PREFACE

In issuing in book form a collection of homely songs and ballads (a few of which have already been favourably received), the writer has been persuaded to preface them with a short historical sketch of the district to which they mostly refer. The subject was so congenial and extensive that the narrative speedily attained to alar ming dimensions, and has only been reduced to its present size by a wholesale pruning, more heavy perhaps than judicious. The fortunes of the Gordons are so intimately bound up and associated with Strathbogie that the history of the Strath must be, to a great extent, a history of this powerful clan, whose actions have so materially influenced the destinies of Scotland.

Reared amongst the expiring echoes of old-world legends and superstitions, and come of an old Strathbogie stock (e terra natu in their own opinion), who looked with something like reverence on a troubled but heroic past, the history and traditions of his native glen have always appeared invested with an extraordinary charm to the author, whose writing he would fain hope is in the spirit which animated the Strath with any pretensions to the well-balanced accuracy of the unbiased historian.

In the first chapter, from the want of sufficient data, probability must take the place of accuracy. When such eminent writers as Chalmers, Garnett, Taylor, Skene, Robertson, Forbes-Leslie, and Pinkerton differ so widely in their views regarding the Picts and their language, who will presume to decide? The preponderance of opinion certainly leans towards a Celtic extraction and tongue. The succeeding chapters will be found to agree with recognised historical facts and dates; the "History of the House of Gordon" (Aberdeen 1754) being responsible for such figures as are not given in the standard histories of Tytler, Keltie, Burton etc. or in the Spalding Club publications, although several incidents (such as the battle of Corrichie) when seen through Gordon spectacles, appear in quite a different light from that in which they are generally regarded. The posts assigned o the Aberdeenshire Battalions at Culloden, differ slightly from the dispositions made by several other writers. The deductions, however, have been carefully obtained, and agree in the main with Mr Peter Anderson's description in "The Story of the Battle", the accuracy of which is generally recognised. The headquarters of the Strathdon battalion is also spoken of as accompanying Lord George Murray on the northern march, although Glenbucket himself, with a considerable number, marked via Braemar.
No doubt many will say the tone of "the story" is too Royalist and Jacobite, unfair to the Covenanters, too flattering to the Gordons, and overloaded with legendary lore, which may be all more or less true, but it is to be hoped that before delivering any rash judgment, each kind reader will thoroughly consider the statements of history. Then, indeed, this unpresuming sketch will have attained its chief object and its reader will, probably, attach a far higher importance to the old Gordon country, and to the gallant deeds of its loyal inhabitants.

The study of local history ought, surely, to be instituted in schools. There are many bright young folks, not a hundred miles from Huntly, who – although cognisant of the valuable fact that Omnes Gallia in tres partes divisa est, and able to gabble succinctly de Bello Gallico – do not know that their native glen was divided into The aucht and fourty, never heard of "Black Arthur" and have not the faintest idea why their forefathers "subscryved" the Solemn League and Covenant.

The writer's warmest thanks are due to many old friends in the Strath who have kindly discussed with hi m the events of bygone days, and given him such hearty assistance, particularly to the Rev. R Harvey Smith, M.A., author of "An Aberdeenshire Village Propaganda" etc; D Horn Esq. J.P.; Mr William Shand, the venerable antiquarian; Mr John Macpherson and Mr Robert Troup. Amongst his own clan he is especially indebted to Miss Mary Anderson, Pouron; and Mr James Anderson, Muirs of Seggieden.

A mine of legendary wealth, folklore, and half forgotten ballads still remains to be brought to light. Surely it will not be lost for lack of pens amongst the many possessing time, talent and opportunity.

Love for his profession, and the memory of many exciting scenes, must be the writer's excuse for allowing the discordant clang of arms to break in so frequently upon the quieter subjects of his Muse.

Dublin, 1891

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THE STORY OF THE STRATH

Chapter I

The Strath - Darkness - Dreamland - Dawn

STRATHBOGIE is the designation of the upland vale drained by the Bogie, a little mountain river which bursts
from a wild hill glen in the hoary side of that grey old Cabrach King – the Buck – and rushing through the magnificently wooded and romantic Den of Craig, with its ancient castle and eerie legends, leaps and surges over rocks and precipices in the loveliest of cascades, which a few hours' rain will transform into roaring cataracts*.

*It has been known in a few hours to flood the ravine to a perpendicular height of eighteen feet.
Passing the ivy-clad and all but invisible ruins of the old burial ground and church of Auchindoir from which, 'tis said, comes still the sound of those vague and awful voices which have been a dread and a mystery for generations, the Burn of Craig unites near the manse with the Corchinnan Burn forming the Bogie proper.

Thereafter the little river sweeps fleetly along with gentle ripple or noisy rush, through many mazy windings, amidst green haughs, under the fringe of overhanging foliage, past the wild gorge of the 'Corbie's Tongue', and through the lovely birk-clad glen of Win'see.

Swiftly skirting the once dreaded "Hornershaugh" – bivouac of tinker, outlaw, and cattle-reiver – and passing Rhynie (the village capital of the upper glen, with its legendary maze of lost royalty and glory-shrouded heroes: dark Druminnoir – once the stronghold of its direct enemies – still confronting it beyond the encircling words), the Bogie meanders softly on past knowe and hill, with standing stones and Druid temple, to where the Essachie dashes its laughing and crystal waters into the Bogie's flood of paley-gold.

