

# TRADITIONS OF STRATHGLASS.

BY COLIN CHISHOLM.

— o —  
I.

In this and the succeeding papers on the traditions of my native glen, I shall only select such legends as truthful and trustworthy people used to recite :

Straghlais a chruidh Chininn  
Cha robh mi ann aineol,  
'S ro mhath b' eol dhombh  
Gleanncanaich an fheoir.

There is an old tradition in Strathglass that all the inhabitants of the name of Chisholm in the district are descended from a colony of emigrants who left Caithness in troublesome times and located themselves in the Glen. From my earliest recollection I used to hear this story among the people. Some believed, some doubted, and some denied it altogether. In MacIan's sketches of the Highland Clans, there is a short account of the Clan Chisholm and how they settled in the Highlands, by James Logan, F.S.A. Scot., written by him for MacIan when he was a librarian in the British Museum, where he collected the data from which he wrote his admirable history of the "Scottish Gael." Finding the old Strathglass tradition partly, if not wholly substantiated by the following extract from No. 2, page 1, of the joint sketches by MacIan and Logan, let me place it before the reader, that he may judge for himself:—

"Harald, or Guthred, Thane of Caithness, flourished in the latter part of the twelfth century. Sir Robert Gordon gives him the surname of Chisholm; and the probability is, that it was the general name of his followers. He married the daughter of Madach, Earl of Athol, and became one of the most powerful chiefs in the north, where he created continued disturbances during the reign of William the Lion, by whom he was at last defeated and put to death, his lands being divided between Freskin, ancestor of the Earls of Sutherland, and Manus, or Magnus, son of Gillibreid, Earl of Angus. It seems that, from the rigorous prosecution to which the followers of Harald were subjected, they were compelled, as was the case with several other clans in troublous times, to seek for new possessions; and Strathglass offered an eligible position for maintaining their independence. These proceedings occurred about 1220."

This passage treats of one portion only of the traditional exodus of the Chisholms from Caithness, but the old Seanachies in the district used to say that most of the emigrants from Caithness continued their western march until they reached Strathglass. Yet, some remained behind. As a proof of this, it used to be pointed out that families of the name of Chisholm were found located in almost every district between Strathglass and Caithness. It can hardly be supposed that the newly arrived emigrants found Strathglass a land of milk and honey. If tradition is to be relied on, they had to displace a formidable enemy in the powerful Clan Forbes. It would appear that the Forbesees disputed every inch of what they considered to be their own territory with the Chisholms. The fortunes of

war favoured the unwelcome intruders from the east, and their descendants are to this day in possession of Strathglass. If charters or royal grants of land required attestation on sheepskin in those times, tradition is conveniently silent about such "trifling cobwebs." As might be expected the Chisholms had to guard their newly acquired possessions very sedulously. It is alleged that they kept watch and ward on both sides of the river Glass. The precipitous hill on whose ledgy bosom revels, runs, and leaps the famous Alt-na-glas-stig—(this burn was understood to be the headquarters of all the goblins of the glen)—was the watch-tower on the northern side of the strath; and on the opposite rocks of Crochail the sentry for the southern side used to be posted. There was no scarcity of loose pieces of rock or boulders of stone on either of these primitive military stations, and woe be to the enemy passing below while an active line of mountaineers continued to pour down such missiles before, behind, and among them. It is stated that by this sort of guerilla warfare the inhabitants of Strathglass turned back an army without coming to close quarters with them.

It may be inferred that the Clan Forbes looked with a jealous eye on their successors in Strathglass, and small blame to them if they did. Yet the traditions of the district do not reveal any continuous ill-feeling between the two clans. The only incident we heard of the kind among them was a serious affair in the church attached to the Clachan of Comar. In this quarrel, which took place about the middle of the sixteenth century, the principals were Alexander Chisholm and his father-in-law, "big Forbes." The origin of the dispute is not known, otherwise it would be related in the tradition. It appears that this Alexander Chisholm was a man of violent and ungovernable temper. The instant big Forbes saw his son-in-law on this occasion getting into a towering passion he sought safety in flight; the cruel son-in-law gave chase, naked sword in hand, and dealt, as he thought, a mortal blow to sever the head of Forbes from his body. He missed his aim, however, and delivered the blow against a stone forming part of the door archway. The roofless walls of this church are still standing intact, and the incision made by the desperate blow is pointed out to strangers and commented on with execration at all the funerals in the district when people meet; and probably this has been the practice from the time of the occurrence until now. Forbes fled through the churchyard, followed by Chisholm for about a quarter of a mile, until he was caught east of Kerrow, where his brutal son-in-law stabbed him to death. The field where he was assassinated is still called Iomaire an Fhoirbeisich, or Forbes' field.

This barbarous murder would seem to have been the result of a family quarrel. In addition to other crimes, it is said that this Alexander Chisholm forced the wife of one of the Macraes of Kintail to leave her children and an affectionate husband to elope with him. At the time this act took place Macrae was residing at Aridhuagan, on the Letterfearn side of Kintail. The injured man appears not to have harboured any great ill-feeling against his wife, for he sent one of her sons after her to Strathglass, possibly under the impression that having one of her children with her would make her happier in her new situation. This son was worthy of a better preceptor than Chisholm, for he became an excellent member of society, and his descendants ranked among the best tacksmen in Strathglass.

From the "Genealogy of the Macraes," the perusal of which I obtained from the editor of the *Celtic Magazine* since the foregoing was in MS., I find this woman was a daughter of Sir Dugall Mackenzie, "priest of Kintail," and that her husband was Finlay Macrae, whose brother Duncan lived at Crochail, and that it was during a visit to Duncan, her brother-in-law, that she became acquainted with Chisholm. "Sir Dugall's daughter was a very beautiful woman, but probably verified the saying, *Rara concordia formæ atque prudentiæ*; for Alexander Du Chisholm, son of Chisholm of Comar, falling in love with her, could not conceal his passion, but gave cause to people to think that he designed to decoy her from her husband, in so much that Finlay was advised to return with her home, which he did sooner than he otherwise intended. But the aforesaid Alexander Du Chisholm, with some confidants, going privately to Kintail, went the length of Arighugan, where Finlay then lived, and waiting the opportunity of his being from home, carried away his wife, and a young boy, his son, named Christopher, who followed his mother to Strathglass, where he became an able and rich man, and lived all his days. Of him are come the Macraes of Strathglass, and severals in Kintail. Finlay thinking his wife had been privy to the plot, disdained to call her back, and so repudiated her."

It is said this Alexander Chisholm murdered one of the Lovat family in Beinn-bhan, a hill between Giusachan and Glenmoriston. There is a cairn built on the spot to commemorate the tragic event, called Carn-mhic-Shimidh, or Lovat's Cairn. It is said that they were returning home from a battle in the south, and having arrived in sight of Erchless, Chisholm remarked that he could now "perceive Lurga-mhor-Eirchlais, where my brother was murdered." "'S olc an t'am cuimhnichidh so Alastair" (This is a bad time for reminding me of that event), said MacShimidh. "Cha bhi e nis fhèarr an traths" (It will not be better just now), replied the Chisholm. Then began the quarrel that ended fatally for Lovat. The old people of the district assert that men from the Fraser estate were seen in pursuit of the Chisholm, who ran off from his own house in Erchless, one of the Frasers shouting after him—

Seasamh math a Shiosalaich,  
Air lar do dhùcha thachair thu.

Which means—

Stand fast, Chisholm,  
You are in your own country.

This appeal to his pride and manhood stopped him instantly, and his enemies coming up killed him on the spot. It was to avenge the death of his half-brother, the young Chisholm, that Alastair Dubh committed the murder in Beinn-bhan. Enough, however, has been said of this cruel miscreant. What remains to be told is that not one of his descendants is now to be found in the Highlands. And I regret to have to record, in the interests of truth, such misdeeds on the part of a clansman, and to have to mention such a detestable crime on the part of Alastair Dubh Mac-an-t-Siosalaich.

(To be Continued.)

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## II.

It is a common tradition in Strathglass that it was proposed at one time to remove the centre of county business to a town to be built on the moor of Comar. This moor is a broad level promontory, jutting out for about a mile between two considerable Highland rivers; and it is situated in the most central part of the district, having a southern aspect, and water power on three of its sides, capable, if utilised, of driving all the machinery in the county. Add to this that the fourth side of this large plateau is a mountain of grey rock, partially covered with wood and verdure. The quality of the stone in this rock is considered to be very superior of its kind; and as to quantity, with an occasional dose of powder, it would build Inverness, Perth, and Edinburgh over again. With all these advantages, one cannot help seeing that nature has prepared this spot as an admirable site for a great and healthy town.

The Island chiefs, lairds, and people of the western part of the county argued that the moor of Comar was more central for the County Buildings than any other place to the east of it. But the chiefs and people resident in the eastern portion of the county maintained that one advantage in their favour outweighed all the arguments against them—viz., that they could at any time have stores of all kinds of water-borne goods at Inverness wherewith to supply the demands of the county. This was the pivot on which the principal argument revolved, and it was clearly conclusive in favour of Inverness.

Had the great carrier (the railway) been at that time, as it now is, within sixteen miles of the site alluded to, the Island chiefs might have carried their point. Whether the affairs of the shire would flourish better under the name of the County of Comar than they have flourished under Inverness-shire is a subject which does not call for immediate settlement. But I have no hesitation in saying that a town established at Comar would have been most central and beneficial in Strathglass.

Macleod of Macleod seemed to have been quite aware of the advantages that might accrue from the county town being built on the moor of Comar, inasmuch as he secured for himself, for his retinue, and for his tenantry, a halting place near the proposed site of the proposed capital of the county. Here they used to encamp, rest, and remain days and nights so long as it suited their convenience. From that time until now this halting place, consisting of a field of a few acres, is called Iomaire-Mhic-Leoid, or Macleod's field. Whether Macleod acquired his—perhaps nominal—title to this field by right, or by might, or by prescription, the traditions of the district do not inform us. It would appear, however, that there was something peculiar about the origin of allotting it to Macleod. There are five such halting places in Glencannaich, all of which were, and still are, *pro bono publico*. On one of these stances, Eilean-aghbarbh-uisg, I have even seen held a considerable cattle fair.

Garadh-an-ruidhe-bhric, Beul-ath Altnasocaich, and the foot of Garadh-na-criche, between Mam and Longart, were also halting places.

Rudha-dubh-Ardtaig was not only a halting place, but, like Eilean-aghbarbh-uisg, a recognised stance for drovers and travellers to pass a day or night in, and of which more presently. It is recorded that these places and similar spots throughout every glen and valley in the Highlands were accessible to all as places long consecrated by prescription for the public good.

Here and in connection with such places I must be pardoned for a slight digression. I have seen in England what appeared to me very remarkable tenacity on the part of the people to old rights something similar to the halting places alluded to. Not only are rights of way through the fields and meadows accessible to the public and maintained by them, but are frequently provided at each end with a stile. I well remember a right of way through the middle of the large dining room in the Ship Tavern, Water Lane, Thames Street, London, and I have seen the public passing through it repeatedly while dining there myself. Since then the tavern has been turned into merchants' and brokers' offices, but the ancient right of way has been retained through the centre of them. About twenty years ago the Italians resident in London commenced to build a large church for themselves in Hatton Garden, London. I saw it when the walls were nearly finished, when some old residenter in the neighbourhood came forward and declared that he remembered a right-of-way passing through the site of the building. The poor Italians were obliged to pull down all they had built on that site, and leave the right-of-way accessible to the public, though much sympathy was felt at the time for the civil and industrious foreigners. And last but not least, King George IV. attempted to close a right-of-way through Richmond Park, but a cobbler on the confines of the Park brought an interdict against the King. The case was tried before the highest Court in England, and decided in favour of the cobbler. I give these three cases as specimens of what I have seen and heard, and most heartily would I wish to see my countrymen in the Highlands inspired with the same determination to hold their rights with equal tenacity against those who are constantly robbing them of their ancient inheritance.

Among other celebrities Allan Dubh MacRanuill of Lundy passed a night in Rudha-dubh-Ardtaig, in Strathglass, with a creach he took from the Mackenzies. This Allan Dubh was the cruel barbarian who burnt the Church of Cille-Chriosd, *i.e.*, Christ Church, near Beauly, in the year 1603. This atrocious deed was done on a Sunday morning, when the whole congregation, chiefly Mackenzies, were at their devotions, all of whom perished either inside the burning pile or by the sword in the attempt to escape through the windows. I have heard old men in Strathglass stating that after Allan Dubh MacRanuill crossed the river at Beauly on his hasty return from the foul massacre he halted on *Bruthach-aphuirt*, opposite Beauly, about a mile and a half in a straight line from the scene of his diabolical work, and ordered his piper to play up the tune of "Cillechriosta." It was then that the piper for the first time played the melancholy part of the pibroch, the words of which are as follows:—

Chi mi thallud  
An smud mor,  
Smud mo dhunach

An smud mor,  
'S Cillechriosta  
'Na lasair mhor.

In England, as well as in Scotland, I have sometimes heard this pibroch as if the words of the first line ran thus—

Chi mi smud mor,

but I well remember old people in the Highlands saying that the piper who played "Cillechriosta" and omitted the word "thallud" did not follow the original. Over and over again a very old man named Duncan Macrae, who was considered a good judge of pipe music, said that Kenneth Mackenzie from Redcastle, known as "Coinneach Deas," was one of the best pipers that ever played the pibroch of "Cillechriosta," and he always played it as above described.

It was from Bruthach-a-phuirnt that Allan Dubh made the luckless division of his men when he sent thirty-seven of them round by Inverness. History informs us that they were closely chased by Murdoch Mackenzie of Redcastle with a party of men who overtook them at Torbreac, about three miles west of Inverness, where he found them in an ale-house, which he set on fire, and the thirty-seven suffered the same fate which in the earlier part of the day they had so wantonly inflicted on others. Allan Dubh and others crossed over from the Aird to the south side of Urquhart. Allan was soon overtaken by the Mackenzies, and the rest is already well known to the readers of the *Celtic Magazine*, and of Mackenzie's "History of the Mackenzies," pp. 157-163.

