many interesting papers at Achnacarry dealing with the history of Lochaber, and indeed of the whole of Scotland during the past three hundred years, I have transcribed the two following as bearing more especially on the Catholic position. The first refers to Mr Alexander Cameron, brother of Lochiel. He is said to have been for some time an officer in the French army, and after that one of the grooms of the bed-chamber to the Pretender at Rome. Here he seems to have joined the Catholic Church and to have entered the Society of Jesus, possibly led thereto by friendship for the Farquharsons. He certainly was associated with Father John Farquharson in the mission of Strathglass. The uncle of Lochiel mentioned in this letter was Bishop Macdonald, of Morar, who blessed Prince Charlie's standard at Glenfinnan.

“ BEAUFORT, 26th Jan. 1743.

“ I send you enclosed, my Dear Laird of Lochiel, the dispatches that I have received from my dear *Cusine*, your Brother, yesterday. You may be sure I will take

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all the care I can of him. I will endeavour to persuade him to come nearer this place, that I may furnish him with all the conveniences of Life, that he cannot get where he is; however, I will do my best that he will not want what is necessary where he is.

“I beg you may use your Endeavours to get an order from his Superiors to make him remove to a milder climate; they cannot in honor and conscience refuse it, for he has done already more good to his church than any ten of his profession has done these ten years past, Except your uncle, who is so famous for making of Converts. The Earl of Traquair is the fittest person to obtain my dear Cousin’s liberty to go and live in the Low Country out of the very wild cold country he has lived in this long time, and which occasioned the sickness and infirmities that put him at death’s door.  
LOVAT.”

In 1746 Mr Cameron was still in Strathglass, where he was arrested and sent from Inverness to London a prisoner on board some filthy vessel. Already in delicate health at the time the above letter was written, his sufferings while in hiding after the battle of Culloden must have told severely upon him, and he died on board a vessel in the Thames, attended, to his immense consolation, by his old friend and fellow-worker, Father Farquharson. Mr Cameron was found accidentally on one of the hulks by the captain of Father Farquharson’s boat. The dying priest was brought to the larger vessel, was carefully tended during his last moments, and was laid to rest in the nearest cemetery on the banks of the Thames.

The next of the Achnacarry papers which I have been enabled to transcribe by the kindness of the present laird is the Key to a cipher of the time of the '45. It is as follows:—

Mr Hunter	} <i>The King.</i>	Mrs Brown.
Mrs Lucie		<i>The Queen.</i>
John Clerk		Mrs Bettie.
Mrs Peggie		Mr Ritchie's family, <i>The</i>
Mr Ritchie,	<i>The Pope.</i>	<i>Cardinals.</i>
Mr Black,	<i>The King of Spain.</i>	Mr Baillie, <i>The King of France.</i>
Mr Barker,	<i>The Emperor.</i>	Mr Buchan, <i>Czarine.</i>
Mr Bromley,	<i>Duke of Argyle.</i>	Mr Can, <i>General Wed (sic).</i>
Mr Colbert,	<i>Duke of Gordon.</i>	Mr Coalman, <i>Lord Lovat.</i>
Mr Dow,	<i>Lord Traquair.</i>	Mrs Enster, <i>Bishop Fullerton.</i>
The Brewers,	<i>The Presbyterians.</i>	Mrs Enster's children, <i>High</i>
		<i>Episcopal Clergy.</i>
Mr Hart,	<i>Lord Nithsdale.</i>	Mr MacKie, <i>Macpherson,</i>
		<i>Cluny.</i>
Mr Morton,	<i>Glenbucket.</i>	Mr Red (Reid), <i>Keppoch.</i>
Mr Turner,	<i>Lochiel.</i>	Mr John Wallace, <i>Lochiel</i>
		<i>Junr.</i>

Etc.

Etc.

Au Caffée de Don Carlos rue letify (?) a Paris.

Of the ecclesiastical buildings still remaining in Lochaber, the most interesting to the Catholics is that within the cemetery of Killechyrille. By the care of the present pastor of the mission, assisted by the laird, The Mackintosh of Mackintosh, the *débris* which at one time almost closed up the inside has been removed, and as far as possible replaced in its original position. The result is that the walls are eight or nine feet high all round, whilst one of the windows is still complete. When this chapel was last used is uncertain—probably a couple of centuries ago. The present

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chapel was built in 1826, on a spot the beauty of which it would indeed be difficult to equal. Previous to that date the chapel was at Achluachrach, a mile higher up the river, close to the present Glenspean shooting lodge. It was here that a somewhat unusual incident occurred. Probably owing to the long incumbency of Mr Angus Gillis, the Achluachrach chapel, a lengthy, low barn with thatched roof, continued to be used long after it had become a somewhat unsafe piece of building. One Sunday during the first year of Father Forbes's residence in Lochaber, the good folk were hearkening to his eloquent words at the end of Mass, when suddenly the roof was seen to give, and with a cry of alarm the congregation made for the door. A fair number thus made their exit in respectable fashion, but a large proportion are known to have found the windows an easier means of egress, and to have cut their hands and arms in the process. The building was scarcely empty when the roof fell in, but without causing injury to any one. Now that the present humble chapel of the Braes of Lochaber has done duty for over eighty years, it is pleasant to know that the incumbent of the mission is preparing to replace it by one more in keeping with the times. But if the old chapel cannot boast of architectural beauty, it will be difficult indeed to equal the natural beauty of the situation, placed as it is half-way down the charmingly wooded brae, with the rapid Spean river rushing through a deep gorge immediately below.



SAINT MARGARET'S, MULROY, LOCHLADER.