Then on and one, gliding with gentler music under the bending sauch and stately alder, by Lochrie, and Smi'ston and Gartly; past the old haunts of wraith and kelpie, with the great Tap and the heather-covered hills rearing their sheltering forms around, gaining strength as it goes from the burns of Cults and Kirkney, and the Ness Bogie, and many another smaller stream, on whose quiet waters has fallen in other days the lurid reflection of the fiery cross; over whose reedy margin the wounded clansman has stooped to quench the thirst of his dying agony; still on, through fertile fields and past smiling cottages, until at last – near the ruins of the grand old castle – its peculiarly sweet and delicately amber-tinted water is lost forever in the Deveron's darker tide.

Here. Where the Wan-Water and the Glamour of Macdonald's delightful story blend their streams, dwelt for generations the proudest and most powerful chiefs of the North in a splendour and state that was all but royal; whose word was law from the Grampian Borders to the distant Orkneys, and who feared not to case the gauntlet of defiance in the face of the kingdom, and dare the strength of Scotland on the field of battle.

Here, also, dating from pre-historic times, stands the loyal old capital of the Strath*, designated by its name until within the last 130 years, although this same noble race of Gordon had vainly striven for centuries to obliterate its ancient title, and rechristen it Huntly after their insignificant Border birthright, whose site is said to be now marked by one solitary tree in the corner of a field.

*Long ago termed "The Raws o'Strathbogie," or more anciently "Tirriesoul."

Such is the little Strath of Bogie. Small, indeed, in itself, yet a district of such note – from the dominating and warlike character of its chiefs and people, and its strategic position on the Highland Border – that from the earliest times its importance was recognised throughout the North, and its designation extended to a territory far exceeding the limited area drained by its comparatively insignificant stream.#

Its name, to the Scottish student, will ever be deeply significant of loyalty, poetry, and power. On the page of history it will remain inseparably associated with the proudest and most heroic efforts of many of the noblest and bravest of our kings and chiefs.

Its inhabitants, in the old days, were thoughtless and unselfish. Faithful to the traditions of the past, they had little of the present craze for sensational change and headlong advancement.

Here the old Roman faith lingered long through trial and persecution, and Jacobite loyalty had no surer stronghold of love and devotion.

#The present Presbytery of Strathbogie consists of 12 parishes, in the shires of Aberdeen, Banff and Moray. The ancient Thanedom extended to about 120 square miles on either side of the river, which is only some eleven miles in length.
When a rude record was first made of land under cultivation, Strathbogie contained forty-eight Dauchs of arable land; a Dauch or Davoch being as much as four of the great unwieldy, short-stiled, twelve-ox-ploughs could cultivate. Even then it was famous, in a way, for the industry of its agriculturists, and was familiarly spoken of as the "Aucht-an-forty Dauch" – a designation by which many old-fashioned and patriotic persons still delight to identify "The Gordon Country."

What may have been its general appearance before the devastation of its great forests we can only surmise; but not, in its comparative nakedness, strangers seem to find little worthy of notice or admiration. A sur-

geon on Cumberland's Staff in 1746 says: - "I passed through a very boggy country till I cam to Strathbogie (the present Huntly), a small, pitiful village, but a very proper name, it being on every side boggy and marshy ground, … a lonesome and barren country."

Nor is the Rev. John Macpherson, writing at a more recent date, much more complimentary. "Neither the village" (Huntly) he says, "nor the adjacent country present features very striking or interesting. The soil is not of a generous nature; but its sons have developed the sturdiest manhood in its subjugation and culture. The climate, rigorously stern, is often in Winter of arctic severity; but the keen, biting winds seem only to have sharpened the people's wits; the gloomy sky, if it has made them dour, has helped to make them sober-minded, and battling with storms and drifting snows has proved a good training for the battle of life. Bannocks of oatmeal and bickers of porridge, together with early and successful contendings with that great army of strong truths whose leader presents to every young Scot this memorable challenge, "What is the chief end of man?" have contributed not a little in raising up generations of strong, free men, able to push their way and hold their own anywhere in the world.

In fact, hard work, coarse but wholesome fare, a severe climate, the Bible, the Church, the school, and the catechism, have conspired to develop in them the tougher elements of the Scottish character. They are as hard as their native granite, as stern as their own Winter, and of a spirit as independent as the winds that play on the summit of their lofty Bennachie. In short, the people of Huntly are Aberdonians of the most Aberdonian type. Shrewd, hard-headed, rough-grained, having ever a keen eye to the main chance, and not to be overcome by force or over-reached by fraud, they are a people pre-eminently canny and Scotch."

Even the courtly old Laird of Knockespock feels bound to admit "There is nothing picturesque in this fertile valley unless it be the windings of the Bogie, so remarkable for its peculiarly blue colour," but "it was from this vale that the best warriors of the Gordon Clan were taken, and there is a very old defiance of

'Wha wou'd misca a Gordon on the Raes o' Strathbogie?'