It is said that the level valley called Strathglass was at one period a sheet of water extending from Dunfionn, above Beaufort Castle (or Caisteal Dunie), to Cnockfionn, opposite Giusachan, and covering a distance of about fifteen miles in length, with an average breadth of about three-quarters of a mile. This valley is bounded on the south and north sides by a continuous range of two parallel hills. From their formation and general appearance one might readily incline to the belief that these hills formed, at some remote period, the two sides of a capacious basin. There are unmistakable traces of cultivation high up—almost on the top of some of these hills. There is an old place of sepulchre, Acha-na-h-eaglais, on the brow of a mountain range, about a mile south-east and considerably above Giusachan. This seems to prove that there were a number of inhabitants located high up here in bygone days. The name of the next cultivated portion of the hill is Druinach, plainly meaning the Druids' field. Whether or not the Druids held possession of the surrounding fields of arable land can only be left to conjecture. It is, however, certain that a considerable portion of the hill lands on each side of Strathglass bear the impress of a rude sort of cultivation at some pre-historic period. The appearance of remote industry through the hills used to be adduced as an element towards proving that what we now see as the valley below was formerly a great lake, of which the long stretch of level fields and meadows, forming the plains of Strathglass from east to west, for about the whole distance already mentioned, is said to have been the bed. I heard one of the best old Seanachies in the district saying, "Cha 'n eil ann san duthich so ach cladach aibhne," meaning that the whole valley was a mere river bed.

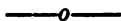
In support of this view he mentioned the name of Christopher Macrae, a Kintail man, admitted to have been one of the most reliable authorities on such matters in the Highlands. Macrae further stated to him that Strathglass acquired its name on account of the barrier at the east end of the lake, "Glas" being the Gaelic for a lock or barrier. It is asserted that one of the outlets from this lake discharged itself through the small valley south of Fanellan, by Brideag and Lonbuy. Faine-eilean evidently derives its name from a comparison with a ring, or circular island, the whole block of land or davoch being about as broad as it is long. The meandering river so slowly winding its placid course through the fertile plains of Strathglass, unwilling, as it were, to quit its parent hills, turns again half-way round at short intervals. To begin with the davoch of Clachan, its productive broad acres of arable land and splendid hill grazings are bestowed on the south side of the strath. Comar or Cam-ar, on the north side, seems to have been at one period attached to the davoch of Clachan, inasmuch as the burying-ground is always called Clachan of Comar, and the formation of the land clearly proves that the "Glas" at one period passed at the foot of the hills to the north of Comar. The division is impartially continued. On the north side is the great davoch of Invercannich; again, on the south, we have the davoch of Croicheal; the half-davoch of Struy to the north; the half-davoch of Mauld to the south; and the davoch of Erchless to the north; the davoch of Maine and Eskadale to the south; and the davoch of Aigais to the north. Never was there a better division of plain fields than is exhibited here on both sides of the river all the way east to what is called the Druim, ridge, or barrier. When the winter snows are thawing and running through all the glens from the watershed of Strathconan on the north to Glenmoriston on the south, and when they are all accumulated in the valley of Strathglass, they form what appears almost one lake at the foot of the mountains. Thus it has acquired from time immemorial the cognomen of the Sea of Aigais, and by this name it was well known throughout the whole Highlands.

It is related that a Strathglass man was once upon a time going across to the Lews. The craft he was in was overtaken by a severe storm, and the seamen wishing to resort to the old Jewish practice of throwing a human being overboard as a peace-offering to the waves, fixed on the Strathglass man as their victim. But the brave Glaiseach was equal to the occasion, and addressed his companions—"Tha bhuil oirbh fhearabh nach robh sibh riamh air cuan Aigais, air Mam-charraidh, nam Monadh Bhreachdaich, ma tha sibh gabhail eagal a so." Which means—"It is evident that you never were on the Ocean of Aigais, on the Mam of Carrie, or on the Hills of Breacachy, if you are afraid of this." He then took the helm into his own hands, and steered the vessel safely to the harbour of Stornoway. Well done, my countryman! With these observations I part with the traditional lake of Strathglass, and shall be glad to hear the opinion of some of the more learned members of the Field Club on the subject, and, notwithstanding tradition, will be disposed to abide by the result.

*(To be Continued.)*

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## III.

THERE is a very old tradition in Strathglass to the effect that the Chisholm's men and those of the Earl of Seaforth, in Kintail, held different opinions relative to the proper boundary on the hills between the estates of their respective chiefs. This contention was periodically renewed, sometimes at long intervals. The chiefs were always on good terms with each other, and never encouraged the perpetuation of the smallest misunderstanding among their vassals. The importunities of a few on both sides continued, however, and the usual council of wise men was called together, each of the two chiefs being surrounded by a select band of twenty advisers. Where or when the meeting was held is not recorded, but probably it was on one of those open seats of justice anciently called Toman-moid, or Stol-ceartais. This court of equity entered on the business of the day with a determination to settle the marches and prevent any disputes about them in all time coming. After a variety of suggestions by the most eminent men on both sides, it was ultimately agreed to leave the whole question to the wisdom of the two chiefs. This was probably the very thing the chiefs wished for. They now had an opportunity of showing their good sense and proving that they were worthy of the unlimited confidence reposed in them. And this is how they arranged to settle the question in dispute. Seaforth said "We ought to shame these fellows who cannot agree among themselves about a bit of hill grazing." "Indeed, yes," said the Chisholm. "Have you any old dairymaid in Comar?" asked Seaforth. "Indeed I have several," replied Chisholm. "Well," said Seaforth, "so have I; let us send a Kintail old woman away from Caisteal Donnan and a Strathglass one from Beinnvean, and wherever they meet that shall be the boundary between us for ever." This arrangement proved quite satisfactory to all concerned, so, without loss of time, the old women were sent off in the interest of their respective masters. In due course they met in the west end of Glen Affric, on a hillock between Loch-a-bheallaich and Altbeatha. Seaforth's dairymaid accosted her opponent thus:—"You have come too far towards Kintail, and I will go still further towards Strathglass," upon which the Chisholm's servant vowed that if the other dared to advance one step further it would prove worse for her. Regardless of threats, and as if the Kintail old woman were deaf, she attempted to pass on her eastward journey. Incensed by such a departure from the arrangements of their respective chiefs, the Cailleach Ghlaiseach dealt a desperate blow with her staff at the skull of her obstinate adversary, felling her flat to the ground, at the same time saying:—"Mar a cluinn, fairich;" If you do not hear, feel. It is recorded that she never recovered consciousness after receiving the blow. It is said, however, that the old crone from Strathglass made quite sure that her antagonist could do no more mischief, and before parting with her, she stuck her staff in the ground beside the lifeless body, tied a filleag or guailachan as a signal on the top of her staff, and marched in triumph back to Comar. Here she related all that had happened in con-



sequence of the obstinacy of her opponent. The Strathglass men repaired in all haste to the spot indicated, and found the story fully verified. The stick was found with its flying signal, which greatly facilitated the finding of the dead body of the Kintail woman. Cuaille is the Gaelic name for bludgeon, or ponderous staff. From that time until now the spot where the staff was found is called Cnoc-a-chuaille, or the hillock of the bludgeon.

Such is the tradition about Cnoc-a-chuaille, and from time immemorial this hillock has formed the acknowledged hill-march in Glen-Affarie between the Earl of Seaforth and the Chisholm, and any one who knows the locality will readily own that the latter has the lion's share of the hills in question.

This mode of settling such an important question will no doubt appear to modern readers very antiquated and almost incredible; but when we consider the intimate and friendly relations which had so long existed between the Chiefs of Chisholm and Kintail, and the close marriage alliances which repeatedly took place between the two families, there is nothing extraordinary in their agreeing to such a friendly settlement of their differences. Alexander Chisholm of Comar was married, in 1577, to Janet, daughter of Kenneth Mackenzie, Xth of Kintail. The second Chisholm after this Alexander married a daughter of Alexander Mackenzie, progenitor of Coul and Applecross, and son of Colin Cam Mackenzie, XIth of Kintail; while his immediate successor married a sister of Alexander Mackenzie, fourth of Gairloch.

It is related that a party of young men from Strathglass on a certain occasion agreed to have a few days' deer shooting through the corries and hills of Glen-Affarie. Accordingly they all arranged to meet on the following evening in a shieling at a central place called Athnamuileach. Whether some of the party had good sport on their way nearer home, whether they were induced to follow a herd of deer in a direction quite contrary to what they intended when leaving home, or whether they had reason to believe that by sleeping out that night in the heather there would be a certainty of sport by break of day on the following morning is not related in the legend. But it is stated that only one of the whole party put in an appearance at the bothy in Athnamuileach, as arranged on the previous day. Night came on and the solitary hunter in a faghleann-monidh began singing to himself:—

Tha 'n oidhche a tighinn,  
'S mise leam fhein,  
Gun mhire, gun mhanran,  
Ach m' amhaltean fhein.

The night is coming,  
And I am alone,  
Without mirth, without converse,  
But my own amusements alone.

Tired of singing and no companions coming, all alone save his faithful staghound, Bran, and his trusty long Spanish cuilbhear caol that never missed fire, and never wounded without killing, his ban-spainteach at his elbow, and his dog at his side, he spoke thus:—"We have already had singing, let us now have some music," and taking a pair of Jewish harps from his pocket, he began to play the plaintive tune of Cumha-an-aona-

mhic—*i.e.*, The Lament of the only son. While playing this ancient tune the hunter was startled by the sudden appearance at the door of a lady dressed in green, who introduced herself in the following terms :—

'S math an ceol an tromb  
Mar bhiodh a chuing tha na deigh,  
Gur miannach le fear gun toirt,  
I bhi mar stob na bheul.

The Gaelic readers of this legend will observe at once that the lady who intruded herself on the hunter's presence was anything but complimentary to him who was thus whiling away the evening. Stung by her reproaches, he raised his gun to his shoulder, and his faithful dog, Bran, leaped in between his master and the spectre in green. The war-like appearance of the hunter at once convinced the hag that immediate capitulation was the best policy, and absolutely necessary, and she sued for peace on the following conditions :—

Leag do ghunna,  
Caisg do chu,  
Thoir naigheachd,  
'S gheibh thu naigheachd.

"Put down your gun, curb your dog. Impart news and you shall receive news." The hunter complied with the terms, entered into conversation with her, and soon found that she was able to relate every act of his past life, and after she had satisfied him as to this, she volunteered to enlighten him as to his future. She revealed everything that was to happen to him during the rest of his days, fortelling him that he would leave Strathglass, go abroad, and when and where he would die. She told him he would never return to Affaric, and bade him, as he valued his life, to leave the glen with all possible speed, assuring him, at the same time, that she was the only friend he had near him that night; and on condition that he would not look behind him, gu gairm choileach; *i.e.* till the cock would crow, she would do all in her power to save his life. Having said this she disappeared.

Instantly he heard an unearthly noise and heavy stampede surrounding the bothy. Hastily wrapping his plaid about his shoulders, clutching and cocking his gun, he walked out and determined if need be to die hard. He could see neither friend nor foe outside, but the noise seemed, if possible, louder and nearer than before. The night was pitch dark, with heavy showers of rain and hailstones. But go he must, there was no alternative but leave Affaric at once and for ever. With all possible speed he began his hasty exit out of the glen he loved so much. From the moment he turned his back to Athnamuileach his dog, Bran, covered his retreat, apparently fighting, but never flinching from enormous odds. In the darkness of the stormy night the hunter made all haste to the south side of Loch Affaric, expecting that the edge of the lake would form an unerring guide for him, and so it did. But he paid the penalty of many an involuntary plunge into the water before he left its long and dreary margin several miles in length. Then he had to pass through the dark and very rough regions of Altgarbh, Pollan-bui, and Ladhar, running all the way as best he could, while the dog barked, fought, and keeping in check the dreadful, noisy and indescribable powers which so closely

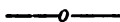
pursued his master all the time. Passing in his flight nearly opposite Beinn-mheadhan, a heathercock, crowing and flying, started up before the exhausted hunter. In the twinkling of an eye all was dead silence. He threw himself down upon his knees, returned thanks for his safety, and stretched himself there and then on the heather till morning. His dog came up as if afraid his master was dead, but on finding that he could speak, the faithful brute lay down beside him, and deliberately placed his forefeet over the breast of his master, as much as to say "take your rest and I will protect you." In this position the unfortunate hunter remained till daylight. About sunrise he began to wring his plaid, drenched with the rain, but could scarcely stand up. He soon discovered that he was close to a small hill lake called Lochan-a-chlaidheamh, the pond of the sword. Le ceum trom 's le cridhe briste, with heavy step and broken heart, he ascended an adjacent hillock called Carn-lochan-a-chlaidheamh, from the top of which he bade a sorrowful and final farewell to Glen-Affaric. Bha intinn mar fhuathos a gheamhraidh, his mind was like the winter hurricane. Fully believing in the prediction of the fairy, and conscious that he would never again see the bens and glens he was now leaving behind him, he began to wend his weary way towards his home in Strathglass. He was soon, however, suddenly startled by the distant howling of a dog, and, turning round, he saw that his faithful staghound, Bran, was no longer with him. Returning as best he could to the spot which he had left at break of day he found his recent bed full of marshy water, and poor Bran shivering, quite unable to move. He pulled the animal to dry ground, but the brute was still unable to walk or even stand on its legs, and he affectionately addressed it thus:—"You preserved my life last night, I shall endeavour to save yours to-day. If I do not succeed I shall perish in the attempt." He then managed to get poor Bran on his shoulders, and carried it in this way for some distance until they both fell over a steep precipice. The dog succeeded in getting up, but its master lay half unconscious on the grass below. He could, however, hear his dog howling piteously, near him. In this helpless state he was discovered by a Buachaille Seasgaich on his way with a herd of young cattle, which he was driving up to Doirecarnach. The herdsman at once gave all his attention to the distressed hunter, and succeeded in reaching Wester Knockfin with him in the dusk of the evening, where he left him in the affectionate hands of his own mother and sisters. He was so much bruised that he was unable to move out of bed for a week, and shortly after his faithful Bran died of the wounds he had received in the nocturnal battle he had so gallantly fought with the powers of darkness on the shady side of Glen Affaric. The poor dog was by him placed in a long wooden box, with the half of the plaid of the hunter, who divided it into two, wrapped round the battered and lacerated body of his faithful staghound. He buried him on the sunny side of a hillock above Wester Knockfin, and from that time until now this spot is called Torran-Ehrain, or Bran's hillock.