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## STRATHGLASS

WHEN writing of Strathglass on a previous occasion<sup>1</sup> I mentioned that "from the Reformation until the beginning of last century, the Catholics in the Aird and in Strathglass received no more support from the two chief families of the neighbourhood, namely, the Frasers and the Chisholms, than was to be expected from the heads of clans who looked upon all their clansmen, whatever might be their religion, as members of their own family." It would, however, appear that, for some time at least after the change of religion on the part of the Parliament of Scotland, the Laird of Strathglass retained the old Faith, for I find that "in 1579 Thomas Chisholm, Laird of Strathglass, was summoned before the Court for his adhesion to the ancient creed." This fact was brought to my notice by a pamphlet "A Memoir of the Mission of Strathglass," which is a faithful reprint of an earlier one published about fifty-five years ago by the late Mr John Boyd, founder and publisher of the *Antigonish Casket*. In the Introduction we are told that "the exact date of the Memoir cannot be ascertained, as the date on the title page is missing. It could not, however,

<sup>1</sup> "Ancient Catholic Homes of Scotland," p. 96.



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have been later than 1851, for the late Bishop Fraser, of blessed memory, who died in the October of that year, was living at the time, as may be seen by the pamphlet itself. The author certainly knew what he was writing about. The pamphlet was reprinted last year in order to rescue from probable oblivion a very interesting chapter in the history of the Catholic Church in the Highlands of Scotland.”

It is pleasing to find so much interest taken in the country of their adoption by the former inhabitants of Strathglass, who will no doubt be pleased to learn that the pamphlet, of which the authorship is thought to be unknown, was composed by Rev. Angus Mackenzie, priest of Eskadale, whose original notes are still in the possession of his successor in the Strathglass mission. The memoir will be found in full in the Scotch Directory of 1846.<sup>1</sup>

The fact that the Laird of Strathglass suffered imprisonment in 1579 is important as showing that he set the example of steadfastness to the ancient faith. When his descendants later conformed to the State religion, the inhabitants of the glen adhered to their first resolution, and hence Catholicity has always prospered there. Another cause which favoured the maintenance of Catholic traditions and rendered possible the erection of churches and of the priest's house here, when they were proscribed in other parts of Scotland, was that there is no main road through this glen to the west coast. At Fasnakyle the chapel was situated where it could only be approached by the road leading from

<sup>1</sup> The larger part of Father Mackenzie's Memoir is given, and as nearly as possible in his own words.

the lower end of Strathglass, eighteen miles distant. This will, no doubt, account for the fact that while the entire territory northwards, and the other adjacent districts, with a few exceptions of modern date, embraced and still cling to the innovations of the so-called Reformation, the inhabitants of Strathglass should from a comparatively remote period form so singular a contrast by their uniform adherence to the Catholic Faith. It is amongst the earliest recollections of the oldest people yet living (1846) that a native Protestant could hardly be met with in the district.

During the interval between 1580 and 1600—the period marked by the renewed activity of the Jesuits in Scotland—the spiritual destitution of Strathglass attracted thither their zealous attention. The severity of the laws, however, and the activity of their pursuers, forced them to retire from the district. From the date of their departure, this mission must have been for a length of time without a pastor. According to the tradition of the present inhabitants, the interval between 1660 and 1680 is the date of the revival of the Catholic Faith in Strathglass. This revival was effected by the conversion of Colin, son of the Chisholm of Strathglass who settled at Knockfin, and was the first of the family afterwards styled “of Knockfin.” This circumstance became known to the missionaries who about this time found their way to Glengarry, and two of them repaired immediately to Strathglass. They were received by Colin of Knockfin, who informed them of his own conversion and of the friendly disposition of his father. Finding thus a confirmation of the reports which they had previously heard, they deter-

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mined to settle in the country. Of the state of religion in Strathglass at this period, or of the Apostolic labours of these priests, nothing more is known than that they opened two stations, the one in a remote locality near Knockfin, where a humble chapel must have been built, as the place to this day is called Achadana h-eaglais (the Church field), the other about the centre of the district, at a place called Clachan Comar. The walls of the chapel are still five to six feet in height, whilst the old holy water font remains, and has been placed at the entrance to the chapel. The graveyard round about is most closely filled with graves, and indeed the situation of the whole is most picturesque, being encircled by a belt of trees and placed in the centre of the beautiful fertile strath.

The next priest who is known to have served this mission is a Mr M'Rae, of whose history we only know that he was the immediate predecessor of Mr John Farquharson. Of Father John a good deal is known, and yet it is little less than a national calamity that far more is not known. He was, according to Browne's "History of the Highlands," the first person who made a collection of Gaelic poetry. His collection contained all that Macpherson collected, and other pieces besides. In reply to questions by Bishop Cameron, Rev. James Macgillivray, who had been a student at Douai under Father John, stated that he recollected very distinctly having heard Mr Farquharson say that he had all these (Macpherson's) poems in his collection; that he never saw Father John at a loss to find the original in the MS. when any observation occurred upon any passage, and that he heard



CLACHAN COMAR, STRATHGLASS.



CLACHAN COMAR.

Showing the walls of the old Chapel and Font.