Yet the Rev. J Reid, the talented minister of Auchindoir, in 1840, boldly states: "The Bogie is a beautiful little river, meandering through a fine valley;" and to one born and reared in the famous old glen it has in itself and its surroundings a beauty which strangers can but dimly see and faintly appreciate, a charm that will be forever imprinted on his memory, and which will assert itself in its greatest power when he stands amongst strangers on some far off land. "Strathbogie!". To such a one the very name is like a chord of delightful music, soft as the love song of a happy lassie, sweet and tender as the soothing ripple of its own fair stream, yet blending with its gentler harmony a chord thrilling and heroic, an echo as of some far off battle cry.

Alas, that Ichabod should be written on the Strath, but its glory is of other days! Its Pictish Princes have faded like the cloud from Knock Caillich. Its mighty chiefs and princely nobles, with all their pomp and power and splendour, have passed away. The dead-man's-bells, purple and pendulous, sway gracefully amongst the rank luxuriance, and the little rabbit flies timidly to its hole, where steel-clad knights and kilted clansmen trod the echoing courts in haughty pride; and the blast from the lonely hills of the Cabrach sighs dismally amongst deserted castles and crumbling creation, and ere long he was striving to conquer and subjugate his fellow. Fierce and frequent must have been the struggles of our fathers to defend their homes from armed intrusion; but in the hour of their direct need the giant Tap, like a loving father, stood over them ready to receive, shelter, and protect; and on its hoary crest they built them a rude but impregnable refuge. Around the base of that lofty cone, wherever the husbandman has disturbed the soil, abundant signs of these primeval battles have some to light tumuli with bones and ashes, stone celts, and flint heads for spears and arrows. Gradually, however, there stole into the blackness of savage night the first faint glimmerings of a yet far off civilisation. Farther south the Pictish Gowanree had learnt to make themselves dirks and drinking vessels of bronze, and eventually to smelt and wield iron. The knowledge and the weapons spread, and soon the Strathbogie warrior, as he backed his shaggy garron or raced his scythe-guarded chariot on the green haughs of his river, rejoiced in his weapons of bronze and his great sweeping Caledonian sword; while a cultivated patch beside his summer dwelling betokened his first attempt at agriculture.

On these rude ancestors of ours, as on all wild races, there doubtless dawned an uncertain idea of the Creator's presence. The sun, the moon, and the stars were to them emblems of an unknown and eternal power, and the elements of fire and water spoke of a Supreme Beneficence, whose attributes they may have worshipped vaguely according to their light; but most probably their great sanctuary in trouble, the kindly Tap, which watched over them so constantly and lovingly, affording shelter from the blast and protection from their foes, received the greatest tribute of their grateful adoration. Whether or not, long before the Star of Bethlehem shed its radiance on the hills pf Judah, the stately Druid had set his blood-red flame on the emerald brow of the Tap, and watched as the terrible Baal-fire glared luridly in response from the summit of each encircling hill, where the ruined shrines of this early idolatry are still distinguishable.

Yonder where the green firwood tops the Knowe of Bogieside, and half hides the Druid's hoary temple, have the white-robed priests expounded to the listening crowd of blue-eyed and yellow-haired barbarians the wonderful metempsychosis of the immortality and transmigration of the soul, and exhorted them to nobler lives and greater deeds, that at death their glorified spirits might soar upwards to dwell in the mists and clouds with the ghosts of departed heroes, hearing evermore the songs of the bards, and rejoicing in the valour of their sons.

There, too, in that green and pleasant wood, where the rabbit frisks amongst the enfringing covert of whins and broom, and the partridge and pheasant rear their downy broods, the heartrending cries of tortured men and women, bound or caged on that huge altar stone, have risen in unavailing shrieks of the wildest agony as they struggled in their blood or burned in the sacred flame: while by their side, calm and impassive, the gloomy and

stern Druid cast his auguries from their expiring throes, and taught the trembling and awe-struck multitude that only by the sacrifice of their fellow-beings could human life be secured and preserved.

But while the smoke of these terrible offerings rose darkly from the Caledonian altars another era was dawning on the earth. Into the far Eastern sky one night there came the glory of the Sacred Star, illuminating the gloomy world with the new and tender radiance of the Divine Presence. Yet half a century before the Infant Christ drew breath the Roman eagles had crossed the
British sea and swooped on the Belgic tribes of B.C. the South, tearing and wounding with their
55 terrible talons for a brief season ere they took
to flight. Not for long did they leave their prey. Soon the sea was dotted again with their ships, and before the stern array of their Imperial Legions the undisciplined
valour of the Britons availed nothing.
A.D. 45 Province after province was brought under . the Roman sway as the tide of conquest rolled steadily northward; and the echoes of these terrible encounters must have early permeated this far, for inter-tribal and even extraneous intercourse was now more common.

The grand and heroic period of Alban and Erin was then opening – the days of valour and chivalry, or carborne chiefs, or peerless maidens, of kings and of heroes, whose romantic attachments and deeds of deathless bravery are still vibrating in the thrilling words of Celtic legend and song, with that misty glamour and wondrous fascination which sprung from the lips and harps of bards and poets long mouldered into dust.