With deep sorrow the hunter announced his intention of leaving all his friends, his kindred, his country, and all that was dear to him. He made no secret of the prophecies revealed to him by the Bean-Shith at Athnamuileach, in which he firmly believed.

He was afterwards killed, bravely fighting the battles of his country.

## TRADITIONS OF STRATHGLASS.

BY COLIN CHISHOLM.



## IV.

THERE is a tradition current in Strathglass that a man named Ualan or Valentine, was falconer or "uchdadar" for the Earl of Moray, and used to hunt for his master on the hills of Strathglass. How he acquired the Gaelic name of "uchdadar" is not related, and it is said that he was the first man who called Cruinnis and the surroundings of Technig—"An Cromagheann," or Curved Glen. I have heard it stated that he gave it this apt designation when he for the first time looked westwards from Erchless. The uchdadar soon made his way far past the Cromagheann, and found Gleann-nam-fiadh and Coileach far better calculated to satisfy his sporting proclivities. It is alleged that he was in the habit of posting himself at a large stone on the north side of Gleann-nam-fiadh, and to get another man to drive the deer past him. In this favourite sport he used to make great havoc with his bow and arrow among the antlered tribe. This stone is about as large as a small house, and has the appearance of having fallen at some remote period from Creag-na-h-inghinn, a large rock directly above it. Ualan, the uchdadar, was famous in his time, and made the stone also famous, as it has been known ever since by the name of Clach-an-uchdadar. If tradition can be relied on the uchdadar was a man of herculean strength and endurance. In proof of which the following verse used to be recited:—

Am fiadh a mharbhadh e  
Ann am Braidh-mhion-luich  
Gu'n tugadh e  
Gun sgion do Challadar e.

The stag he would kill in Braidh-mhion-luich, he would carry without opening it to Cawdor. The whole distance being over sixty miles, the falconer must have been a powerful man indeed.

There is a "Precept under the Great Seal for infesting Ualan Chisholm of Comar in the lands of Knockfin, Comer-mor, Inver-channaicha, and Breakachies, dated 9th of April 1513." If this Ualan or Wiland was the hero of the above tradition—who carried the stag from Strathglass to Cawdor Castle, he was not, in other respects, any better than his neighbours, inasmuch as we find, about the year of his infestment in the lands described, that an Ualan Chisholm of Comar, Sir Donald of Lochalsh, and Macdonell of Glengarry, stormed the Castle of Urquhart, expelling the garrison, and wasting the surrounding country. Whether this act was considered meritorious or the reverse, it is certain that twenty-five years after the storming of Urquhart Castle, Ualan's eldest son, John, had received a charter under the Great Seal of his father's lands, dated 13th March 1538. I have heard it stated that at a meeting in Strathglass the Chisholm who was Chief of the Clan about the year 1725, related some extraordinary feats performed by Ualan the uchdadar. All the man pre-

sent were so much pleased with the glowing description their Chief gave of Ualan that they expressed their determination to make his name a household word. By the end of the year there was a son born to each of nine married men who were present at the meeting, and each of the nine boys was christened Ualan. The late Mr Valentine Chisholm (Inchully), who died fifty-nine years ago, at the age of ninety-six, was the last liver of the nine. I well remember the time when this Ualan of Inchully attended the wedding of John Forbes—Ian-Ban-Foirbeis—who married Mary, daughter of Allan Chisholm, Kerrow. Mary, the bride, was a granddaughter of Ualan. Nothing would please the young people at the wedding better than to see the venerable patriarch, Ualan, on the floor. The old gentleman was at the time over ninety years of age, but to please his young friends he acceded to their wish, and stepped on the floor with a firm gait, offering his arm to the bride. "Now, young people," said he, "let another couple of you come forward to dance this reel with the bride and myself." "Too glad of the chance," responded Ian Mor Mac Alastair 'ic Ruari, at the same moment giving his arm to his own grand-aunt, the bride's mother. This John Mor Chisholm was great grandson of Ualan's. We have now four generations on the floor, but a fifth came on in the person of Alexander, one of John's sons, a great-great-grandson of Ualan, so that there were actually five generations of the same family of the name Chisholm dancing the reel together. The aged Ualan was the seventh son of Colin of Knockfin, the senior cadet of Chisholm and of his spouse Helen, daughter of Patrick Grant, fourth Laird of Glenmoriston. The fourth Laird of Glenmoriston was married to Janet, the fourth daughter of Sir Ewen Cameron of Lochiel. This lady was grandmother to Ualan of Inchully, so that he was at the same time a grandson of the Laird of Glenmoriston and a great-grandson of Lochiel on the mother's side. On the father's side he was a grandson of the first Chisholm of Knockfin and great grandson of the Chisholm of Strathglass. The venerable Valentine Chisholm of Inchully was the father of Bishops John and Æneas Chisholm who died in Lismore and were buried in Cill-chiaran in that Island—the former of whom died in 1814 and the latter in 1818. According to an old tradition in the Highlands the seventh son in a family was generally supposed to be intended for the medical profession. Consequently his countrymen credited Ualan, he being the seventh son, with the power of healing the King's Evil. People were in the habit of coming from a distance to consult him in such cases, and the old gentleman was always very obliging, never refusing to administer so far as he could to the wants of rich or poor. When offered a fee he invariably accepted the sum of sixpence only, and that merely to comply with an old belief that a cure was more likely to be effected after a piece of silver had been paid for it. The name of Ualan became very common in the district in my own time.

The old people in Strathglass state that a battle was fought above Fasnacoil on a field called Glasbuidh or Aridhuian. The tradition is, that Clann 'ic Gille-onaich and the Macmillans of Lochaber formed an idea that they could, by uniting their forces, take possession of Strathglass. The Chisholms who were for a long period, prior to this, sole proprietors of the district, failed to see any justice in the demands of the intruders from the south-west. It was very galling to them to

hear of such an intention at any time, but especially at a time when their chief was a minor; so they decided on the most determined resistance. Their reply was an immediate declaration of war, expressing their readiness to abide by the arbitration of the sword, and to decide the merits or demerits of their contention on the Blackmoor of Baile-na-bruthach, between Clachan and Baile-na-haun. The would-be conquerors of Strathglass objected to the large level blackmoor to fight a battle on. They alleged—very properly in my opinion—that it was too much surrounded by club-farms, and that women and children from these farms might be killed unintentionally. Unfortunately for the enemy it was ultimately decided by the leaders of both parties to fight the battle on the fields of Aridhuian, where, no doubt, it was an advantage for the Chisholms to fight, on ground they must have known much better than their opponents, especially as there are several little hillocks on Aridhuian and a burn running through it. This enabled Chisholm of Knockfin—the leader of the Strathglass men—to place all the forces under his command in a favourable position.

It is stated in the traditions of the district that the Macmillans and their friends were dreadfully shattered by the first fire. Whether this was the result of the absence of proper discipline among the Lochaber men, or want of ability on the part of their leader, I know not, nor have I ever heard any cause assigned for it. But I have always heard that Knockfin disposed his men in such a masterly manner as to enable them to pour their bullets simultaneously into the front and flank of the enemy. Terrible as this volley was it does not appear to have satisfied the pugnacious proclivities of the intruders. Decimated as their ranks were, the brave Lochaber men rallied and returned again and again to the charge with little or no success. In the afternoon two of them came forward under some sort of flag of truce and arranged to bury their dead, and carry their wounded away. The following day no less than sixteen of the latter were removed on improvised ambulances. This mode of conveying sick, wounded, or dead bodies, was called in Gaelic “*cradh-leabaidh*,” a term, literally translated into English, meaning anguish or agony bed. The defeated Lochaber men did not consider it safe to pass through Strathglass by the ordinary road. They decided to cross the river Affaric with their melancholy procession, at the rough fords east of Achagiat, called Na Damhanan.

When a mere boy I was passing through the field of Aridhuian with an old man who lived during his youth in Fasanacoil, and who was tacksman for a portion of his life in the farm of that name. He had ample opportunities of knowing the traditions current in his time about the battle of Aridhuian. He pointed out to me where the battle commenced and where the enemy buried their dead.

I heard a number of curious incidents about this battle. One of them is to the following effect:—In their flight two or three of the Lochaber men saw an old woman trying to conceal a little boy from their view. One of them got hold of the boy. The simple old nurse implored him not to hurt the child, as he was the son of Mr Chisholm of Knockfin. “No fear of him,” said the refugee. “Keep quiet; I will take care of the child, and he will probably take care of me, till I get out of the Strathglass woods.” So saying he took the child up on his shoulders, re-

marking in Gaelic, "'S e guailleachan as fhearr leam a gheibh mi gu h-oiche," meaning that he considered the boy the safest tunic he could have got all day. The faithful nurse was very much alarmed, but she was told to follow quietly: and when they passed out of the wood above Giuasachan the boy was restored quite safely to her.

It is also related that one of the enemy was lying mortally wounded on the field of battle, and crying loudly for some one to give him a drink of water for the love of God. A Strathglass man who heard him answered, "As you ask for it in that Name you shall certainly have it," and so saying he went to the burn which runs through the field, took off his bonnet, filled it with water, and hastily returned to the bleeding man. He stooped down and held the water to the lips of the sufferer. Whilst in this position, performing an urgent act of mercy, the ungrateful wretch whom he was assisting pulled out from his pocket a "madadh achlais," or stiletto, and thrust it into the heart of his benefactor. The charitable man who lost his life whilst thus acting the part of the good Samaritan was of the family of Chisholms known as Clann 'ic Alastair Bhuidhe. I heard it said that he was a great-grand-uncle of John Buidhe Chisholm, who died about fifty years ago, at a very advanced age, and was for part of his life tenant of Glassburn.

At the same battle another Strathglass man was killed, if possible, in a still more treacherous manner. He was attacked by two of the enemy's swordsmen, both of whom he kept at bay with his good blade for a while, but at last, being hard pressed, he placed his back against a mud hut which stood near him. Here he parried every stroke and thrust aimed at him. Whether the length of his sword or his own superiority in wielding the weapon enabled him to defend himself against the sanguinary efforts of his two deadly enemies I know not. It is, however, certain that they saw no fair chance of vanquishing him. So one of them conceived the idea of killing the brave hero by the foulest means. To accomplish this he slipped round and entered the bothy quietly by the door, and by raising a sod made an aperture from within, whereby he obtained a view of the two accomplished swordsmen eager as tigers for each other's life blood. In an instant he saw the Strathglass man within reach of his sword, whereupon he thrust it through his body from behind. Thus the gallant swordsman fell without a single wound or scar except the fatal one from the weapon of the cowardly assassin in the bothy.

Such are the traditions current in the district about the battle of Aridhuian. I state them exactly as I heard them related over and over again by truthful and trustworthy men. It is said that the two deaths above described were the only casualties among the Strathglass men when defending their rights at the point of the sword.

It is a source of pleasure for me to conclude this paper with the statement of an old Seanachie, named Cameron, whom I heard saying—"Some of the best families and best soldiers in Lochaber positively refused to take any part whatever in the reckless enterprise which brought such a crushing defeat on a section of their countrymen at the battle of Aridhuian."

*(To be Continued.)*

## TRADITIONS OF STRATHGLASS.

BY COLIN CHISHOLM.

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V.

THE Glen of Coileach in Glasleitir, Strathglass, used to be considered one of the best sporting glens in Scotland. As such, some of the flower of the Highland proprietors and gentry resorted to it for deer stalking and sporting. This, the most exciting of Highland sports, is not always attended without danger. For instance—A hunter, eager for a shot, was cautiously crawling and peeping through the hollows and hillocks of Cuileagan it Stron-phris, a celebrated haunt of red deer—nearly opposite Coileach, on the north side of Glasleitir. Imagine the terror of the creeping man on observing a large stag roaring and running towards him. The hunter got up and ran with all possible speed, and succeeded in reaching the foot of a very large stone, on the top of which he threw his gun and hastily scrambled after it. Scarcely had he cleared the ground when his huge antlered pursuer was at the foot of the stone roaring round it, his large horns bent back to his hips, and his mouth wide open. The hunter seized his gun and shot the brute straight down his throat instantly killing him, saying—“You will stay there for awhile and I will stay here and load my gun, lest some of your friends might wish to revenge your death.”

At a certain season of the year these animals are most dangerous. An old woman, Rebecca Macrae, herding cattle for my father and grandfather close to this very stone, found two large stags, both dead, the antlers of each through the body of the other. A farmer's wife of my acquaintance, now living in Strathglass, having occasion to see some of her cattle about dusk, took a light to the byre. Suddenly she heard a tremendous roar not far from her. She took up the candle and rushed back to the house, and had scarcely time to shut the door when an antlered monster appeared at the window. She hastily put out the lights, when the huge brute took his departure towards the hills.

I said that many youths of the best Highland families resorted to Coileach for sport, but that it was not always unattended by danger. Here is proof:—

Sealg Choillich a rinn mo leon,  
Tha 'n Ruidhe-greadhnach fein a guil,  
Mac na-h' eilde bho na bheinn  
Dh-fhag oighre Chillduinn gun fhuil.

The blood of the heir of Kildun was here shed by a stag. There is a high mountain called Beinn-Fhionnla, not far from Ruidhe-greadhnach, where probably the heir of Kildun was killed. The poet supposes that the very field, formerly called the “Field of Joy,” on which they had their tents, weeps. The family of Kildun at one time possessed part of Lochalsh. There is a Kildun in the Island of Lewis, and another near Brahan. The latter was probably the property of the heir killed in Coileach. If I mistake not, there is an ancient title for Kildun, which was at one time disputed between the Seaforths and the Dingwalls of Kildun, and which I think is still in abeyance.