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Mr Farquharson often regret that Macpherson had not found or published several poems contained in his MS. and of no less merit than any of those laid before the public; that Mr Farquharson came to Scotland in 1773 leaving the MS. in the Scots College of Douai, where Mr Macgillivray had occasion to see it frequently during his stay there till 1775; but, he said, it had got into the hands of young men who did not understand Gaelic, and was much tattered, and several leaves had been torn out; that the late Principal of the College who was then only a student there, remembered very well *having seen the leaves of the mutilated MS. torn up to kindle the fire of their stove.* When we remember that Father Farquharson at his arrival in Strathglass did not know Gaelic and had there to begin a systematic study of it with the assistance of Mrs Fraser, of Culbokie, we can form some idea of the labour of forming such a collection, which was "in folio, large paper, about three inches thick, written close and in a small letter." The destruction of this manuscript was indeed a great loss, as the poems collected during Father Farquharson's residence of thirty years in Strathglass might have contained many pieces of local interest, besides those published by Macpherson. During this long stay of thirty years, Mr Grant in his "Braes of Mar," assures us that the natives of Strathglass fondly loved Mr John—Maighistir Ian, as they call him; and they welcome warmly, even now, a Braemar man for his sake. They tell many wonderful anecdotes concerning him, says Mr Grant in the above-mentioned work, p. 228, and he then relates the following, which I will give in his own charming, half-Gaelic style.



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On his way to visit a sick person, Maighistir Ian reached the Cannich, a tributary of the Glass. He was accompanied by his clerk—"clerach," the Strathglass folk call that official. In order to ford the stream, the father found that it would be necessary to divest himself of a garment that shall be nameless, and only after the passage discovered that he had left it behind him. On looking back, he perceived on the other bank a dwarfish, ugly old carle to all appearance about to cross after him. "Fhir sin thall," cried the father therefore, "thoir nall mo bhriogais?" The carle paid no heed. "Fhir sin thall," repeats he, in louder tone, "nach toir thu nall mo bhriogais." "You fellow there, won't you fetch over my trousers?" "The nasty old body," muttered he to the clerach, "he does not heed me. You just go over for them." The clerach draws back. "I don't like the look of that 'bodach' at all, Maighistir Ian." In fine Maighistir Ian finds, if he would possess himself of his garments, he must even go himself. Now mark what befell. Just as he nears the bank, the old carle, with a noise like a thousand thunders, and spitting fire, flame, and smoke, dived into the river and disappeared. The clerach in terror swooned away, and did not recover till the good father, no way dismayed on his part, stood beside him with his raiment all properly adjusted.

Maighistir Ian had often enough hard times of it. The clerach would then sally out to forage, and would, alas! more frequently than desirable, return empty-handed. While he was thus employed one evening, a beggar applied at the priest's door for alms. One small basinful of meal was all the house contained,



but Maighistir Ian would share to the last with the poor, so, as he held the basin to give away the half, his whole store some way fell down into the beggar's bag.

"Ro mhath, ro mhath, dar thuit e ort bhi falbh leis," said he.

"Well, well, as it fell to you, be going with it."

The clerach by and by returned, tired and disappointed and cross. Alack! was ever mortal more unfortunate? Now "lese" me on good brose—a substantial dish. The clerach will regain his good-humour, and satisfy the cravings of hunger. But woe betide! even this is denied him—the meal basin is empty and desolate like his own stomach. He learns with indignation the prodigal charity of the good father, and storms dreadfully against him.

"Have some faith, man, and confide in Providence," mildly expostulates Maighistir Ian; "we may yet be rejoiced by a good meal."

But the clerach sits by the fire in great dumps, chewing the cud of bitter reflection, instead of masticating strong kail brose. You might have easily seen that he considered Providence's providings grievously below the mark. Hark! a tap is heard at the door, the clerach runs forth, and finds there a man on horse-back, who, without speaking, hands him a bag, and rides away through the night. The bag was big-bellied and ponderous, the bag emitted a savoury odour, the bag made the clerach's mouth water as he emptied it, tearing out its contents with both hands on the table before his master. And truly it contained very many excellent things of the eatable order, and truly the

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clerach regaled himself with Maighistir Ian on the rarest viands. "Another time, clerach," quoth the priest, "you will know better." As to the purveyor of the feast—the strange horseman—you will learn without any wonder that he was never heard of again.

Father John Farquharson was twice taken prisoner: the first time to Fort Augustus, the second time he was transported to the penal settlement of Hanover. The captain of the vessel which carried the priest to Hanover reminded Father John that he performed his duty by landing his prisoners in Hanover, and would return to England by such a tide. The hint was quite enough; and when the captain cleared the Hanoverian coast, the priest suddenly appeared at the captain's table. He was brought safely back, without incurring danger or expense.

Born in 1699, he had entered the Society of Jesus at Tournay. Towards the end of October 1729 he landed in Edinburgh, and presumably passed at once to Strathglass. We have Bishop Cameron's authority that he worked thirty years in the Glen, say till about 1759, when he was appointed Prefect of Studies at Douai. Here he remained till 1772, when he went to his nephew's residence at Inverey. He died in 1782.<sup>1</sup>

It was but a few years before his death that the following incident occurred. It seems that at the Scots College at Douai, the sons of Episcopalian Jacobites were not infrequently received. One of the last of these was the amiable Colonel Spens of Craigsanquhar. He died in 1848 at the age of ninety. When Spens

<sup>1</sup> *Celtic Magazine*, January 1782.

was at Douai, Father John Farquharson was superior—a man—so my authority says—of elegant manners, and much respected by every one. He was an accomplished scholar, and so popular amongst the people that at the breaking out of the French Revolution, when the clergy were in great danger, his escape and that of the Scottish students was facilitated by the inhabitants of the town. He escaped with them in disguise, and after many perils succeeded in reaching England. Colonel Spens used to relate that once standing at his own door he saw in the distance a tall, handsome man of fine presence coming up the avenue. Viewing him through a glass, he said to his wife: “If I thought he were alive, I should say that that was my good old tutor, the Abbé; but I fear that he has perished.” However, his surmise was a true one, and he immediately had to welcome his ancient instructor. I give the account as it appears in the *Edinburgh Review* (January, 1846), although there must be some error in the dates, as authentic records tell of Father John’s death in 1782.