The few ancient mss. Now extant with this deeply interesting period, even when apparently trustworthy, although stimulating surmise, afford but little accurate information regarding the habits, condition, and history of our fathers, and the traditional wealth of legend and song seems but to envelop these early centuries of the Christian era in one inexplicable and bewildering maze.

Moe than once must the old Tap and the sheltering Binn have seen the sons of the Strath mustering and marching forth to aid in the desperate attempt to stem the onward march of the Roman legions as they forced their way, with rapidly diminishing numbers, through our mountain barriers which, although they traversed, they were unable to retain. Nay, in all likelihood these hoary hills have seen the rays of sunlight gleaming on the burnished crests of the Imperial legionaries,*

*The presence of the Romans in the neighbourhood is amply attested by the existing traces of Roman roads at Corgarf and Braemar and the Maiden Causeway of Bennachie.

and scintillating from shield and sword, as under Agricola, or Tabellius, or Severus, the Strathbogie's barbarians, who swooped on them with shouts and clamour from thicket and hillside, their scanty checked or stripled mantles fluttering in the breeze, and their little wicker shields and long iron swords brandished in furious determination.

Not alone on the brazen helms of the veteran legionaries fell the blows of those great claymores, but on the skulls of Irish kerne and Danish rovers, for the prowess of the warlike Caledonians in these early days forms the subject of special comment in Norse Skalds and Irish annals, as well as in the more reliable records of the Romans.

With their congeners across the Irish Sea the sons of Alban held considerable intercourse, sometimes leaguing with them for the destruction of the Sea Kings, sometimes carrying war into their country, as when in the first century Cuchullin, the Pictish hero of Ossianic fame, seized and settled a large tract in the North of Ireland with this countrymen.

In this time of shield and sword, when, as its legends and name bear testimony, Rhynie was a kingly desmesne, its great mountain was probably one of the principal strongholds of Pictavia.

Disconnected scraps of legendary lore discourse of continuous struggles with the fierce Norsemen and rapacious Vikings, of the capture of the mountain fortress by these wild rovers, of their investment, starvation, and surrender; of years of continuous labour by men and women from far and near to complete the fortifica-

tions and render the Tap impregnable; of war with a black and terrible race of men, and of invading forces consumed in a blazing forest.

Ossian, that poetic meteor, whose voice and harp yet speaks and vibrates, tells in thrilling language of the car-borne Chief of North,* resplendent in his shining armour, with a thousand heroes in his train; and sings in a strain of matchless tenderness the sorrowful and romantic story of his beautiful daughter Oithona, whom the wild Orcadian pirate carried captive from the halls of Noth, near the dark rolling Deveron, to his wave-swept island "that rose like a blue shield in the midst of the sea."

Mayhap it was standing on the desolated muir and gazing at the far Tap, as it stood out black and dismal against the
Sky of night, that her lover, the princely Gaul, poured out the anguish of his heart.

"Whither art thou gone in thy beauty,
Dark-haired daughter of Noth?
Lathmon is in the field of the valiant,
But thou didst promise to remain in the hall;

*In old mss., the spelling is Noath. Ossian has it Nuath.

Thou didst promise to remain in the hall,
Till the son of Morni returned,
Til he returned from Strumon,
Returned to the maid of his love.
The tear was on thy cheek at his departure,
The sigh rose in secret in they breast;
But thou dost not come forth with songs,
With the lightly trembling sound of the harp."

Vain was the gallant prince's soliloquy, the mocking ripple of Essachie his only answer. No love light glimmered on the far fortress and a dread foreboding comes on the soul of the warrior.

"The son of morni is on the plain,
There is no sound in the hall,
No long-streaming beam of light
Comes trembling through the gloom.
The voice of Oithona is not heard
Amidst the noise of the streams of the Deveron.

Great must have been the power and influence of the district in these days when Fingal, the valiant and wise, admitted the equality of its chivalrous prince, and when its warrior host that "rolled like clouds behind the son of Noth" could match the unconquered might of the king of Morven.

Meanwhile change followed on change. From Ireland a small colony either of Hiberno-Celts or of the Picts previously planted in Ulster, crossed to Argyllshire, and by dint of sheer bravery maintained a firm hold of the soil until after several centuries, through intermarriage with the Royal blood of Alban the rival nations of Pict and Celt were finally united. Before that happy fusion, however, war was ever the grand and exciting employment of both nations.

Now grappling fiercely with each other, again leagued against their common enemy the Dane, storming the Roman posts, breaking over the great wall and harrying the hapless Britons, to whom the Roman Eagles – fast massing around their eternal eerie in their last vain struggles for its defence – could by and by render but scant protection; and with whose final flight the light of science and civilization, which four-hundred years of their sway had planted in England, was all but extinguished.

But a truer and more glorious light was already burning in Southern Britain and in Ireland, and from the
A.D. 563 latter came the patient loving Saint Columba, that primitive Scottish Church from which the Truth was to spread so widely amongst the "gentle Barbarians" as this devoted Christian loved to term the children of Alban. Nor was it long until the meek Culdee disciples, with their new religions, penetrated to the regions about Strathbogie, for the great Pictish King Bruidi Macmeilochon accepted the new faith and founded a chapel to the Order of Saint Bennet at Kildrummy.* Then indeed there came a wonderful change. The cruel and haughty Druid, driven from his altars, fled to the woods and the hills, skulking from cave to thicket in terror of his life and only daring to venture near his blood-stained sanctuary to perform the awful rites of his faith with a few shuddering idolators in the darkness of night. Yet the pagan faith died hard, and several of its happier customs and ceremonies have survived its extinction.