There is an old tradition to the effect that Fionnla-dubh-nam-fiadh was residing in Glasleitir before the laird of Gairloch sold it to the Chis-



holm. This Fionnla-dubh was very jealous of any one killing deer in Glasleitir. In his peregrinations through Coileach he on one occasion espied a man in Coireag Fhionnla, on the east side of Coileach, as if stalking deer. Fionnla-dubh, and a companion of his, distinguished from his neighbours by the sobriquet of the "Tachairean," made all haste towards the stalker, and came on him unawares. The unfortunate man was busily employed at the time disembowelling a stag in an out-of-the-way crevice on the west shoulder of Mamsoul, called "Na Leaban-an-faileachd," or Hiding-beds. According to tradition, it was here that "Mac-an-airaich-dhuibh" was caught "ann an curach feidh," by the barbarous Fionnla-dubh and his cruel accomplice, the "Tachairean," and there and then murdered for the heinous crime of killing a stage! No sooner was the horrible deed accomplished, than the fear of detection seized on the cowardly assassins. To conceal their crime, they carried the body across the ridge above them and hurled it down the face of the perpendicular rocks and precipices overhanging the Lochan-uaine, *i.e.*, the green lake behind Mamsoul. They then walked to the house of the murdered man, who at the time staid with his wife and children on the Chisholm's property in Glen-Affaric. The unfortunate woman, little suspecting the diabolical deed committed by her guests, began in all haste to prepare food for them. While thus busily engaged, Fionnla-dubh amused himself with the children, while the "Tachairean" stretched himself on a bed of rushes behind a block of wood, called in the vernacular, "Leabaidh-chul-beinge, took a pair of Jewish harps out of his pocket, and composed and played the tune of which the words are as follows :—

Bhean-an-tigh lion an gogan,  
Lion an gogan, lion an gogan,  
Bhean-an-tigh lion an gogan,  
'S gheibh thu do dhiol paidhidh.

Mac an airich dhuibh na laidhe,  
Dhuibh na laidhe, dhuibh na laidhe,  
Mac an airich dhuibh na laidhe,  
An lochan dubh a bhraighe.

Imagine anything to equal in callous audacity the inhuman proceedings of the assassins—serenading the wife and children of their victim, while their clothes were still saturated with his blood. Having regaled themselves at their victim's expense, by partaking of the food provided by him while in life, they went their way, but suspicion afterwards fell upon them, yet nothing could be proved against them, until some time after the body was discovered in the Lochan-uaine. This discovery was facilitated by the widow's recollection of the air played by the "Tachairean" on his Jewish harps. On finding the body, they sang a plaintive lament, beginning thus :—

'S diumbach mi de' n Tachairean,  
'S do dh-Fhionnla-dubh-nam-fiadh,  
'Dh-fhag mo shaibhlean gun tubhadh,  
'S mo chlan bheag gun bhiaidh,  
Chuir iad fear-mo-thighe san toll dhomhainn—  
Lochan dubh air nach eirich grian.

It is said that the sun never shines on the Lochan uaine, an idea which seems to have been well known to the widow. This is the tradition as I heard it from boyhood. I may, however, quote the account given from an old

MS. in Mackenzie's History of the Mackenzies, that the reader may compare it with the current tradition in Strathglass :—"The first outbreak between the Glengarry Macdonalds and the Mackenzies originated thus. One Duncan Mac Ian Uidhir Mhic Dhonnachaidh, known as 'a very honest gentleman,' who, in his early days, lived under Glengarry, and was a very good deerstalker and an excellent shot, often resorted to the forest of Glasletter, then the property of the Mackenzies of Gairloch, where he killed many of the deer. Some time afterwards Duncan was, in consequence of certain troubles in his own country, obliged to leave it, and he, with all his family and goods, took up his quarters in Glen-Affrick, close to the forest. Soon after he went, accompanied by a friend, to the nearest hill, and commenced his favourite pursuit of deerstalking. Mackenzie's forester perceiving him, and knowing him as an old poacher, cautiously walked up to him, came upon him unawares, and demanded that he should at once surrender himself and his arms. Duncan, finding that Gairloch's forester was accompanied by only one gillie, thought it an irrecoverable affront that he and his man should so yield, and refused to do so on any terms, whereupon the forester being ill-set, and remembering former abuses in their passages, he and his companion instantly killed the poachers, and buried them in the hill. Fionnla Dubh Mac Dhomhnuill Mhoir, and Donald Mac Ian Leith, a native of Gairloch, were suspected of the crime, but it was never proved against them, though they were both repeatedly put on their trial by the Barons of Kintail and Gairloch."

It will be seen that the most serious retribution soon followed the murder so secretly committed in Coileach. The author of this valuable work attributes the fierce wars which had taken place between the Mackenzies and the Macdonnells of Glengarry to this murder, and primarily from killing a stag in the Leaban-an-faileachd. For full accounts of the sanguinary wars between these two powerful families, see the work already quoted, pp. 122 to 127 and 140 to 165.

Some years ago I remember reading that the first feud which broke out between the Macdonalds of Glencoe and the Campbells of Breadalbane originated from a party of the latter seizing one or two of the Macdonalds deer-stalking on their grounds, and to mark their displeasure they cut off the ears of the two Macdonalds. From that day forth there were endless feuds and fights between the two clans. Here we have two of the most disastrous and lasting feuds that ever disgraced the annals of Scotland—the origin of which is traced to deer-killing.

But to return to Clann Ian Idhir. The tradition in Strathglass relative to this family is that a chief of Glengarry had two sons, each of whom was called John. To distinguish them from each other, the senior was called Ian-dubh, and the junior Ian-Odhar. It is said that the former remained in Glengarry, and his descendants were called "Teaghlach an t-Sithean;" the family of Sithean, a farm in Laggan, Glengarry. The latter went to Lochcarron, where he and his family flourished so well that it used to be said—"Attadale's Achantee, da Bhaile Clann-Ian-Idhir." The first of the name who settled in Strathglass came across the hills from Lochcarron and settled in Carri, Glencannich. His descendants became so numerous and so respected, that the Clishholm appointed them his Leine-chrios, or body guard, and for centuries one of the family was

standard-bearer for the Chisholm. On one unfortunate occasion only do we hear of any other than a Mac-Ian-Idhir being honoured with that office—on the fatal field of Culloden. About fifty-five years ago, the last lineal descendant (Ruari-Mac-Dhonuil, *i.e.*, Rory MacDonell) of the hereditary banner-bearers to the Chisholm emigrated to Upper Canada. He was then an old man, had no sons, and therefore it was considered right that he should nominate a worthy successor to his honourable office. I was present when Ruari Mac Dhonuil, known as Ruari Mac Ian Idhir, constituted as his successor his own namesake and nearest relation, Christopher Mac Donell, now residing at Techuig, as standard-bearer to the Chisholm.

(To be Continued.)

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ADIEU ! LOVED FRIENDS OF ATHOL BANK.

Adieu ! loved friends of Athol Bank,  
 I leave you with an aching breast ;  
 In your warm hearts mine found a home,  
 A cosy nook of peaceful rest.  
 Those joyous days in which I shared  
 Your wealth of hospitality ;  
 The converse dear, the bardic lore,  
 Will in my mem'ry cherished be.  
 Ofttimes the theme—our native land—  
 Its bards, and chiefs, and heroes bold,  
 Its battlefields where fought our sires  
 And freedom won in days of old ;  
 Our own Breadalbane's stately Bens,  
 Its corries, glens, and ruins gray,  
 The classic scenes that border round  
 The Dochart, Fraochie, and the Tay.  
 Belovèd patriarch, and revered !  
 With sprightly step and sunny smile,  
 The " Good Part " thou hast choosen well—  
 Leal Scot ! in thee there is no guile.  
 And thou, my trusty bosom friend !  
 Aye may thy verse new honours win,  
 Thine every line is chaste and pure,  
 Dear Bard of Kenmore and Killin !  
 Thou too, our beauteous, ripening rose,  
 With lovely eyes of warmest brown,  
 Of face so faultless and so fair,  
 On whose calm brow ne'er rests a frown—  
 Oh ! winsome lassie ! faithful, kind,  
 May happiness on thee descend,  
 And all that sweetens and endears  
 Through life and till thy journey's end !  
 Though sundered far our lines may be,  
 I'll with delight recall each day  
 Your friendships charming and sincere,  
 To cheer me when I'm far away.  
 Heaven bless you and those kindred hearts  
 Who so enriched with kindness true,  
 My gladsome *ceiliidh*, cherished dear,  
 To you and them a warm adieu !

## TRADITIONS OF STRATHGLASS.

BY COLIN CHISHOLM.

### VI.

It is said that the Chisholm, good old Rory, "Ruari-an-aidh," as he used to be familiarly called, was in treaty with the Laird of Gairloch for the purchase of Glasletter in Glen Cannich. The then Laird of Gairloch, Sir Alexander Mackenzie, ninth laird and second baronet, was locally known as "An Tighearna Breac." About 1720 he purchased some land in the low country of Ross, and continued for a few years afterwards to add to his estates. This rendered it necessary for him to think of selling the most distant portion of the Barony of Gairloch in Glasletter. The good old Chisholm made up his mind, if possible, to buy it. With this object the two lairds met, and went to see the Glasletter. On their way passing through the west end of Glencannich, they called on a very eccentric character, "Fearachar na Cosaig," who resided in Cosaig. He conveyed the two chiefs for about two miles up the glen. When about to leave them Sir Alexander asked him the following questions:—"Ciod i do bharail ormsa Fhearachair? tha mi dol a chreic na Glasleitreach!" "Ma ta," arsa Fhearachair, "Alastair cha 'n eil ach barail a bhruc de ladhran, barail bhog. Ach ciod a tha thu faighinn air a son? Am bheil thu faighinn uiread ri Beinn-fhionnla air a son?" "Cha 'n eil idir," arse Tighearna Ghearloch, "cha 'n eil mi faighinn uiread na cloiche sin air a son," 's e bualadh a bhrog air sconn cloiche. "Tha thu faoin Alastair," thuirt Fhearachair, "Ged thoisicheadh tu an diugh aig bun Beinn-fhionnla, agus a bhi gabhail di fad laithean do bheatha, cha chaith thu i, ach faodaidh tu uiread na cloiche sin, a chaitheamh an uin ghoirid agus bithidh a Ghlasleitir a dhith ort." "Tha thu ceart, ro cheart Fhearachair," arsa Tighearna Ghearloch, "agus bithidh 'bhuil." Thug an Siosalach suil air Fhearachair mar gun abradh e "Rinn thu 'n tubaist." Thuig Fhearachair mar bha, agus thuirt e, "Ach co ris a ghaolaich, Alastair, tha thu dol a reic na Glasleitreach?" "Ri do charaide fein, an Siosalach," arsa Tighearna Ghearloch. "Puthu! mas ann mar sin a tha," arsa Fhearachair, "'s beag eadar ribh fein i; 's cloinn chairdean sibh fein. Turas math dhuibh a dhaoine uaisle," arsa Fhearachair 's e cur eul a chinn ri na tighearnan. For the benefit of the unlearned I shall give the meaning in English of this familiar dialogue as follows:—"What do you think of me," said the Laird of Gairloch addressing Farquhar, "now that I am going to sell the Glasletter?" "My opinion of you is the same as the badger's opinion of his hoofs, a soft opinion; but how much are you getting for it, are you getting the size of Ben-Finlay of gold for it" (one of the highest mountains in the district)? "Oh! no, Farquhar, not even the size of this stone," striking his foot against a stone that lay near them. "Well, then, I beg to tell you that you are very foolish, for if you were to begin this day at the foot of Ben-Finlay and work at it for the remainder of your life, you could not spend it, but you could soon spend the size of this stone in gold, and then

Glasletter would be gone from you for ever." "You are right, quite right, Farquhar," replied Gairloch. The Chisholm looked askance at Farquhar, as much as to say, "you have spoiled my bargain." Farquhar, discovering that he had committed a mistake, then said, "But, my dear Alexander, who are you going to sell the Glasletter to?" "To your friend, the Chisholm," replied Gairloch. "Oh then," answered Farquhar, "if that is the case, it's a very small matter between yourselves, children of relations as you are. A good journey to you, gentlemen;" and Farquhar turned on his heels and left them.

The Laird of Gairloch, it will be seen, was not above consulting a poor mountain herdsman, whose familiarity with the two lairds will make the reader smile. The result was that Gairloch did not offer the Chisholm the Glasletter again for several years. Some five or six years after, however, the good old Chisholm bought Glasletter from Sir Alexander. I am not surprised at Gairloch having a great reluctance in parting with the Glasletter, considering that his family had it under a charter for about 220 years. How long they may have had it before is not clear, but it is historically true that they had a charter under the great seal of Gairloch, Glasletter and Coirre-nan-Cuilean, dated as early as the 8th April 1513.\*

Further on in this paper I shall relate a few more of Farquhar's eccentricities, but meanwhile let me state what good Rory intended to do with his newly acquired possessions. Soon after the purchase he entered into an agreement with a contractor to drain Loch Mulardich, a fresh water lake in Glencannich, which measures from east to west about five miles, and in some parts about a mile in breadth. It is bounded at the east end by a rocky barrier, which divides it from another lake called Loch-a-Bhana. This ridge between the two lakes extends to about 100 yards. It was calculated that by the draining of the loch some valuable grazings would be reclaimed and added to the already fine pastures about its upper end. The immense depth of the lake at the face of the intercepting rock was an encouragement to proceed with the proposed operations, especially as the bottom of Loch Mulardich was on a level with the surface of Loch-a-Bhana below. Consequently the contractor found no engineering difficulty in the work. He began with great vigour by blasting the intercepting rock, and removed piece after piece, leaving only a thin breast of rock at either end to keep back the water. Many a time have I measured with the end of my fishing-rod, the depth of the holes made and left in the rock by the borers, into which the intended charge of powder was never inserted; and part of the smithy wall which the men erected for sharpening their tools still remains. Everything was going on so successfully that the draining of Loch Mulardich was considered almost an accomplished fact, when the contractor accidentally lost his life. On a certain occasion good old Rory was on a visit to his father-in-law, Macdonnell of Glengarry, when a party went on a shooting expedition to Cuileachaidh, where a man resided named Alastair Mor, who considered himself no mean poet, and in greeting the Chisholm he addressed him—

Mo ghaol an Siosalach Glaiseach,  
Chunnaic mi an Cuileachaidh an de thu,

\* See Mackenzie's History of the Mackenzies, p. 305.