The late Mr Colin Chisholm, who was conversant with all the traditions of Strathglass, published in the *Celtic Magazine*, January 1882, most interesting details regarding Father John. From this we learn that “in order to avoid detection as a priest, Father Farquharson used to dress in the kilt and tartan hose like the men of the district, and was so dressed on one occasion when celebrating Mass in his sacerdotal in the old meeting-house at Balanahoun, when a party of soldiers entered the building. Over and

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over again I heard an eye-witness, at that time a young lad, and who was along with his mother on that occasion, describe the distressing scene as follows:—As soon as the red-coats came in at the door, one of them, whom he called Sergeant Rushard (Richard), rushed up to the altar and told the priest that he was his prisoner. At this moment all the men in the house started to their feet and vowed that they would bury every one of the soldiers in the floor of the house. Now came the priest's difficulty to keep his congregation from attacking and slaughtering his captors. By his great command over his people he succeeded. But seeing the men forming into a solid phalanx outside, and determined to release him, Father John turned round, drew an imaginary line on the ground, and forbade any man present, on pain of instant excommunication, to follow him across that line. The ladies of the congregation construed the threat as directed only against the men, and they accompanied their pastor for about a quarter of an mile, to a spot where they had to cross a small burn called Alt-a-bhodaich. Here Mairi ni 'n Ian Ruaidh, great-grandmother of Rev. Hugh Chisholm, now priest at St Miren's, Paisley,<sup>1</sup> darted in, close to the side of Father John, and took the maniple off his arm. Encouraged by her success, an aunt of the late Bishop Macdonell, of Canada (Mairi ni 'n Ailean), got hold of the chasuble, and when in the act of pulling it over the priest's head, she received a sabre blow from one of the soldiers, which cut her head, and felled her,

<sup>1</sup> He died in 1908. As Provost of the Archdiocese of Glasgow, he was beloved and respected of all who knew him.





THROUGH GLEN CANNICH.

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bleeding, to the ground. The wound did not prove fatal, but Mairi ni 'n Ailean felt its effects for the rest of her life. When her grave was opened many years after her death to receive the body (I think of her husband), her skull was discovered to have been cut, and the two edges of the bone seemed to have joined again as if dove-tailed together like the teeth of a hand-saw. After this sword-stroke the soldiers crossed over the old wooden bridge at Fasnakyle, and handed Father John a prisoner to the Chisholm on the green at Comar House. By this time a great crowd had gathered. The Chisholm invited Father Farquharson to walk upstairs and join the ladies, while he himself had his influence taxed to the utmost endeavour to keep his people and the soldiers from imbruing their hands in each others' blood. The above statement I heard repeatedly from an eye-witness—Colin Chisholm, senior, formerly tacksman of Lietry, Glencannich."

On his return from his first imprisonment Father John withdrew to the Brae of Craskie in Glencannich, where a temporary residence was prepared for him under the cliff of a big boulder. Here he was joined by his brother and Father Alex. Cameron. The three were priests of the Society of Jesus.

Their watch-tower commands a view of the road leading from the plains of Strathglass to Glencannich for about three miles. Here they were safe, so long as they chose to remain in it. Tradition says that Father John used to emerge occasionally from his domicile to administer to the wants of his neighbours. The people residing in the plains of Strathglass used in turn to go and receive the consolations of religion in Glencannich,



It is morally certain that Father Farquharson, like his predecessors, baptized infants about that time in a capacious cup-stone formed by some freak of nature into a rude baptismal font. This font, "Clach-a-Bhaistidh," is said to have been used for baptisms from time immemorial. In order to protect it from damage, it was removed to the vicinity of the Marydale church, and was placed on a stone column by the late Captain Macrae Chisholm.

But to return to the three priests in their shelter at Craskie, which soon became known to their enemies. At the time that the two priests mentioned above were taking shelter with Father John, two men were sent to apprehend him in his cave. The people represent him as endowed with the foreknowledge of coming events, and in this instance he is said to have told his two companions that his pursuers were making fast towards him — that flight in his case was impossible, but that they might still save themselves, as intelligence of their arrival had not yet gone abroad. After this conversation, the more effectually to cover the retreat, he set out to meet those who were in search of him, and soon fell into their hands. Father Charles returned to Braemar, and Father Cameron to his native country Lochaber. There he was soon after arrested and sent as a prisoner to London, where he died. It would appear that he had done good work as a missionary in Strathglass, as is shown by the following extract from the Dingwall Presbytery Records.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Celtic Review*, December 1884.

“ At DINGWALL, 27th April 1743.

“ The Presbytery do appoint their Commissioners to the ensuing General Assembly, to lay before the said Assembly the following brief representation respecting the state and growth of Popery in their bounds, particularly that the Presbytery do find, besides Mr John Farquharson, a Jesuit Priest, who, for several years, resided and traffick'd in the Chisholm's country as a Poppish Missionary, that there is one, Alex. Cameron, brother to the present Laird of Locheale, who hath lately settled in the part of Strathglass that pertains to Lord Lovet, and is employed as a Poppish Missionary in that neighbourhood and Glenstrathfarrar, and trafficks with great success; and he hath great advantage by his connection with the inhabitants of Lochaber, which gives the people in these corners, wherein he is employed, occasion to suppose that it is in his power to protect them and their cattle from the invasions of the people of that country, or to avenge himself upon them by their means, *by which the few Protestants that are there* are much discouraged, and kept in perpetual terror; that several arguments and methods are said to be used by him that would more become a country where Popery had the advantage of law in its favours than places that are under a Protestant Government, by all which means the Presbytery do find that a greater number have been perverted to Popery in those parts within these few months than thirty years before. The Presbytery do instruct their Commissioners to urge the Assembly to take the matters above mentioned to their serious and reasonable consideration, and endeavour to procure