A.D. circa 900
And now for several centuries a deep mist falls on the life and customs of our ancestors, and in dim obscurity our legends and traditions tell us only of uncertain tribal contentions, and of fierce and continuous fighting with the Danes and the Norsemen; those wild rovers of the sea, who amongst their other conquests had seized upon and held a considerable tract of Buchan and Morayshire, and whose frequent and persistent attacks on the coast severely taxed the strength of Scotland to repel. Although our scraps of legendary lore are unanimous in asserting the eventual defeat of all invaders who penetrated this far, it is more than likely that a strain of Scandinavian-blood was at this time infused amongst the Pictish inhabitants.

*Culdee Missionaries also settled at St. Combs and New Deer.

In the southern provinces a gradual amalgamation and infusion of races had been constantly going on. Romans, Angles, Saxons, Danes, Jutes and Normans had successively seized and for a time held supremacy over the great Celtic foundation of the British race which, rendered pliable by four-hundred years of Roman rule and adapting itself to each succeeding change, easily lost its original identity, and by gradual combinations evolved its splendid nationality, higher civilization and its all but universal tongue. But amongst the rugged bulwarks of the North our fierce forefathers felt little of these external influences, or despised their power. Up to the advent of the Gordons the Saxon tongue was little known in Strathbogie, and for two-hundred years afterwards was only in common use in the neighbourhood of the castles, where a few south-country craftsmen were generally settled. In these rude times must have lived the originals of those wonderful giants and wizards and kings, whose history – distorted by tradition and by its translation into another tongue – is still kept green in mysterious legend and rugged verse.

Jock o' North, Jock o' Bennachie, and Lang Johnny Moir had doubtless their actual prototypes in that vague "once upon a time" when "Jock o' North and Fin MacCowl set oot ta saw the corn," and performed deeds of valour which have been magnified into feats of more than miraculous pretensions. Could we but learn the real history of these wild days, without doubt many a gallant deed done in sight of the Tap, and many a brave feat of arms performed by Strathbogie men in distant parts, would call forth our admiration. The annals of Ulster tell us how Donald Mormaer, of Mar, led a valiant band of our countrymen to aid the Irish in their
A.D. 1014 brave struggle against the Danes, and . that the gallant chief of Kildrummy, with many of his warriors fell fighting by the side of the Irish King at the Battle of Clontarf.

Tribal contentions, family feuds, and extraneous invasions must have left for a time distinct and accurate traditions, but the want of any permanent record, the subsequent change of tongue, and the excitement of succeeding and apparently more momentous events have gradually blended or destroyed nearly all recognisable outlines from such legends, up to the time when the shattered army of the dead Macbeth streamed in sullen route down the green haughs of the Bogie, turning fiercely at bay every now and then, and

A.D. 1058 vainly striving to shake off the pursuing and vindictive forces of Malcolm.

More Pict than Celt, probably, the young and gentle Lulach instinctively fled towards that ancient refuse of his race “The Tap” and, surely, if the old mountain could have felt, it must have yearned over the poor prince as he struggled bravely to bring the few survivors of his host into its sheltering breast.

Vain effort! One after the other his two brothers fell; the first by the water of Bogie, the other on the market muir, where he himself, wounded to the death, still fought on in the rearguard of his retreating column, until in the Craigbeg gorge, where the carnage was the thickest and the piled-up corpses damned the stream, he quenched his death-thirst, ere he expired, in the turbid Essachie. In the gathering darkness the victors fell back, and with wailing and lamentation the defeated host bore their dead across the shoulder of the hill and laid them to rest in the lonely Milduan*, but the body of Lulach was interred with the remains of Macbeth in the Royal sepulchre of Iona.

Troublous times succeeded the coronation of Malcolm Canmore. The Church or Rom laid its stifling grasp on the country and the Primitive Scottish Church, which for several centuries had lightened the land, and whose entire independence had hitherto been proudly upheld, was now suppressed and exterminated, while rich grants of land in
Strathbogie were bestowed both on the Roman Church, and afterwards on the militant order of Knight Templars.

*Milduan – Gaelic, Grave of a thousand.

The native Scots, indignant at the favour shown to Saxon adventurers, and the rapid encroachments of that race and
Language in the Lowlands made various unsuccessful and rebellious attempts to drive out the
A.D. stranger, in which our ancestors, with
1108- 1160 other fierce clans of Moray and Ross, were especially implicated.