Cha 'n eil agad ach son nighean,  
 Gheibh thu Tighearna dha 'n te ain ;  
 Thug thu 'n cuid fhein do na Taillich  
 'S mor gu'm b fhearr leo agad fein e,  
 Leig thu ruith do Loch Mhulardaich,  
 'S rinn thu fasach dha 'n spreidh dhi.

John Tulloch, the contractor, was a native of Redcastle, a man of great energy and reputation in his business. A number of gentlemen were in the habit of spearing salmon at this time, and it was considered very good sport. John Tulloch, who joined a party at the Falls of Kilmorack, accidentally overbalanced himself while aiming his spear at a salmon, and fell into the caldron below, and thus ended, unfortunately, the scheme for draining Loch Mulardich.

Fearachar-na-Cosaig, already mentioned, was a descendant of Aonghas Odhar, a Glengarry Macdonell, and somewhat eccentric. On one occasion, in the depth of winter, he went down to the Strath for a bag of barley to have it ground at home on the quern. Returning home with his load, at a place called Carn-an-doire-dhuinn, and within two miles of his own house, Farquhar was crossing a hollow where he noticed a great number of birds taking shelter during a snow-storm. Farquhar, evidently a man of generous disposition, took the bag of barley from off the horse, and strewed the whole contents on the snow to feed the birds. On his arrival at home, in answer to his wife's enquiries and remonstrances for his foolish proceedings, he said that he could not see the Chisholm's birds starving without succouring them, and that he had given them all the barley. The story soon reached the ears of the Chisholm. Farquhar was sent for to Erchless ; a good supply of barley was presented to him ; and the same quantity ordered to him annually during his life. From that day till now the hollow in which Farquhar strewed the barley for "eoin beaga 'n t-Siosalaich," is known by the name of "Glaic an eorna," the hollow of the barley. So far as I am aware, no man has pitched his residence in Cosag since Farquhar left it, until Sir Joseph Radcliffe built a shooting box there some fifty years ago. After Sir Joseph left the lodge was rebuilt, and has since been the shooting residence of Sir Greville Smith and others, and it is now in the possession of Mr Winana. Considering that Cosag has been selected as the residence of men of wealth and taste, we must allow that old Farquhar was not a bad judge of locality when he originally built his mud hut.

There is a very old story current in Strathglass to the effect that one of the Lairds of Gairloch was accidentally killed in Lietry, in Glencannich, by a man who was watching the cattle pinfold. At the time this accident happened it was customary for farmers and owners of cattle to pinfold and watch them at night in a square or circular enclosure called "Buaille-mhart." This system was considered beneficial in more respects than one. First, the knowledge that the fold was sedulously watched was a terror to those inclined to try their hand at the old-fashioned game of cattle lifting ; second, it was well known that the fold, when properly attended to by shifting, replacing, and rebuilding alternately on different parts of the field, was one of the best possible means of fertilising the ground. For these reasons and others it may be taken for granted that the "Buaille-mhart" was pretty common to all parts of the Highlands. The watchers,

however, used to find occupation irksome during the dreary long nights in the fall of the year, and many and many a song was composed and sung to while away the time on these occasions.

Thug an oidhche nochd gu galliann,  
'S ann oirn tha caithris na Buaille.

Lietry, as I said, was the scene of the accident which terminated fatally to the Laird of Gairloch. A farmer in Lietry, named Macdonald, long, long ago, was watching the cattle fold, when about dusk one evening two gentlemen, Gairloch and his companion, came up and leant against the top lath in one of the hurdles composing the fence of the fold. Macdonald, observing them from a distance, instantly challenged them in the following terms:—"Co tha'n sud 's an uchd air a bhuaile?" (Who is there leaning on the fold?) Gairloch, knowing Macdonald's voice, with whom he was intimately acquainted, and in whose house he intended to pass that night, requested his companion not to answer that they might have some quiet fun with the watcher. Macdonald, however, became peremptory, and repeated his previous question, adding the rather significant threat—"Mar freagar sibh mise bithidh m' inthaidh aig an fhear as gile broilleach agaibh." (Unless you answer me my arrow shall be at him whose breast is the whitest), who turned out to be Gairloch, he having had on a light vest. A short pause ensued, but no answer came; and Macdonald raised his bow and shot the fatal arrow, which embedded itself in the neck of the Laird of Gairloch, who instantly fell to rise no more. The part of the neck which the arrow pierced is called in Gaelic "an Slugan;" and from that day to this the field on which the sad accident occurred is called "Raon an t-Slugain." Mackenzie lingered for about a week in Macdonald's house before death had put an end to his sufferings, and it is related that he fully exonerated Macdonald from blame, and begged, as his dying request, that no one would ever cast it up to him. But Macdonald himself was so much dejected in consequence of what happened, that he scarcely ever entered any society during the rest of his life.

(To be Continued.)

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THE HISTORY OF THE MACDONALDS AND LORDS OF THE ISLES.—A "First List of Subscribers" will be found in our advertising pages. It is naturally gratifying to receive the patronage of so many of the better classes, socially and intellectually, for a work on the merits of which they have been already able to form an opinion to some extent in these pages. Those wishing to secure copies of the History should lose no time in sending in their names, as *the issue is to be strictly limited*. It will soon be sent to press.

BOOKS RECEIVED and to be noticed in an early issue:—From David Douglas, Edinburgh, "Scotland in Early Christian Times," by Joseph Anderson; from "Fionn," "The Celtic Garland."

## TRADITIONS OF STRATHGLASS.

BY COLIN CHISHOLM.

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VII.

IN a short Gaelic speech, delivered by me at the last annual assembly of the Gaelic Society of Inverness, and reported in the *Celtic Magazine* for August, it is stated that the famous Captain Campbell ("Caimbeulach dubh Ear-raghael") was not without some sympathy with his neighbours, when he acted as the officer in command of the camp at Browlin in 1746. I may here give an instance. Some cattle belonging to my great-grandfather, Colin Chisholm, formerly at Lietrie, strayed across from Glencannich to Glenstrathfarar. The old gentleman went to see Captain Campbell, who not only released the cattle, but while they were commenting on the sad state of the country around them, they noticed another herd of cattle browsing on Fuaran-na-Callanaich, about a mile from where they stood. Captain Campbell remarked, "I know whose cattle these are—they belong to Captain Chisholm of Prince Charlie's army. When you take your own cattle away, drive his along with you, and tell Captain Chisholm of Knockfin to keep them out of my sight for the future, for if my men should bring them in to the camp he will never see them again." So much for Captain Campbell's sympathy with his Highland countrymen. The ancestor of mine here referred to was a young officer, and fought for the Stuarts under the Earl of Mar at Sheriffmuir. He fought again for the same unfortunate cause under the obstinate Murray at Culloden.

I stated in the same Gaelic address that the hated Major Lockhart of 1745 gave peremptory orders to the Chisholm's two sons, John and James—both of whom were commissioned officers in the Royal army—to be ready the following morning to assist in burning their father's castle and estates. After the battle of Druimossie, or Culloden, the Royal army amused themselves by burning or otherwise destroying all that came within their reach on some of the Highland estates. Among the rest, Beaufort Castle and all the buildings on the Lovat estates were reduced to ashes. There was a camp stationed on Convent Bank, another at Duny, and one at Raonfearna, at Struy. Thence a strong party was sent to Glenstrathfarar, to burn and destroy everything that an invading army could destroy. This company was commanded by Captain Campbell, "Black Campbell of Argyle," whom the Jacobite poet, Alexander Macdonald, and the Aireach Muileach, immortalised by alternate satire and eulogy. So completely did Campbell and his party do their work, that they drove before them to the newly-formed camp at Browlin every cow and animal worth eating, and burned every house and hut in the whole glen. But before burning them, the dwellings were ransacked by the soldiers, and any articles of value they found were carried by them to the camp at Browlin. After selecting such of the smaller valuables as were to be forwarded to the camp at Raonfearna, a white horse was loaded with a portion of the spoil and sent in charge of two red-coated soldiers across Bacidh—one of the hills which intervene between Glencannich and Glenstrathfarar, and the ridge of which is the boundary in that part



between the lands of Chisholm and Lord Lovat. This road was probably chosen from motives of prudence and to avoid the burning embers of the smouldering villages through Glenstrathfarar. Whatever the motives, the expected security for the unfortunate soldiers turned out to be worse than useless, inasmuch as they were met on the Chisholm's side of the hill by two Glenstrathfarar men close to a place called Ruidh-Bhacidh. These men disputed the right of the red-coats to the booty being carried on the white horse. As might be expected mortal combat ensued, and one of the soldiers soon fell to rise no more. The other took to his heels with the speed of a hare before the hounds, leaving his pursuers far behind. He soon landed at Lub-mhor, a shieling between Leitrie and Carri. Here there were only women and children herding cattle. On the approach of the half-naked and half-maddened soldier, shouting and praying for protection and mercy, the women and children at the shieling took themselves off to the hills, and the soldier (if possible) increased his speed, following the course of the river, shouting and roaring throughout. The distance between Bacidh and Struy being about twelve miles, the fleet-footed red-coat got over the distance in a wonderfully short time. All who saw him in his flying terror, believing that he was a raving maniac, cleared the way for him until he reached the camp at Raonfearna. I shall leave him there to rest while I return to the scene of the combat at Bacidh.

An eye-witness detailed what took place, and it has been handed down by tradition as follows:--When the runaway soldier out-distanced his savage pursuers, they turned back and quickly resumed their ugly work. To begin with, the white horse was brought to a bog, the valuables stripped off his back, a pit dug, and a dirk thrust in each side of his heart, and the animal hurled out of sight in the pit. Another pit was hastily prepared for the dead soldier, and he was dragged by the legs and thrown into it. The eye-witness alluded to was a girl of the name of Cameron, who happened to be at the time herding her father's goats on the face of Tudar, an adjacent hill. From the first sight Cameron had of the red-coats she crouched down in a hollow to hide herself, and with wonderful presence of mind kept quiet in her hiding-place until she saw the corpse of a fellow-creature pulled by the ankles and thrown into the yawning bog. At that moment, however, she gave way to a terrible coronach, in frenzy left her hiding-place and ran off. Seeing her, and alarmed at the unexpected discovery, the butchering gravediggers gave chase to the terrified girl, seized her, and questioned her as to the cause of her violent grief. She assured them that she fell asleep while herding her father's goats, and that now she could not find them, and she was sure to incur her mother's displeasure. With this excuse, and the hurry to finish their unholy work, they allowed her to return to Carri, where her father was a farmer.

Let me now give an idea of the commotion this foul tragedy at Bacidh caused throughout the four camps in the district, and in the principal one at Inverness. Every soldier and officer from Browlin to Inverness were seized with a determination to retaliate, and eagerly wished for an opportunity of avenging the death of their comrade in arms. The news was almost instantly conveyed to Major Lockhart, who was commanding officer at the time at Inverness. This officer ordered certain companies to be ready next morning to accompany him to burn the country of the Chisholm, and among the officers whom he selected for this

expedition were John and James, the Chisholm's two sons. The selection was considered harsh and cruel, even in military circles, and the sons had an interview with Major Lockhart, urging him to institute such an enquiry as they were sure would bring the murderers of the soldier to condign punishment. To this course the brutal Major would not listen, and instantly ordered the young officers out of his presence. Nothing less than fire and sword could satisfy the avenging cravings of this cruel officer. However, as he was about to retire to bed that same evening, a stray bullet found a billet in his body. He was hurled before his Maker in an instant, and Strathglass has not yet been burnt. No one for a moment supposed that the death of the murdered soldier ought not to be avenged. Yet the fact of his being killed immediately as he crossed the boundary between the lands of Lord Lovat and Chisholm could not justify any one out of a lunatic asylum to have recourse to fire and sword without the least regard to guilt or innocence. Probably Major Lockhart may have had discretionary power conferred upon him by King George or by the butcher Duke. But whoever gave him this power, it would appear that the Devil himself directed him in its application. Without the shadow of a doubt it was the immediate cause of his own destruction.

This Major Lockhart, who, by his cruelties on this occasion, has obtained an infamous notoriety, some time before this marched with a detachment into the country of the Macdonalds of Barisdale, and laid waste and destroyed their dwellings. Some of these poor people had obtained protection from Lord Loudon; but the Major disregarded them, and told the people who had them that not even a warrant from Heaven should prevent him from executing his orders.\* Any one not possessed of humanity is simply a barbarian, but a soldier without religion or humanity is a monster; especially when invested with authority to destroy life and property at pleasure, and equipped with the weapons of death.

To illustrate this statement let me give a short account of a cruel murder committed by a brutal soldier at a farm in Glencannich, called Tombuie. The tradition in the Glen is as follows:—The people on this club farm 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 Glac-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 entering 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 its 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 and

\* Fullarton's History of the Highland Clans, p. 678.

humanity, 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 transixed on the point of his sword. Not satisfied with this brutal act, the monster threatened to report his comrade who had just 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.

Here is another case in point. At the time the Clothing Act was in force, viz.—when the *filleadh-beag* and *breacan-uallach* were unmeaningly proscribed by English law, or, as some old people used to say, by the fiat of President Forbes, a company of red-coated soldiers were loitering through Glencannich, when they spied a young man dressed in kilt and tartan hose. He was at the time loading a sledge cart with black stem brackens for thatch. Two servant girls were assisting him in collecting the brackens. On their own unchallenged statement we have it carried down by tradition, that as they began to make the load, standing on an eminence called *Tom-na-cloichmoire*, in *Badan-a-gharaidh*, half-way between *Lietrie* and *Shalavanach*, on placing the first armful of brackens in the cart the young man alluded to turned suddenly round to them and exclaimed—“Oh! God! look at the dead man in the cart, look at his kilt, hose, and garters.” The girls assured him they could see nothing but the brackens he had placed there. After a moment or two the young man owned that he could no longer see what a few minutes previously appeared to him to be the figure of a dead man.