the Assembly's particular recommendation to the Committee for Reformation of the Highlands to take special care for providing these corners, not only with a well-qualified preacher, such as is there presently employed, but also with a Catechist and schoolmaster, and that the Assembly give proper order for executing the laws against the said Messrs John Farquharson and Alexander Cameron, and that the assembly use their interests with the superiors and heritors of the parishes of Killtarlitie and Kilmorack, to protect the Protestant religion in their bounds, and discourage, by all reasonable and likely means, the Roman Catholic religion."

As we have already heard of Father Cameron under Lochaber, of which he was a native, let us now see Father John Farquharson in a new *rôle*, that of poet at the expense of the notorious Simon, Lord Lovat. Again Mr Colin Chisholm is our authority,<sup>1</sup> who says, "it is evident from the very plain terms in which he addressed and warned his neighbour (Lord Simon) that he had no very high opinion of him. His lordship had incarcerated the priest's clerk in the "Red Dungeon" at Beaully for fishing salmon in the river Glass, at Fasnakyle, about twenty miles above the Falls of Kilmorack. His reverence went to obtain the release of his clerk, but my Lord Simon was obdurate, and refused to open the door of the cell. It will be seen that the priest was very displeased, but he was not to be foiled by any old or young sinner; consequently, he fulminated the severe censure embodied in the subjoined verses against his lordship.

"Soon after, Lord Simon attended a dinner party at

<sup>1</sup> *Celtic Magazine*, November 1881.



FASNAKYLE FALLS AND BRIDGE.

The site of the Chapel was on the right of the Bridge.

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Eskadale, on which occasion one of the gentlemen present recited the verses. Lovat at once attributed them to Mrs Fraser, of Guisachan, a well-known poet, but being assured that the author was no other than Rev. Mr Farquharson, his lordship appeared much confused, scarcely uttered another word at the party, and soon went on his way to Beaufort Castle. Self-willed as he is said to have been, it seems that he had no wish to call forth any more disagreeable prophecies, for he immediately released the clerk." It is noticeable that the good priest clearly foretells that Lord Simon's body would be without its head—no very difficult matter, perhaps, seeing how he was on all sides suspected of being traitor "to both Kings."

It must have needed no little pluck on the part of the good priest, himself an outlaw eagerly sought after at the time, thus to risk the anger of so reckless a nobleman. Pluck, however, Father John certainly had, as was but fitting for the son of old Lewis Farquharson, of Auchindryne, of whom the story is told that being very aged at the time of the Rising of 1715, he yet insisted on taking the field with his kindred, saying: "I am old now, and of little use; but what reck? If my lads should no' do their duty, can I no' 'sheet' them?"

Mr Farquharson, in the words of our Memoir, was soon enlarged, and returned once more to Strathglass, where he continued for several years serving the mission. At length he retired to his native country, Braemar, where, according to the charming inscription on his tombstone, "he spent the evening of his days as chaplain to his nephew, Alexander Farquharson,



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of Inverey, and died at Balmoral, 22nd August 1782.”

Father John Farquharson was followed by Father Norman M'Leod. Further than the recollections of his holy and edifying life, the history of the mission during his incumbency affords no other facts than that he built a rude chapel, but suited to the circumstances of the times in which he lived.<sup>1</sup> At an advanced age he retired to Edinburgh, and was succeeded by Father John Chisholm, a native of Strathglass. He was born in Inchully in February 1752, and was early sent to the Scots College of Douai, then directed by the Jesuits. On their expulsion from France he went to the novitiate of the Order at Tournay. When the Jesuits were suppressed in 1773, he returned to Douai College, which by that time had been entrusted to the secular clergy. Regarding his stay at the Jesuit Novitiate, he thus writes to a friend in 1807, fifteen years after his consecration as Bishop: “I wish I was allowed once more to begin my novitiate; the only year I had of it was, I believe, the best of my life.” From 1775 till 1792 he laboured with great fruit in the Strathglass mission, where his kinship with the laird was of great advantage to him. Indeed, very soon he so ingratiated himself with the Chisholm that it was no longer a matter of toleration to have a priest in the country. He successfully procured the respect of all the families of distinction in the surrounding districts, and was the first who made a breach in the rampant bigotry which had till then continued to strain on every side

<sup>1</sup> So great was the attachment of the people to him that they called their sons after him.



the Strathglass mission. At length his increasing popularity began to awaken the jealousy of the parsons, who now began to consult among themselves "what was to be done with the popish priest?" when a favourable circumstance, as they thought, presented itself. Father Chisholm had opened a station in the low division of Strathglass. The place which he was obliged to fix upon was in the immediate neighbourhood of a barn in which the Presbyterian missionary who came occasionally to that quarter preached. This was construed by the local Presbytery into a piece of effrontery that required an immediate check. They met, therefore, and it was resolved that the members of the meeting should head a party to seize the priest. But an untimely observation by one of the brethren, hinting "that they might set out on such a mission, but that would not warrant the safety of their bones till they returned," daunted them not a little. The expedition was abandoned, and Father Chisholm was left unmolested.