Chapter 2

As lang's creepin'eevie sticks tae the wa'
The muckle hoose o' Gordon will never fa'
Old Couplet

Valiant Gordon stood
With keen resolve and bathed his shield in blood,
On Sliachs plains the Gordons fought so true,
And gained a shield embossed with regal blue;
For the reward likewise Strathbogie's plains,
Where noble Huntly to this age remains.
Laing, 1819

Hoarse shouted Moray o'er the heathy vale,
"The victory's ours, sound trumpets, fill the shell!"
Upon the field the brave Strathbogie lay
With many Gordons breathless on the clay.
Ibid

The earliest Lords of Strathbogie
of whom history gives us any information were of the great Macduff family, with the royal blood in their veins, and as loyal and patriotic as they were warlike and determined. They possessed vast estates in other parts of the country but derived the surname of
"Strathbogie" from the district where they had their principal residence, and to which they probably attached the greatest importance. At first they were zealous supporters of the Bruce, and strenuously opposed Baliol and the policy of the English king.

In the ensuing struggle for Scottish independence they, as well as their powerful neighbours, the Comyns, cast in their lot with Wallace, and led the Strathbogie clans to battle against the English. Edward, however, was too powerful and 1303 saw an English army traversing the strath with fire and sword.

Next year there sought shelter for a brief space by the Bogie's reedy banks one whose name and deeds will live forever in the Scottish breast – the hero, Wallace – soon, alas! To be betrayed and butchered.

Bruce then drew the sword of Scottish independence and more than once found shelter and assistance amongst our
Northern hills. Here to Strathbogie, when
A.D. 1308 weak and ill, the dauntless king was
carried in a litter, that he might regain his
strength, and at Sliach in Drumblade his little army cut the enemy to pieces.

Unfortunately the Red Comyn- whose daughter the Lord of Strathbogie had taken to wife – was his rival, and through his lady's influence David Strathbogie forsook the cause of the Bruce, and joined the Comyn's faction, thereby forfeiting all his great possessions in the North, which were bestowed by the Bruce on Adam Gordon as a reward for his bravery and faithful service.

The Forbeses, however, and several other Aberdonian septs, fought gallantly for the Bruce, especially at the siege of Kildrummie Castle (1306), to which fortress the Scottish queen had been sent for safety. Kildrum-

mie was besieged long and vainly by the English and the Comyns, and was only taken through the treachery of the wretch Osborne (the English armourer of the castle). The brave garrison was butchered, Bruce's handsome brother, Nigel, hung, the Queen of Scotland barbarously imprisoned, and the Countess of Buchan exposed in an iron cage to the jeers of the rabble by the chivalrous sovereign of England.

Adam Gordon, who succeeded to the lordship and principal lands of Strathbogie, vainly endeavoured to Change the designation of his new estates
A.D. 1309 to Huntly, but he was more successful in imposing on his vassals the surname of Gordon, now so inseparably connected with the district, and so notably associated with Scottish history and valour.

Under the wise rule of Adam and his brave descendants the name of Strathbogie became more famous than ever. Always loyal and true to the best interests of the throne, they gave their blood unstintingly for their country's cause. Never did Scotland muster her armed strength but the Gordon pennon was there, with a gallant gathering of kilted clansmen and steel-clad knights to uphold its honour.

Halidon Hill, Durham, Otterburn, and many another early field (even Poitiers) bear eloquent testimony to their gallantry and devotion, and to the valour of their faithful followers from our dauchs and glens. Around their northern hills they held their enemies in awe, and brought a greater sense of security into the Strath, where the stately castles of minor chiefs began to spring up in imitation of the splendid piles at Huntly and Druminnoir.

The rapid increase of the Gordons' power and influence could not fail to awaken the jealousy of the neighbouring septs. These for a time may have affected to sneer at the "Bow-o-meal Gordons" and make merry over the colours of the new tartan, but were mostly compelled before long to acknowledge the supremacy and seek the friendship of the Gordon chiefs.

The powerful Clan Forbes was the Gordon's greatest rival from the beginning, and almost invariably opposed their schemes and ambitions, so that between the two septs a state of intermittent war generally existed.

Too often was the quiet of our little valley disturbed by the gallop of mail-clad riders and the frantic battle-cry of contending clans. And what terrible noise is this that comes echoing and clanking yet, on legend and song, to our ears? The tread of 10,000 kilted
A.D. 1411 warriors sweeping down the glen of Kirkney to the red field of Harlaw, and scattering to ravage and to plunder.

"Their tartans they were waving wide,
Their glaives were glancing clear,
Their pibrochs, rang frae side to side,
Would deafen ye to hear."

Two centuries earlier, and every fighting man from the Deveron and the Bogie would have buckled his broadsword and joined the ranks of Donald's array to aid in the desperate attempt to drive back the ever advancing civilization of the South. Now, however, the inhabitants of Angus, the Mearns, and Aberdeenshire were sensible of such benefits, and loyal to the Crown; so they mustered contingent under the brave Lord Forbes of Druminnoir and the Earl of Huntly, who commanded the rearward of the battle. Terrible and protracted was the struggle, but the nature of the field and the superior armament and skill of the Earl of Mar's forces carried the day. Ere night fell, the wreck of Donald's proud army was flying across the pillaged fields of Strathbogie in grief and dismay.

"Cryand the corynoch on hie;
Alas, Alas for the Harlaw."