After some chaffing from his assistants for his apparent credulity, he went on with the load, arranged it on the cart, leading his horse down hill, and coming to the side of a lake at *Fasadh-coinntich*, at the end of which there is a small promontory jutting out into the water. When turning this point the kilted man observed for the first time that his movements were watched. He soon found himself surrounded on all sides by a cordon of soldiers, disposed in line to prevent the possibility of his escape. Determined not to be caught alive or disgrace his dress by surrender, the brave fellow took to the water and swam across, but while climbing a small rock on the opposite side he was fired at, fell back in the water, and perished in presence of his pursuers. The servants before-mentioned, seeing the dreadful deed, ran off and told the people of *Lietrie* what had happened to their friend. His neighbours went at once to the spot and found his lifeless body at the edge of the water where he fell. They turned the brackens out of the sledge cart, placed the corpse in it just as it had been taken from the water dressed in kilt and hose, and the unfortunate man was carried to his own residence in the cart.

If there be no meaning or reality in the word “presentiment” or second-

sight, it will not be easy to account for the terror with which the young man called God to witness that he saw a dead man in his cart.

It is not my wish nor is it my interest to add one word to or change a syllable in the foregoing incidents. They are here told simply as I heard them related by old people in the neighbourhood, two of whom personally recollected some of the events that happened in and even before the eventful year of 1745. I was born and brought up at Lietrie, within half a mile of where the man was thus murdered for the crime of wearing a strip of plaited tartan round his hips. The combat at Bacidh took place within a mile and a half of Lietrie, and the diabolical murder of the innocent infant was committed at Tombuie, within four miles of the same place.

Let no one imagine that I refer to those sanguinary times with the view of disparaging the noble profession of arms. My opinion, on the contrary, is, that so long as Christian as well as Pagan nations continue to countenance the scandal of war, the character and profession of the soldier cannot be too much refined and elevated.

(To be Continued.)

#### EVICCTIONS IN THE SCOTTISH HIGHLANDS.

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THE editor of the *Celtic Magazine* has, in greater measure than almost any one known to the present generation, rendered valuable service to the Highlands by his protracted and assiduous researches into the history of their clans, and his vast acquaintance with Celtic literature, to the enrichment and preservation of which he has devoted the labours of his pen for many years past. In the pamphlet before us Mr Mackenzie makes an important contribution to our knowledge of the subject of the depopulation of the Highlands and its causes. He presents a series of vivid sketches of the evictions which have taken place at Glengarry, Strathglass, Kintail, Glenelg, Skye, Uist, Barra, Coigeach, Sutherland, and elsewhere since the last futile attempt of the Pretender to recover the throne of the Stuarts in 1745, beginning with the Glengarry expulsion of 1853. Some of the individual cases of hardship and suffering which resulted from that cruel act, perpetrated, too, mainly at the instance of a woman, are, even at this distance of time, painful to read. . . . The position of the Highland crofter is a subject on which Mr Mackenzie may well claim to speak with authority. It is to be deplored that much that has been written on this subject has been done by men who have had no previous real knowledge of the facts, and who, when opportunity presented, seem to have neglected to avail themselves of it, being content to obtain a one-sided view from persons whose interests naturally presupposed bias, and whose information should therefore have been received with all the more caution. Mr Mackenzie can speak from "bitter experience of the crofter's lowly condition, contracted means, hardships, and incessant struggles with life generally." His picture is, we believe, a thoroughly truthful and honest one. He shows how utterly impossible it is even with the best management of the average croft—from one to four acres—to raise sufficient for keeping the crofter's family above starvation point, and his evidence is minute and veracious. To all interested in the population question in the Highlands, and in the question of agriculture as pursued in the north of Scotland, this pamphlet will afford much information which will be valuable, because, in our opinion, thoroughly reliable.—*Edinburgh Daily Review*.

## TRADITIONS OF STRATHGLASS.

BY COLIN CHISHOLM.

## VIII.

IN my last I mentioned that the cruelties of the notorious Major Lockhart of 1745 were the immediate cause of his having been hurled before his Maker without a moment's notice. This tyrant distinguished himself as one of the most merciless even among the Duke of Cumberland's followers. To this day his name is mentioned in the Highlands with execration. In the Jacobite ballads of the period he had a prominent place. One lady, whom he robbed of her fold of cattle, immortalizes him in a plaintive song (without a word of invective) which she begins thus :—

Tha crodh agam an Sasunn,  
'S tha iad an glasadh am pairce,  
Ma ghabhas sibh an urra ri m' thochradh  
'S e Maidsear Logard an t-airsach.

Unfortunately, there were other officers stationed in the Highlands who committed indescribable excesses, under pretence of obeying the orders of the Royal Butcher, but to the credit of English officers generally, there were among them men who not only positively refused to obey the brutal Duke, but offered him their commissions rather than do so. On the field of Culloden the Duke ordered one officer after another to despatch Charles Fraser, younger of Inverallochie, lying wounded among the dead and the dying, merely because he raised his head and looked at them ; and in turn each officer, to his honour, refused. Wolfe, the first officer who tendered his commission, stated that he did not hold it for the purpose of acting as a common executioner, but to act as an officer and a gentleman. The Butcher then ordered a common soldier to club the wounded Highlander to death with the but-end of his musket. So much for the humanity of that King's son. Historians inform us that the excesses committed in the Highlands, by order of the Duke of Cumberland, are without parallel in the annals of the world, except perhaps in the atrocious barbarities committed under Hyder Ali when he entered the Carnatic ; ach—

Ge b'oil le neart Hyder Ali,  
Thug an Reiseamaid Thaileach dheth cis,  
Dha 'm bu shuaicheantas cabar,  
Shiubhladh uallach air bharaibh na frith.

The comparisons drawn between Hyder Ali and Duke William and the brave Kintail Regiment reminds me that I had heard old men relating that the Duke of Cumberland when at Inverness sent to Brahan for the Earl of Seaforth, and told him that the King was informed that he (the Earl) was also against him, though he took no active part in the Rebellion, to which Seaforth replied—"There is not a word of truth in that ; for if I and my clan had been against your father, neither you nor any other man belonging to your father would have come across the Black

Water yet. When you see the King, your father, explain this, my statement, to His Majesty, will you?" The Duke never sent for Seaforth afterwards to Inverness.

In the retreat from Culloden the Grants of Glenmorriston and Urquhart, the Frasers of the Aird, and the Chisholms of Strathglass, kept closely together, shooting any unfortunate trooper that ventured within range of their long Spanish muskets. While this amusement was rather briskly going on, and the men at the same time making the best of their way to Inverness, a company of Argyleshire Highlanders who followed the Duke, rushed on to the old stone bridge across the river Ness, and closed and locked its massive iron gates. They then constituted themselves into a guard to prevent the gates from being broken open, and to prevent the possibility of escape by the Highland fugitives, who were closely pursued by the Duke's cavalry and artillery. As might be expected the narrow avenue of Bridge Street (as it then stood) was soon crowded with a mass of retreating Highlanders. At a fortunate moment Fraser of Reilig appeared on the scene, and commanded the Argyle-men to open the gates; but the spirit which induced them to run all the way from Culloden to secure, as they expected, the wholesale slaughter of their countrymen at the bridge, induced them to disregard Reilig's orders. He then hastily addressed the crowd, and assured them that unless they released themselves instantly from their jammed-in position in Bridge Street, they would soon be annihilated by Cumberland's red-coats. Up with your swords, said Reilig, and cut to pieces every man of that vicious guard. In another instant there was not a living man of the Argyle guard on the ground. At that critical moment a gentleman riding a strong spirited horse, shouted out at the top of his voice, "Clear a passage for me in the middle of the street." He spurred and galloped his horse, and brought his breast against the top rail of the gate. The rail slightly yielded to the shock. The rider hastened back to the top of the street, and again spurring and galloping his noble steed, he brought him full against the same place, on this occasion striking at the same moment the rail with the soles of his own feet. The stubborn iron yielded to the shock, the gate was forced into the form of a semi-circle. The spirited animal fell dead on the spot, and his noble rider came to the ground only to rise with much injured though unbroken limbs. The men soon twisted the gates out of their way, and the passage of the bridge was cleared.

My great-grandfather was one of those in Bridge Street, and my grandfather had a perfect recollection of his going to and returning from Culloden. Some of the men were much exhausted after the tough affair at the bridge. My great-grandfather was advanced in years (he fought for the Chevalier at Sheriffmuir, thirty years before Culloden), and being also a big, heavy man, was much exhausted, and on crossing the bridge at the west end he proposed to ride home on one of the numerous ponies which there awaited them. There was no time to look for a saddle; the best substitute was a big plaid an aged woman was carrying on her shoulders, for which he exchanged some pieces of silver. Hastily adjusting it on one of the ponies, he asked one of his comrades in arms, my other great-grandfather, Uilleam Mac Dhonuil Ruaidh, William Chisholm, Moor of Comar, to help him to mount. In his hurry to oblige his neighbour William threw him clean over, and on going round to the other side

to give him another lift, the old hag came and snatched her plaid away, taking it and the silver together. They saw no more of her, but applied the rod to the pony until they dismissed it somewhere in Dunain wood.

The old gentleman, who thus managed to get out of danger from the Royal troops, stood alongside the Chisholm's piper when that master craftsman distinguished himself, as stated in my last, at the Battle of Sheriffmuir.

The old people of Strathglass were not in the least surprised to hear that Ian Beag, the celebrated piper, performed feats quite beyond the powers of any other piper. They had always attributed exceptional and extraordinary powers of music to the Black Chanter, "Am Feadan Dubh." They used to say that long ago a chief of Chisholm staid for a time in Rome, who, on his return, brought home among other valuables, the famous Black Chanter, combining in itself all manner of musical charms. Though manufactured of the hardest and blackest ebony, it was not impervious to the gnawing effects of time. Consequently it had been supported and strapped with bands and hoops of silver by successive Chiefs of Chisholm. This gave it the familiar name of "Maighdean a Chuarain," the Maiden of the Sandal. It is said that along with its musical charms it had other qualities the reverse of charming. When a member of the Chief's family was about to die, the Black Chanter was quite silent, or if not entirely mute for the time, the best piper that ever handled a set of pipes could not get a correct note out of this wonderful Italian Chanter. So say the legends; and a native poet, Donald Chisholm, as if determined to perpetuate his admiration of it, says in one of his many sweet effusions—

Fraoch Eadailteach binn,  
'S e gu h-airgidach grunn,  
Cha robh an Alba  
Na fhuair cis deth an ceol.

Comar, in the heart of Strathglass, was usually the residence of the Chiefs of Chisholm, when the heir-apparent was unmarried. When married his father always established him in Comar while he himself resided at the old House of Erchless until the modern Castle was built. The practice was continued long afterwards. I have seen old people in the district who remembered two of the very best proprietors they ever had that began their probation as chiefs in Comar. The chief used to say that the best possible training for the young laird was to begin life among the most comfortable portion of his tenantry. Some people of the present day will smile at the idea; yet experience has proved its wisdom. Thus a Highland Court on a moderate scale was established in the very centre of the people. From this centre of genuine hospitality a virtuous and exemplary mode of life used to flow. If tradition speaks aright the ties of friendship and mutual confidence never stood on a firmer basis anywhere between landlord and tenant than in the country of Chisholm. The alacrity with which the tenants furnished their chief with the requisite number of men to procure commissions for such of his sons as made choice of the profession of arms was wonderful. The process was simple but effective, and was as follows:— Either the ground officer or the wood ranger would call out with stentorian voice, at the door of the chapel after mass on Sunday, that the Chisholm

wished every man on his estate to assemble on a given day to meet him at the local inn of Cannich, or Clachan, as the case might be. The request was readily and loyally attended to. Farmers brought their sons, men servants, and all their dependants, and took a pardonable pride in introducing them to their chief. He had only to state the number of men he wished, and the quota was soon made up. On one occasion, while these preliminaries were going on, an eye-witness told me that he saw Christina Macrae, a fine looking woman, of commanding appearance, approaching Alexander XVI. of Chisholm and introducing herself as the widow of the late John Ban Chisholm of Lietrie. She then presented her seven sons, Alexander, John, James, Rory, Archy, Duncan, and Alexander, junior, adding that she brought the seven to their noble chief that he might take his choice of them. The Chisholm replied, "Magnanimous woman, so long as I live you will never be without a friend." He then asked John whether he wished to be a soldier with his own son Duncan, when John at once answered, "With all my heart." Another of the brothers, Duncan, disappointed that the choice had not fallen upon himself, also volunteered. This Duncan was afterwards killed in action, in America, leaving one son, who followed his father's profession, became a commissioned officer, and fell at Waterloo. John dying early, only attained the rank of Sergeant-Major. James, the widow's third son, enlisted afterwards as a private soldier in Inverness, and after distinguished service diod a Lieut.-Colonel in Strathglass. The following is a copy of the inscription on his tomb in the Clachan of Comar:—"Here rest the remains of Lieutenant-Colonel James Chisholm, of the Royal African Corps. This most distinguished officer having served his king and country for a period of thirty-eight years in different parts of Europe, Asia, Africa, retired to his native glen covered with wounds. He died on the 19th November 1821, aged 56." Rory, the fourth of the family, had two sons, James and John. The latter died a commissioned officer at Comar, Strathglass, and James rose rapidly to the rank of Colonel in one of the Colonial Regiments, and died while acting as Governor of the Gold Coast in Africa. A short time before his death he raised a native regiment at his own expense, in Africa, which strained his means. He died soon afterwards, his valuable services being early lost to the country, and his life and property lost to his friends. The widowed mother of such a distinguished family of soldiers had also five daughters, one of whom, Catherine, married Donald Maclean, formerly living at Carri, Glen-Cannich. Catherine had three sons, Rory, James, and Duncan. Rory was a Captain in the British army, and died in the United States. James became a Major, and died a few years ago at Boulogne. Duncan, who died young, was an Ensign. This patriotic Highland woman coming with her seven sons to her chief that he might pick and choose from them is a fair illustration of the genuine attachment of the Highlanders not so very long ago to their chiefs. Had she lived to an advanced age she might have seen one of her sons a Lieutenant-Colonel, one a Sergeant-Major; a grandson a Colonel and Governor of a British colony, another a Major, one a Captain, and three others Ensigns.

*(To be Continued.)*

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## TRADITIONS OF STRATHGLASS.

BY COLIN CHISHOLM.