Regarding the several small chapels at Fasnakyle, Clachan, Aigas, and Inchully, I find an interesting piece of evidence from a most unexpected source. A Mr John Knox in 1786 published "A Tour through the Highlands of Scotland." It is written with a strong anti-Catholic bias, yet at one point he says "that the (Protestant) clergy, when they do arrive at the preaching station, find the people in the same situation as themselves, drenched with wet, shivering with cold, and alike exposed to all the inclemencies of weather during the time of service, and on their journey back to their comfortless huts." He further informs us that "while

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the Protestant clergy are in this wretched condition, having neither dwelling-houses nor places to preach in, those of the Catholic persuasion in the Highlands have both, and which are kept in excellent repair." To which we might add that the Protestant clergy had always their stipend, small though it may perhaps have been, but that the Catholic clergy depended entirely on the alms of the faithful. Without doubt it is a most remarkable fact that despite so much discouragement—not to mention absolute persecution—on the part of those in authority, the Catholic Faith has been maintained in so many of the glens of Scotland in almost primitive simplicity. There is a charm about this simple religious faith which was a striking characteristic of both people and pastors as recently as fifty years ago, and of which the remains are still often to be seen.

In 1791 Father John Chisholm was appointed Bishop of the Highland district, and was consecrated by Bishop Hay on the 12th February 1792. He left the entire charge of the Strathglass mission, which he had served for seventeen years, to his brother, Mr Aeneas. Bishop John having fixed his episcopal see, like his predecessor, at the small seminary at Samalaman, thence transferred both his residence and seminary to Killechiaran, in the island of Lismore, where he died on 8th July 1814. Father Aeneas came to the Strathglass mission in 1789, and at first resided chiefly at his father's house at Inchully, where he built a small chapel, which stands to this day, but is now occupied as a dwelling-house. In 1793 he obtained the appointment of Father Austin M'Donell to the lower portion of the mission, whilst





SAINT MARY'S, ESKDALE—INTERIOR.

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he himself retained the upper district, in which he built at Fasnakyle a chapel on a far more elaborate scale than had been hitherto possible. Father Aeneas also extended his missionary zeal as far as Inverness, where in 1810 a room was procured, and as the congregation increased the work of attending to it was transferred to the priest at Aigas. Here Father Austin M'Donell was much assisted by Mr Fraser, of Moulie, a convert to the Catholic Church, on whose property at Aigas a chapel was opened in 1801.

Bishop Aeneas Chisholm was succeeded at Fasnakyle by Mr Philip Macrae, who had been appointed to the Aigas mission in 1812, where he was now succeeded by Mr Evan Maceachen. These two continued to superintend their respective missions under the paternal guidance of Bishop Aeneas, who ever remained devoted to his first flock. In 1818 Mr Maceachen was removed from Aigas to Braemar, and was immediately succeeded by Mr Duncan Mackenzie.

During the incumbency of these two missionaries, Thomas, Lord Lovat, desirous to provide better accommodation for the congregation of the lower district, "built a chapel at Eskadale on a scale of grandeur hitherto unknown in the Highlands." It was opened in 1826, and here, at his death in 1875, he was laid to rest. His tomb may be seen on the left of the chancel.

Mr Duncan Mackenzie died at Eskadale in 1828, and Mr Macrae in 1842. In 1827 Mr Alexander Macswein had charge of the whole of Strathglass in consequence of the ill-health of Mr Macrae, but in 1833 Mr Thomas Chisholm was appointed to the mission of Fasnakyle, where he remained until 1848.

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The ranks of the Catholics in the Upper Mission of Strathglass had been for some time becoming thinner, when Mr Angus Mackenzie wrote his Memoir; still the parent mission can look with complacency on the congregations to which it gave existence, namely, Eskadale, Inverness, Marydale, and Beaully. Of the two last named, Marydale is the successor of the Fasnakyle chapel mentioned above. It stands at the junction of Glencannich and Strathglass, and was opened in 1868. The church at Beaully, which was opened in 1864, was, like that at Eskadale, built by Thomas, Lord Lovat, and is situated on land adjoining the venerable ruins of Beaully Priory.

In 1814 Father Aeneas Chisholm succeeded his brother as Vicar Apostolic of the Highland district, and removed to the seminary at Lismore, where he died in 1818. An interesting link between the old country and her Canadian daughter is afforded by a relic of these two holy bishops. It is thus described in the Tablet, 18th January 1908. "In Antigonish, an old woman brought out from her breast a beautiful pectoral cross, a peculiar cross with two cross-bars, like an archiepiscopal processional cross, with the inscription, 'S. Ignati, ora pro me'; on the reverse was, 'Sine peccato originali.' I asked if she knew anything of the history of the cross. She replied, 'No,' only that she had heard that it once belonged to the Easbuigean bana, 'the fair Bishops.' Now the 'fair Bishops' were Bishops John and Aeneas Chisholm, Vicars Apostolic, who are buried in the island of Lismore, near Oban. She had it from her mother-in-law, a Mrs M'Quarrie, from the island of Eigg, in the





CEMETERY OF SAINT MARY, ESKADALE.