The several subsequent generations were chiefly marked by a small influx of craftsmen and artisans from Aberdeen and the South, and the rapidly increasing power and influence of the Gordon Clan, who specially distinguished themselves in the battles of Brechin, Flodden, and Pinkie, where many of their gallant chiefs held high command, and on w hose bloodstained soil our fathers fought bravely for their country, and nobly sustained the warlike reputation of the Strath.

Mary, the beautiful and luckless Queen of Scots, found the Earl of Huntly esteemed as "the wisest, the richest, and powerfullest" noble in the kingdom, and was said to have cherished a tender passion for his fourth son, the Bonnie Sir John of Findlater. Enemies, however, poisoned her mind. Her natural brother, who had the poor queen entirely in his power, was Huntly's bitterest enemy, and had done his utmost to ruin and humiliate the House of Gordon, until at length Huntly, unable to bear it longer (although warned, it is said, by an apparition of his impending doom), assembled his clan, and on the fatal field of Corrichie lost his life in the desperate attempt to free the queen from her thraldom and rid himself of his enemy.

A.D. 1562

Then ensued a reign of terror in the regions of the Deveron and the Bogie, which the royal army pillaged and plundered with fire and sword. The beautiful Castle of Strathbogie, along with most of the other Gordon strongholds, was destroyed, and its splendid furnishings and magnificent tapestry-work sent to decorate the royal residences. All the unfortunate gentlemen connected with the house of Gordon on whom hands could be laid were promptly executed. Amongst others the Bonnie Sir John had his comely head mangled on the scaffold; while the weeping queen, compelled by the brutal Earl of Moray to look on the ghastly spectacle, "fell in a dead faint." Afterwards she extended her pardon to the Gordons, and restored their forfeited estates; nor had the poor queen any friends who were more devoted to her person, or who upheld her interest to the last extremity so bravely, as did the members of this noble house, two of whom, with the most earnest and untiring zeal, vainly defended her at her mock trial in England, thus entailing on their family the bitterest enmity of Queen Elizabeth.

Meanwhile Strathbogie had been a prey to interstine conflict. Strong war-parties of Gordons and their allies had been frequently engaged in fierce contests with the Camerons, Mackintoshes, and Farquharsons, or in plundering and laying waste the fair lands of Moray. It was after one of these raids on Deeside that Huntly is said to have found himself encumbered with 200 orphan children, whom he caused to be taken to Strathbogie Castle.

There they were herded together like pigs, and fed from a trough, until the Laird of Grant (Huntly's ally) took them away and distributed them amongst his clan, where they were given the surname of Strathdee*.

Nearer home a long series of injuries and reprisals between the Gordons and the Clan Forbes culminated in a fiercely contested battle at Tilliangus, where Black Arthur, the brother of the Earl of Forbes, disdaining to accept quarter, was slain by the victorious Gordons, who also vigorously but vainly besieged Castle Forbes, at Druminnoir, for several days.

A.D. 1572

Burning for revenge, the Forbeses appealed to the Regent for aid and redress. Mar gave them a troop of horse and five companies of foot. Several of the neighbouring septs also came to their assistance, and with a considerable force they attacked the Gordons at Aberdeen. Sir Adam Gordon cleverly inveigled them into an ambush, and, aided by a party of very expert Highland archers, defeated them with considerable loss, taking prisoner the Master of Forbes and several of their principal chiefs, whom he sent under escort to Strathbogie, and after a few days set at liberty.

*At Rothiemurchus, to this day the story is given credit, and some people are said to be descendants of the "Trough Grants" or are known as the children of the "Trough" (G.S. 1916)

This but embittered the tribal hatred of the rival clans. The Forbes' adherents made incessant and daring forays into Strathbogie, retiring swiftly with their booty to the safety of Druminnoir Castle. Rhynie suffered in particular from its proximity to this stronghold, and its inhabitants of necessity attained to great expertness in guerrilla warfare.

One terrible incident in these cruel raids was particularly deplorable. Sir Adam Gordon and his men attacked Towie Castle, in Strathdon, the seat of one of the Forbes chiefs, whose fearless lady (a Campbell) made a most heroic resistance. The castle was set on fire but, although implored to leave it, the determined lady made fast the doors, and with 37 of her people perished in the flames. This appalling tragedy increased the fury of the contention, until no one dared to till the ground, and famine seemed inevitable. Both parties saw that the existing state of matters must cease, and at the invitation of the Forbeses fifteen gentlemen from the Gordon estates assembled at Druminnoir to arrange conditions of peace with a like number of the Forbes clan. The latter, however, mistrusted the Gordons and, to guard against surprise, each Forbes brought his dirk, with the understanding that if any sign of treachery was observed by their chief, he should stroke his flowing beard and instantly each of his clansmen would stab the Gordon sitting on his right.

All, however, went smoothly, both parties being equally anxious for conciliation. Suitable terms were agreed to, and the rival clansmen, lately the bitterest enemies, clasped hands and toasted each other in true Highland style, while the two venerable chiefs, elated beyond measure with convivial sentiment and steaming toddy, congratulated each other on the advent of a season of peace and prosperity and swore eternal and unchanging friendship. Suddenly, in the midst of the mirth and wassail, the Forbes' chief inadvertently laced his hand on his patriarchal beard. Horror of horrors! Like a flash every Forbes snatched his dirk from its sheath; the walls of Druminnoir rang with the furious war-cry, "Lonach! Lonach!" and in an instant the hapless Gordons rolled groaning in their gore.