### IX.

THE cruelties of Hyder Ali, referred to last month, reminds me that a Strathglass man perished in the infamous Black Hole of Calcutta in 1756. This young man, Alexander Fraser, was one of the nine sons of Fraser of Culbokie and Guisachan, by his wife, a daughter of Mr Macdonell of Ardnabi. Three of their sons died at Guisachan, two in America, two in the East Indies, and of two who were officers in the Austrian army one died in Germany, while Donald, the youngest of the family but one, was killed in battle. On the arrival in Strathglass of the sad intelligence that Donald was killed, his mother composed a plaintive elegy on him, the poetry of which is of a high order. She sings thus :—

Nollaig mhor do 'n gnas bhi fuar,  
Fhuair mi sgeula mo chruaidh-chais ;  
Dombnull donn-gheal mo run,  
Bhi 'na shineadh an tiugh a bhlair.

Thu gun choinneal o's do chionn,  
No ban-charaid chaomh ri gal ;  
Gun chiste, gun anart, gun chill,  
Thu 'd shineadh a' laoigh air dail.

'S tu mo bheadradh, 's tu mo mhuirn,  
'S tu mo phlanntan ur an tus fais  
M' og laghach is guirme suil,  
Mar bhradan fìor-ghlan 'us tu marbh.

'S bàs anabaich mo mhic  
Dh' fhag mi cho tric fo ghruaim ;  
'S ged nach suidh mi air do lic,  
Bi'dh mo bheannachd tric gu d'uaigh.

'S ann do Ghearmailt mhor nam feachd,  
Chuir iad gun mo thoil mo mhac ;  
'S ged nach cuala each mo reachd,  
Air mo chridhe dh' fhag e cnoc.

Ach ma thiodhlaic sibh mo mhac,  
'S gu'n d' fhalaich sibh le uir a chorp,  
Leigidh mise mo bheannachd le feachd,  
Air an laimh chuir dlighe bhàis ort.

Sguiridh mi de thuireadh dian,  
Ged nach bi mi chaoidh gun bhron ;  
'S mi 'g urnaigh ri son Mhac Dhe,  
Gu'n robh d' anam a' seinn an glòir.

In the March number of the *Celtic Magazine* I find a most interesting Review by Captain Colin Mackenzie, F.S.A., Scot., of a book entitled "The Scot in New France," by J. Macpherson Le Moine, Quebec. Mr Le Moine gives a glowing account of the esteem in which the Fraser Highlanders, or the old 78th and the old 71st Regiments, were held in Canada. No wonder if both the memory and the descendants of the Fraser Highlanders should be honoured and respected in Canada. It is

not detracting from the merits of any other corps to say, that a more patriotic body of men never entered the British army than that distinguished regiment. In 1757 the Hon. Simon Fraser, son of the famous Simon, Lord Lovat of the Forty-Five, came among his clansmen with letters of service to raise a regiment for the Crown. At this time Simon did not possess a single acre of land, his patrimony having been forfeited when his father was executed, so that neither fear nor favour in any form could be credited with the genuine welcome accorded to him on his return by his kinsmen and countrymen. On this his first appeal to them for men, the retainers on his father's late estates at once placed him at the head of eight hundred of their number. The neighbours and gentlemen to whom he gave commissions brought seven hundred more to his standard. These men so signally distinguished themselves under the command of their natural leader, the Hon. Simon Fraser, at the taking of Quebec, and elsewhere in Canada, that the English Government promoted him to the rank of Lieutenant-General, and rewarded him with a grant of the family estates of Lovat, forfeited in 1746. Again, in 1775, he was entrusted with raising two battalions. His officers, of whom six besides himself were either chiefs, or presumptive heirs to chiefs of clans, gave General Fraser the best possible assistance in raising the two battalions of 2340 men. They were also called Fraser Highlanders, and were known in military annals as the old 71st Regiment. The General was a great favourite with all the men under his command. He was beloved and his memory much respected in his father's country. I once heard an old man, Donald Macgruer,\* saying that he recollected the General, last time he was at home, to have ordered all the tenantry round about the Aird to assemble at Castle Dounie. Seeing the men assembled on the lawn in front of the Castle, the General came out and shook hands with them all. He then sent in for his elder brother, the Hon. Archibald Fraser, and in his presence questioned the tenantry as to whether any of them had cause to complain of his brother as a landlord. The General then turned round to the Hon. Archibald, and congratulated him on the happy relations which seemed to exist between him and the tenants, adding—"I wish you to bear in mind that the estates of Lovat were restored to me and not to you, and I desire your tenantry to know that so long as you perform your duty kindly and considerately to them, I shall never interfere between you, but if you do not study how to take care of my father's men, it will be my duty to leave the army to come and take possession of my father's estates, and take care of the men who were instrumental in restoring these estates to our family." Whether this short and plain speech had any weight with Archibald in after life I know not; but certain it is that he converted Glenstrathfarrar into two sheep farms, by which act the fire was extinguished on ninety Highland hearths. So said the old people who remembered the time when the Glen was thickly studded with hospitable and well-to-do tenantry. General Fraser was dead some years before this eviction took place, he having died in London in 1782.

Duncan, the Chisholm's eldest son, whom I mentioned last month,

\* The Macgruers were a branch of the Clan Fraser, and were their hereditary banner-bearers.

was second Captain in the old 71st or Fraser Highlanders. He also died in London in 1782.

Having said this much of two Chiefs who were certainly the foremost officers in the Fraser Highlanders, let me now say a few words about some of the brave men who volunteered to share the dangers and hardships of a Canadian campaign with their lairds and leaders. The first I shall refer to was John Macdonell, tenant on the Fraser estates, who left Inchvuilt in Glenstrathfarrar. He was distinguished from his neighbours by the patronymic of Ian-Buidhe mor. The men, on the eve of their departure from 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 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. 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-Buidhe mor, 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. The General gave him to understand that some one indicated a suspicion that he had deserted. This was too much for our hero; and he begged the General to let him know who the fellow was, that he might have the pleasure of breaking his bones and teaching him better manners in future. We heard nothing remarkable about him during the voyage until the fleet was nearing Quebec, when a man was observed from on board the transport, crouching along the top of a hill near the water. The soldiers declared that he must be a French spy, when John, not waiting to listen further, raised his gun, and fired, instantly killing the supposed spy. The sound warned the garrison and caused great commotion. General Fraser, accosting John, told him firmly, "Ud, ud, Iain, Iain cuimhnich *t-exercise*." "An diabhl, eacarsi

na eacarsi," ars' Iain, "ach eacarsi an fheidh, far am faic mise namhaid cuiridh mi peilear troimh 'chorp." That is, "Tut! tut! John, you must mind your exercise." "The devil, exercise or exercise," replied John, "but the exercise of the stag. Wherever I see an enemy I will put a bullet through his body"—a characteristic specimen of the discipline of Ian Buidhe Mor.

Some time after this episode a French bravado sent a challenge to the Fraser Highlanders, in which he offered to fight the best swordsman among them. "Do you think he is in earnest," inquired John. "So much so," replied his friends, "that the Regiment will be bound in honour to make up a purse of gold for him if his challenge is not accepted." "He will take no gold from us," said John, "for I will meet him tomorrow morning." The meeting took place in presence of a large number of witnesses. The combatants stood facing each other. The Frenchman first made some grand move to show his agility and command over his weapon, but in the twinkling of an eye John was within arm's length of his antagonist, "striking him at the third button," as he himself used to say. The foolish Frenchman, with all his fencing skill, fell down dead, uttering a hideous yell. "May be it is counting his gold he is," said John—who was carried home in triumph on the shoulders of his comrades. All the officers and men congratulated him on his skill with the sword, and asked him how he managed to kill the Frenchman? "When we stood on the ground looking at each other," said John, "the fool thought he would frighten me!—Ghearr e figear m' anmhaoin air mo bheul-thaobh—he cut the figure of strife before me. I sprang over and struck him at the third button, and he fell dead as a herring."

The next Strathglass man in this distinguished Regiment whom I shall mention is 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 again seen. 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 topcoat, 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 topcoat 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, remarking 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 his 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. This 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, in his approach, by the wild savage; they thus managed to trace and reach his cave, which was found guarded by a fierce red Indian squaw and a young man, both of whom prepared to give battle. The woman was killed in the struggle which ensued to capture them. The soldiers ransacked the cave, and found every cask of rum, box of sugar, and other article 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. The young Indian was bound hand and foot, brought to the camp, and placed on board the first vessel that sailed for Britain. This specimen of the wild Canadian native was so fierce and unmanageable that the sailors found it necessary to chain him to the mainmast of the vessel—a restraint so uncongential to one used to such a free and easy life, that he died on board, when he was consigned to the deep.

But how, it may be asked, was the brave Alexander Macdonell rewarded for having brought the murderer of his comrades to such a condign and well-deserved punishment? The truth must be told, however unpalatable. Indeed, in this case, it is even more; it is disgraceful. He received no reward whatever. It was adding insult to injury to tell him that, as he was not a scholar, according to the usual acceptation of that term, his country could do nothing for him! So much was the heroic Alastair hurt on learning this that he soon afterwards died of grief, or, as his comrades used to say, "Sgain a chridhe leis an taire." Let me only add that I often heard old men saying that they were intimately acquainted with him; that he was, though unusually strong and powerful, until roused by his ideas of duty, exceedingly quiet; and that in all these respects he left not his equal in Strathglass.

*(To be Continued.)*

## TRADITIONS OF STRATHGLASS.

BY COLIN CHISHOLM.

## X.

WHEN a boy, I was coming down from Glencannich with an old man who had the reputation of being one of the best Seanachies in the district. He delighted in impressing on young people the necessity of knowing the history, legends, and songs of the former inhabitants in the district. Crossing Torr-beatha, a rising ground that separates Glencannich from Strathglass, he pointed out a cairn at the north-east end of Blar-an-lochan, which he said was built to the memory of a Strathconan man, killed at that spot. The tradition he related regarding him is that a party of freebooters stole a herd of cattle from Strathconan. As soon as missed, the owners followed hot haste in pursuit. They overtook the thieves, with their "creach," on Torr-beatha. The leader of the Strathconan men, Mac Fhionnla Oig, it appears, was a brave man. He at once challenged the freebooters to turn the cattle or prepare for fight. They choose the latter alternative. Mac Fhionnla Oig engaged their leader, and instantly killed him, when another of the thieves levelled his gun at the victor, and shot him dead on the spot. Thus, in an instant, the leaders of the two parties were both dead on the top of Torr-beatha. The freebooters disappeared in all haste. The men in pursuit sent one of their number home with the sad news of the death of their leader. On the following day more Strathconan men arrived in strong force, and with the assistance of Strathglass and Glenstrathfarar men they carried the body of their dead hero across the high hills of Glencannich, and the still higher hills of Glenstrathfarrar and Glenorrin, to his native Strathconan. My informant stated that a sister of Mac Fhionnla Oig came along with the funeral party, and as soon as they raised the bier on their shoulders, she composed and sung the following plaintiff verses:—

Oh ! mo la deurach dubb,  
 Eh ! mo la deurach dubb,  
 Oh ! mo la deurach dubb,  
 Mu 'n toir a bha 'n deis a chruidh.  
 Oh ! mo la deurach dubb,  
 Eh ! mo la deurach dubb,  
 Oh ! mo la deurach dubb,  
 D' fhag iad m' fhear fein a muigh.  
 Oh ! mo la deurach dubb,  
 Eh ! mo la deurach dubb,  
 Oh ! mo la deurach dubb,  
 'S lion iad a leine a d' fhuil.  
 Oh ! mo la deurach dubb,  
 Eh ! mo la deurach dubb,  
 Oh ! mo la deurach dubb,  
 'S truagh nach be 'n de an diugh

Having passed the ridge of Torr-bheatha, and descending the south side of it, we came in sight of the Clachan, or Cill-Bheathain, the burying ground in the upper part of Strathglass. My aged fellow-traveller took off his bonnet, and solemnly recited the pious old salutation :

Dhia beannaich an Clachan,  
 Far am bheil tasgaidh na tìre,  
 Far am bheil m' ullaidh agus m' araic,  
 Agus m' ailleaganan prìseal.

Passing Raon-Bhraid, my companion told me that, long ago, a woman went from this farm to the adjoining one of Easter Invercannich for the purpose of borrowing a griddle, wherewith to bake the Christmas bread. The snow was deep on the ground at the time. Although the distance between the two farms is only about half a mile, she felt fatigued, and sat down to rest at a place called Raon-ceann-a-ghlas, after which she resumed her walk, reached Invercannich, got the griddle, and retraced her steps homewards. On coming to the spot where she had halted on the outward journey, she was horrified to observe an infuriated wolf burrowing with all his might in the snow and earth, at the very place where she was so recently sitting. What was she to do? A battle for life was imminent, and there was not a moment to be lost. In this terrible plight the courageous woman determined to use the only weapon within her reach, and, raising the griddle, she, with all her strength, by a well-directed blow from the sharp edge, struck the ferocious animal on the small of the back, broke its bones, and cut the body in two. Some two or three months afterwards the same brave woman became the happy mother of a son, who grew up to be a famous hunter. It is said that a very rough place on the shady side of Glencannich, called Bacaidh-nam-Madadh, used to be infested with wolves; but the hunter alluded to succeeded in destroying them all.

I heard the authorship of the pious salutation alluded to about the clachan attributed to Cailean Mac Alastair, a very old man, who lived long ago at Lietry, Glencannich. I was told that at the funeral of one of his children at Clachan, when the coffin was laid in the earth, he said, "This is the fifteenth coffin I have laid in this grave." He was reported to be the wisest man in the district. Let the reader judge for himself. He married five times, and succeeded in admirably adapting his own to the temper of his five different wives.

It is said that an old woman, who nursed one of the Chisholms of Comar when he was a baby, remained in the family until he became a full-grown man. Whether he consulted his nurse on the choice of a wife, I do not know. Anyhow, when he married the lady of his choice, and took her home to Comar, her ladyship did not seem to come up to the nurse's standard of perfection. The old woman believing, however, that she could improve the young lady, was good enough to remain among the domestics for the purpose of carrying her theory into practice. After a few attempts to shape and mould the views and ways of the laird's lady, the old nurse became convinced that she had a will of her own and was determined to act upon it. About a year after the marriage his wife presented the Chisholm with an heiress. To obtain the opinion of the nurse of the new arrival, the infant was handed to her, and this is how the cruel woman saluted it:—

'S toigh leam fein do leth a leinibh,  
 Bho do mhullach gu d' bhonn,  
 Ach 's truagh nach robh an leth eile dhìot,  
 Na theine dearg do dharach donn.