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Old Country,' whose maiden name was Macdonnell. With these data, I wrote to the parish priest of Indique, Cape Breton, the Rev. Archibald Chisholm, who seems to have the Highland traditions at his fingers' ends. I asked him if he could help me to trace the beautiful relic back to the 'Easbuigean bana,' Mrs M'Quarrie being a Macdonell. I got a reply by return of post, stating that he had no doubt but the cross belonged to the 'fair Bishops.' They had a sister, who married a Macdonell of Glengarry. She had three daughters: one married a man in Skye, another married a M'Quarrie in Eigg, and a third came out with Father Macdonell, who was afterwards first Bishop of Kingston, Ontario. She was not more than six weeks in America when she married an Allan M'Nab, who was later—or his son—Sir Allan M'Nab, Prime Minister of Canada, at Ottawa. This same priest has in his possession the book of the spiritual exercises of St Ignatius, as also a flask, which were once the property of Father John Farquharson in Strathglass." In the same letter to the Tablet the writer mentions his pleasure at finding "in the diocese of Antigonish 80,000 Catholics, of whom no fewer than 45,000 are Gaelic-speaking. . . . There are sixty Gaelic-speaking priests and fifty Gaelic-speaking nuns, at the head of whom is the venerable Gaelic-speaking bishop, Right Rev. John Cameron, D.D. What is equally satisfactory is that the best Highland Catholic traditions are nurtured and fostered by the people. Home Highland Catholicity cannot hold a candle to the sturdy Gaelic Catholicity of Nova Scotia."

Two interesting lists are now before me, the one

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contains the names and birthplaces of twenty-five priests (including four bishops), friends of the late Mr Colin Chisholm, who had all been born in Strathglass, but had died previous to the date at which he wrote; the other contains the name and birthplace of seventeen Strathglass priests (including two bishops), who were still living. From Canada a further list of twenty-seven Strathglass priests in that country has been sent me; little wonder that Mr Mackenzie could write in 1846 — “as a nursery of priests, Strathglass is not less deserving of note.”

And now for another matter of less ecclesiastical interest—the sufferings in the Glen after the '45. Regarding the former, the *Celtic Magazine* for May 1881 has the following:—The people on the farm of Tombuie in Glencannich were shearing corn on the dell of Tombuie, when, to their terror, they saw a party of red-coated soldiers just approaching their houses. Immediately they took themselves to the hills. But the frantic screaming of an unfortunate wife, who had gone to the field to assist her husband and family, reminded them that the baby was left asleep at home. There was no way of reaching the house or extracting the poor infant before the soldiers could reach it. So the terrified people at Tombuie made all haste to the rocks at the east side of Glaic-na-Caillich. While thus concealed in the cliffs of the rocks eagerly watching every movement on the plains below, they saw one of the soldiers enter the house where the little one was peacefully asleep. It afterwards transpired that in drawing his sword out of its scabbard to despatch the innocent occupant of the cradle, the rays of the

sun flashing on the polished metal reflected a blaze of light around the cradle. The innocent little creature clapped his tiny hands and laughed at the pretty light playing round its crib. At the sight of the baby's smiles his would-be executioner stood awed and hesitating between the orders he had received and the dictates of conscience; he put his sword back into its scabbard, and was turning out of the house when he was met by a comrade, who questioned him as to whether he had found any person inside. He answered in the negative. This suspicious comrade, however, dashed into the house, and, horrible to relate, emerged out of it triumphantly carrying the mangled body of the infant transfixed on the point of his sword. Not satisfied with this brutal act, the monster threatened to report his comrade who had spared the life of the infant. His more humane companion, however, incensed at the fiendish spectacle before him, instantly unsheathed his sword, planted the point of it on the breast of the cowardly assassin, and vowed by heaven and earth that he would in another moment force the sword to the hilt through his merciless heart if he did not withdraw his threat, and promise on oath never to repeat it. Thus the dastardly ruffian was instantly compelled at the point of the sword to beg for his own execrable and diabolical life.

It is wonderful that only twelve years after these and similar atrocities spread fear and terror through the Highlands, Hon. Simon Fraser should be able to raise 800 men for the service of the Crown, and that at a time when he was not possessed of an inch of land. To the above number were added 700

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more brought by the gentlemen to whom he gave commissions. A large proportion of the whole were men from Strathglass. The memory of their deeds in Canada is still fresh in the Dominion, where they greatly distinguished themselves under the command of their natural leader Hon. Simon Fraser. In consequence of his services, the English Government promoted him to the rank of Lieutenant-General, and restored to him the family estates of Lovat, forfeited in 1746. Again, in 1775, General Fraser raised two battalions of 2,340 men, known as the Fraser Highlanders—the old 71st Regiment. The General himself was a great favourite with all the men under his command, as also in Strathglass. Here are two tales from the pen of Mr Colin Chisholm, whose account I have followed in the preceding. John Macdonell, tenant on the Fraser estates, left Inchvuilt, in Glenstrathfarrar, to join the Fraser Highlanders. He was distinguished from his neighbours by the patronymic of Ian Buidhe-mor. The men, on the eve of their departure for the north, were assembled at Inverness, the transports riding at anchor in the Sound of Kessock ready to sail. They were all mustered on the south side of the Ness, and answered to their names. All were ordered to be in readiness to embark the following morning, and every precaution was taken to carry this order into effect; but under cover of night, our hero, John Buidhe-mor, eluded the vigilance of the guards and patrols in town. He, however, felt that it was of no use to attempt crossing the old stone bridge—the only one at that time in Inverness; the river was in high flood, but John was not to be foiled.





GLEN AFFARIC.

[To face page 215.]



He went down to the large ferry-boat which in those days busily plied between the Maggot and the Merkinch. When he reached the boat he found it firmly secured by a strong iron chain, fixed in a large stone, and locked. What was to be done? Neither chain nor lock could be broken without making a noise which might betray him. At last the happy thought occurred to him to try whether he could not move the stone into the boat. John, a man of herculean size and strength, succeeded in lifting it, and placing it in the craft, and having rowed himself quietly across, he left boat and stone in that position to sink or float as they pleased. With all the speed he could command, John went off to Inchvuilt, a distance of more than thirty-two miles from Inverness. He gave his wife and children some important instructions about the farm, bade them an affectionate farewell, and retraced his steps to Inverness.