The English of which is—"I love the half of you, baby, from the top of your head to the sole of your foot; but I regret the other half of you is not burning in a blazing fire of brown oak."\* This verse having been recited to the mother, she ordered the nurse not only out of the house, but out of Strathglass. She was transported to the plains of Morayshire, where the Chisholm sent men with wood to build a house for her reception. When the old crone entered the new residence in her penal settlement of Morayshire, she surveyed its internal construction with an anxious eye. Gazing at its couple-trees, her heart gladdened at finding herself surrounded with Strathglass timber, and she addressed her new abode thus:—

'S tocha leam do mhaidean croma,  
Na da-thrian na'm bheil am Moireamh,  
Airson gun d' fhas iad an coille Chomar,  
Frith na'n damh dearg 'us donna.

Meaning—"I prefer thy crooked couple-trees to two-thirds of all in Morayshire, because they have grown in the wood of Comar, the haunt of the red and the dun stags." Before parting with the builders of her new house she made them bearers of a mark of gratitude to her patron, the Chisholm. This is how she began her message of thanks to him:—

'S truagh nach robh Loch-mhaol-ardich,  
Far an orduichinn i 'm Moiramh,  
A fad 's a leud, sa lom, sa larach,  
Aig mo ghradh fo eorna soillear.

"I regret that Lochmular dich is not where I would order it, in Moray, its length, breadth, site, and area,† growing bright barley for my love, the Chisholm."

*(To be Continued.)*

**THE HON. ALEXANDER MACKENZIE**, Ex-Premier of Canada, and Mrs Mackenzie, passed through Inverness on Monday last, on their way to Caithness. Mr and Mrs Mackenzie have been travelling here and on the Continent of Europe for the last two months, and we were very pleased to learn from himself that he has been greatly benefitted by his trip, and his appearance unmistakably indicates the fact. By the time this shall have appeared in print, he is to be back in Inverness for a few days, and we hope that he will thoroughly enjoy the surroundings of the Highland Capital.

**THE GAELIC CENSUS.**—Though we have given this month eight pages more than usual, to enable us to present the reader with a report of the Annual Assembly of the Gaelic Society, we are obliged to hold over a valuable communication by Mr Fraser-Mackintosh, M.P., on the Gaelic Census; as also the Rev. Alex. Macgregor's next chapter on "Flora Macdonald." We are glad to find that Mr Fraser-Mackintosh has been successful in getting an address agreed to, in the House of Commons on Monday last, for a tabulated return of all the Gaelic-speaking people of Scotland, by counties, parishes, and districts, under the Census of 1881.

\* The oak is supposed to burn hotter than any other wood

† The area of Lochmular dich is about four miles.



## TRADITIONS OF STRATHGLASS.

BY COLIN CHISHOLM.

—o—  
XI.

LONG ago a man, much respected by his neighbours, was residing in the Davoch of Clachan, Strathglass. His name was Cameron, but he was more frequently known by the patronymic of Mac-'ill-donaich. He was noted for his acts of kindness and his willingness to assist his neighbours. In return for his good-natured deeds, it was supposed that everything he undertook prospered so much that on three different occasions he had a miraculous multiplication of such things as he required. This auspicious kind of increase is called in Gaelic "An torc sona." According to the legend it appears that Mac-'ill-donaich was a joint farmer with another man in a part of the Davoch of Clachan, the arable portion of which was at that time called "an t-Ochdamh," i.e., the eighth-part of a Davoch of land. In the spring of the year Mac-'ill-donaich ploughed and prepared the ground for the seed. He took a firloft of oats to the field, and began to sow, but, strange to say, the more he took out of the bag of oats the larger it looked. Mac-'ill-donaich continued sowing away with all his might. He finished his own, and continued with equal vigour to sow his neighbour's land out of the same firloft of oats.\* Some idle man, who was curiously looking on, and could perceive no diminution in the size of the bag of seed, remarked rather unceremoniously, "Am bheil thu 'n duil gu'n cuir thu an t-Ochdamh leis a cheathramh?" Do you think you will sow the eighth with the quarter? Immediately the remark was uttered, the bag became empty. Mac-'ill-donaich, attributing the sudden stoppage of the supply of seed to the inquisitive question of the idler, addressed him thus:—"A dhuine leibidich, na'm bi'dh tu air do theangaidh pheasanach a chumail samhach, chuirrinn talamh mo nabaidh, an deigh mo chuid fein a chur mar tha, leis an aon cheathramh."—You thoughtless man, had you held your flippant tongue quiet, I would have sown my neighbour's land after my own with the same firloft. Tradition says that the oats are said to have grown so well as to render the whole circumstances the wonder and source of talk in the district, until, at last, the farm on which the miracle took place acquired the Gaelic name of "Ceathramh," or, as it is written in English, Kerrow. Clann Mhic-'ill-donaich were both strong and numerous on the Strathglass estates about three hundred years ago. I heard it said that they were instrumental in settling two very knotty points in favour of the Chisholm. I believe there are a few of this family of Camerons still in the parish of Kilmorack. There was another old family of the Clan Cameron in Strathglass, descendants of Mac-Mhic-Mharstinn na Leitreach, of whom some members were noted soldiers. I heard old people saying that Lochiel was on a certain occasion in trouble with Mackintosh of Mackintosh. News came to the Strath that a battle between the two chiefs was imminent. One of the Mac Martin Camerons, Eoghan beag, was at the time a servant to the Chisholm. Ewen asked leave to go and assist his chief, Lochiel. Permission

\* Firloft is an old Scotch measure equal to one-fourth part of a boll.

was readily granted, and little Ewen gladly started for Lochaber. He was in time to join the Camerons on the morning of the day of battle. The contending parties were marching on, in haste, to cross a certain ford. The Camerons on one side of the river suddenly descried the Mackintoshes about equi-distant on the other side. Placed in this position, the plans of both armies were instantly upset. If either determined on crossing, the chances were that the other would annihilate them in the water. The contending clansmen eagerly watched each other for some time; rested on their arms; then sat on the heather, and began to devise new plans of attack. Little Ewen, however, thought their council of war tedious, for he meant business. He left Strathglass with the purpose of doing some service for his chief, and was determined to prove that he was both able and willing to do it. So he got up and coolly walked out of the Cameron ranks, wending his way towards the river. He then stood on a small plateau and shouted out at the top of his voice, "An dean fear agaibh malairt saighde rium?" (*i.e.*, "Will one of you exchange arrows with me?"). In answer to this challenge an archer came down from the enemy's camp, stood on a steep bank of the river, and shot an arrow which fell quite harmless close to Ewen. He took it up and shouted to his opponent—"Co dhìu 'sfhearr leat do phlaigh fhein na plaigh fear eile?" (*i.e.*, "Will you have your own or another man's plague sent back to you?"). The reply was, "Send back my own, if you can, little man." Ewen shot the archer's own arrow across, hitting and killing him. The body of the archer having rolled down the bank into the water, another came to avenge the death of the first one, and little Ewen killed him also. After a long pause the Camerons observed the Mackintoshes preparing to move. Lochiel ordered a counter-movement in his ranks. Instead, however, of attacking the Camerons, the enemy left the field. Then Lochiel asked the little man for his name, where he came from, and several other particulars, and having received answers, he said, "My brave fellow, if you stay with me you shall have one of the best farms in Lochaber." But Ewen was plain spoken, and said that he could not wish for a better master than the Chisholm, and consequently he intended to remain with him. "In that case you must call on me before you leave Lochaber," said Lochiel. Needless to say that Ewen called on his Chief, remained with him for some days, and, when parting, Lochiel gave him a letter to the Chisholm, on receipt of which, or very soon afterwards, Ewen was placed by the Chisholm in the fertile farm of Baile na bruaich. In this farm one generation after another of his descendants lived as farmers until about the beginning of the present century, when the general course or infatuation for sheep seized the landed proprietors of the Highlands. The only one I now know of these Mac Martins or Camerons, originally of Letterfinlay, is Hugh Cameron, who is in the 82d year of his age, and living alone at 36 King Street, Inverness. He had one son a soldier, who was in the Indian Mutiny, and if now alive I know not where.

Like other parts of the world, Strathglass has its fairy tales, goblin and ghost stories. Here is one of them. A man named Allan Bàn Macdonell from Glengarry was on a visit with some friends at Clachan, Strathglass, in the beginning of December. When about to return home he proposed to cross the hills in a straight direction from Clachan to the house of a relative in Glenmoriston, with whom he intended to pass the

night. The hills he had to cross are dreary, lonely, and long, without road or path to guide his steps. The distance as the crow flies is some ten miles. A portion of the hills is called Crabhach, and this part is supposed to have been from time immemorial haunted by some evil spirit. His friends at Clachan endeavoured to dissuade Allan Bàn from his purpose of crossing the hill. They used all available arguments to induce him to return home by the ordinary road through Urquhart. Last of all they reminded him that it might be dangerous for a lone man to pass through Crabhach about dusk, or at night, in case the old hag of the place, or as she was called in Gaelic, Cailleach-a-Chrabhaich, might attack him. "If she attacks me," said Allan, "she will never attack another after me." He was a powerful man, and was accompanied by his favourite stag-hound, whose name was Gille Dubh, or Black Gille. Allan Bàn, in bidding his friends at Clachan good-bye, told them to make themselves easy in regard to his safety, and added, "With my faithful Gille Dubh at my side, I would not hesitate to face any number of ghosts and goblins. Why, therefore, should I be afraid of danger where no danger exists?" So saying, he took himself off to the hill. According to his own tale all went well with him until he reached about half-way between Clachan and Glenmoriston. But, when passing by the side of the lake at Crabhach, he was intercepted by an ugly looking spectre, who announced itself as Cailleach a-Chrabhaich, and ready to try conclusions with him. Allan, determined to despatch the old hag at once, entered on a fierce combat with her. He found it more difficult than he anticipated, and called his Gille Dubh to his assistance. The desperate combat was now at its height; Allan dealing heavy and mighty blows at the spectre with his ponderous sword, while his stag-hound was lacerating, galling, and ripping it on all sides. The ghost could not long stand such merciless treatment. But Allan vowed by all that was sacred, on earth and elsewhere, that he would not desist until the goblin's head should be in the nook of his plaid as a trophy for his friends at home. The moment the sacred name of the Almighty was mentioned, the spectre disappeared. Allan felt much exhausted, but proceeded on his journey.

Sitting down to rest he discovered that he had left his bonnet at the scene of conflict. To go home without his bonnet might be attributed to cowardice, so he returned and found his enemy, the old hag, had taken possession of his head-piece; and had her feet in it, busily engaged milling it at the loch side. Allan made a peremptory demand for his bonnet; but he was met with an offensive refusal, and the battle had to be fought over again. The second encounter was even more severe than the first. In the struggle, however, the brave Allan got hold of his bonnet and kept it. The Cailleach, finding she could not vanquish the hero, addressed him thus:—"You have slipped through my hands to-night; you had a narrow escape; if I had succeeded in making a hole in your bonnet you would have been dead this very night. But I shall meet you again soon, and by the time the cock crows on Christmas night you shall be a dead man." Allan reached home battered and bruised, and he took to his bed. His friends visited him daily; whatever they dreaded or believed they pretended that he was in no danger from what occurred in Crabhach. However, on Christmas night his nearest relatives and friends in the neighbourhood gathered at his house, determined to share the dangers of

the night with him. About midnight, congratulating themselves that no danger appeared, wine and spirits were placed on the table, glasses were filled; but the momentous signal was given, the cock flapped his wings, and with his shrill, clear voice announced that the line was drawn between day and night. In ecstasies of joy Allan shouted—"Tha Chailleach breugach," "The spectre is a liar: let me drink long life and happiness to all of you." Saying this, he took up a glass, but before he tasted of its contents it fell from his hand; the hand fell on the table; and the brave Allan there and then fell down a corpse before his friends. His tragic death has been commemorated in song by the poets of the time, one, who attributes the death of more of his clan to Cailleach a chrabhaich, begins thus:—

Cha teid mise do'n rathad,  
 Air feadh na h-oidhche no trath la,  
 Cha 'n eil deagh bhean an taigh 'sa Chrabhach,  
 Tha i trom air mo chinneadh,  
 Dha marbhadh, 's dha milleadh,  
 'S gu'n caireadh Dia spiorad n'as fhearr ann.

In concluding this series of short papers on the traditions of my native Strath, I may be permitted to express my regret that there is no vein of the theologian about me, otherwise I might have felt inclined to say something on the peculiar state of religion in my native district during the last five hundred years. I may, however, say that under existing circumstances, it does seem to me very remarkable that the people of Strathglass were able to adhere to the Catholic faith during all this time, while the people of the neighbouring straths and glens, and the whole inhabitants of the four counties northwards, embraced either the Episcopalian or Presbyterian form of religion.

COLIN CHISHOLM.

### HOW GLENMORISTON OBTAINED GLEN DUCATAY.

In the old days of ignorance and superstition, Highlanders used to attach great importance to charms and spells. These charms were composed of materials of infinite variety, worn and believed in as a sure protection against an endless catalogue of real or imaginary evils. Very frequently they were worn in the form of some article of jewellery; among others, the pin or *fibula* used for fastening the plaid, was often the object of the greatest importance to the wearer. Some of these ancient *fibulae* are still preserved as family heirlooms, or in museums. They were generally of large size, and adorned with carvings of grotesque figures and quaint legends, and if they should happen to be engraved with the names of the three fabulous kings, who were supposed to have done homage to the infant Saviour—viz., Melchior, Gaspar, and Balthazar—then, indeed, they became invaluable, protecting the fortunate possessors from every danger, even from sickness. Such a charm was worn by the Laird of Glenmoriston at the time the following incident occurred.

It happened one day that the young Chief of Lovat was out hunting, accompanied by Glenmoriston, and while passing through the narrow glen of Ducatay, near the wood of Portclare, on the Lovat estate, a fine deer-hound held in leash by Lovat, in straining after the quarry broke away.