As the muster roll was being called over next day, John was found missing. This led to unfavourable comments on his non-appearance, but General Fraser would not listen to the supposition that he had deserted. Just as the men were about to embark, a man in kilt and shirt was seen coming in great haste towards the camp, who, on approaching nearer, was discovered to be no other than the missing Ian Buidhemor, having walked over sixty-four miles during the night. "John," said General Fraser, "where have you been?" "Only to see my wife and children!" was John's reply.<sup>1</sup>

Another Strathglass man in this distinguished regi-

<sup>1</sup> *Celtic Magazine*, July 1881.

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ment was Alexander Macdonell from Invercannich known by the patronymic of Alastair Dubh. His courage and daring seem to have been the admiration of the whole regiment. By the united testimony of his countrymen who served in the Fraser Highlanders and afterwards returned to Strathglass, it was recorded in the district that Alastair Dubh was one of a camp of British soldiers occupying some outlying post in Canada, where some of the contents of the military stores under their charge were disappearing in a mysterious way; and the officers, determined to detect and punish the culprit, ordered the soldiers to watch the stores every night in turn until the thief was discovered. Strange to say, the first sentinel placed on this duty never returned. Sentry after sentry took his turn and place, not one of whom were seen again. One night the duty fell to the lot of some faint-hearted man, who, firmly believing that he would never return, was much disconcerted. Alastair Dubh, as compassionate as he was brave, pitied the poor man, and bade him cheer up, asking him at the same time what he would be disposed to give him if he would mount guard that night in his place. "Everything I have in the world," was the reply. Alastair did not ask for more than the loan of his bonnet, his top-coat, and his gun for that night only, all of which were readily placed at his disposal. Alastair began his preparations for the night-watch by crossing some pieces of wood, on which he placed his neighbour's top-coat and bonnet. He proceeded to examine the gun, and loaded it with two bullets. He then primed and loaded his own gun with a similar charge, re-

marking that such was his favourite shot when deer-stalking in Strathglass. Alastair mounted guard at the appointed time, took his two guns along with him, one bayonet, and the dummy in top-coat and bonnet. He stuck the dummy in the snow within some fifty or sixty yards of the sentry-box in which he stood. Ordering the man he relieved to retire, he expressed an opinion that the contents of his two muskets would give a warm reception to the first two thieves who approached the stores, and that the bayonet would probably satisfy the curiosity of a few more of them. During the night he noticed a huge object, under cover of a thick shower of snow, coming towards the stores by a circuitous route, apparently with the view of getting behind the dummy. In this the monster succeeded, and getting within a few paces of it, he, tiger-like, sprang upon it, when both fell on the snow. The strange object was soon on its legs; but no sooner was he up than a couple of bullets from Alastair brought him again to the ground. After a minute's moaning and rolling on the snow he managed to get up, and attempted to reach the sentry-box, but Macdonell fired at him a second time, sending two more bullets through his body, which brought the monster again to the ground, this time to leave it no more.

By this time the whole garrison beat to arms, and soon crowded round the body of a gigantic Red Indian. A strong party was sent on the track made in the snow by the wild savage in his approach; they thus managed to trace and reach his cave, which was found guarded by a fierce Red Indian squaw and a young man, both

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of whom prepared to give battle. The woman was killed in the struggle to capture them which ensued. The soldiers ransacked the cave, and found every cask of rum, box of sugar, and other articles that had been stolen from the camp, either wholly or partially consumed, in the cave. Horrible to relate, they also found the heads of every one of their missing comrades in the dreadful place. Just as if exhibited like trophies, each head was suspended by the queue, or pigtail, then worn by the British soldier, from a peg round the inside of this charnel-house.

Events like these are but incidents in the history of a corps which gained great praise for its soldier-like bearing from so fine a commander as the gallant General Wolfe.

But such a body of men could never be raised in the same circumscribed area now, for even of so popular a corps as the Lovat Scouts only one squadron of 120 men comes from Strathglass. It was not, however, without some hesitation that at the beginning of the nineteenth century the clearances were effected in this district. We have heard of the "Easbuigean Bana"; it was the "Bhantighearna Bhan,"—the fair lady—who long resisted the idea prevailing at that time of clearing off the smaller tenants and letting large tracts of land to farmers from the south. As a widow, she had the rental of part of the late Laird of Chisholm's lands, and so long as she lived the small tenants were safe in their holdings. At her death, however, the best farms were let secretly, and half the inhabitants of the Glen were left without house or home, whilst later on only two farmers of the name of

Chisholm were left, where before almost the whole strath had been farmed by them. For some years the Lord Lovat of the day received many of these on to lands in Glenstrathfarrar, but later this most fertile valley was devoted to deer also, and these are still in possession. Well may we look forward to the day when another "fair lady" may arise to give preference to the good people who long ago were such faithful Christians, such devoted tenants, and such sterling soldiers, as were those of whom the surviving traditions in Strathglass tell.

Having opened this present chapter by a reference to the close union which exists between the Highlanders at home and their relatives in Canada, I may perhaps be permitted to close it with a verse of the favourite Canadian boating song, the authorship of which has been so frequently discussed of late. The immediate reference is to the Isle of Arran, but the sentiments expressed have just as often been those of the Highland emigrants from Strathglass across the sea.

“Come foreign rage—let discord burst in slaughter ;  
Oh then for clansmen’s true and stern claymore  
The hearts that would have given their blood like water,  
Beat heavily beyond the Atlantic roar.”

*Antigonish Casket*, 21st November 1907.





DOOR-HANDLE AT SCALAN.





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