Imagine the feelings of the unfortunate chief, a man of noble attributes and undaunted courage, as he looked round in horror-stricken dismay on his slaughtered guests and met the astonished and interrogatory gaze of his blood-bespattered clansmen.

"O, sic a peety! sic a peety!" was all his trembling and ashen lips could gasp.

"Sma' peety!" retorted a ferocious Forbes, as he wiped his gory weapon. "It will tak a lot o' Gorden bleed ta pit oot the lowes o' Towie Castel!"

Local tradition asserts that treachery was repaid with treachery. Gordon of Craig proposed that this unfortunate accident should not stand in the way of an amicable adjustment, and desired six of the Forbes gentry To confer with himself and two other Gordons who would meet them unarmed in his castle at Craig. The six Forbeses sat together at one side of a long table, their chairs close to a panelled wall. The Gordons unarmed sat facing them. Suddenly, in the midst of their negotiations, secret panels opened noiselessly in the wall, and ere the unfortunate Forbeses could move, a gigantic Gordon in the flowing tar tans of his clan stepped behind each chair with uplifted dirk, which he instantly buried in the nape of his victim's neck.

Hostilities again commenced, and so bitter was the enmity between the rival families that not even when abroad could their hatred be restrained.

The Reformed faith had by this time awakened national enthusiasm and obtained supremacy over the greater part of Scotland. The powerful septs of Leslie and Forbes early accepted its doctrines, but the great clan of Strathbogie regarded it with coldness and dislike. Most of the Gordons still adhered to the Church of Rome, and George Gordon, the Sixth Earl and afterwards First Marquis of Huntly, who married Henrietta Stuart, as the famous inscription on the lofty ruins of Strathbogie Castle still proudly testifies, was not one to be easily coerced.

The most powerful of the Northern Chiefs; no one lived a more stormy life or passed through greater vicissitudes in his career. Oft although his royal master James VI, helpless under the thumb of his covenanting advisers, had to profess open hostility to the Gordon chief, yet there is abundant evidence that Huntly was acting on terms of private understanding with the king. The long-standing feud with the rival house of Moray was still unforgotten, and when word was brought to Huntly that the Earls of Moray and Athol with the clans Dunbar, Mackintosh, Macpherson, part of the Grants and the Laird of Calder's men had mustered at Forres and bound themselves by a solemn obligation "to extirpate all the race of Strathbogie" the haughty chief declared it was most welcome news. Signal fires blazed on the hills of Bogie, the Fiery Cross* flew through every glen and dauch in the Gordon country, and two days afterwards, a gallant force marched out of Strathbogie with drums beating and pipes playing to seek their sworn enemies. Moray's host, however, declined battle and fled ingloriously into the hills.

*Fiery Cross. The following entry occurs in the ms. Book of the Lord High Treasurer of Scotland, under the date 28th August 1547:
"Item – My Lord Governor's Grace being surely advertised that the army of England was at hand; to Mungo Strathern Messenger letters of Proclamation with the Fire Cross to Kincardine, Aberdeen, Banff, Elgin, Forres, Cromarty, Nairn, Inverness, and bills, again to Huntly, Errol and the Master of Forbes.
- iiii 1b.

Huntly, hastening to the court, succeeded in obtaining a Commission against Moray, whom he
A.D. 1590 attacked at the House of Dunibrissel, capturing and burning it with little loss, save John Gordon, of Gicht, who was shot by an attendant of the Earl of Moray, and whose brothers killed that nobleman in revenge. Meanwhile the Strathbogie men pursued the Clan Chattan into Badenoch, killed fifty and dispersed the remainder, then turning into Strathspey they defeated the Grants with heavy loss, and plundered the house of Ballindaloch. A party of the daring Mackintoshes however had burned the Castle of Auchindoun, which terribly enraged Huntly; and the Mackintosh chief, dreading his wrath, hastened to Strathbogie to sue for peace. Huntly was absent, but his proud lady received the suppliant chieftain and haughtily informed him that he lord had sworn that nothing but the Mackintosh's head could purchase pardon for his clan. To show his entire submission the Mackintosh handed his sword to the lady, and kneeling on the floor, bent his neck, saying meekly that to save his clan he would willingly give Huntly his head. Terrible to relate, the fierce lady took him at his word and with one stroke of the weapon severed his head from his body.

The warlike Clan Chattan was not tamed. Next year they swept over the Gordon lands on
A.D. 1592 Deeside, leaving behind them but smoking ruins. Scarcely were they safely back in their own country than Huntly with the flower of Strathbogie was upon them, and a bloody encounter ensued. The defeated Clan Chattan fled to the hills, and Huntly wasted and destroyed their lands with great cruelty, returning with much plunder to Strathbogie. Hardly had he reached his castle gate when he heard that eight hundred of the insuppressible Mackintoshes, following on his heels, were making havoc on his Cabrach lands, slaying and burning without mercy.

Hastily directing his newly disbanded clansmen to re-assemble and follow, Huntly dashed off with whatever mounted men he could muster. He found the Mackintoshes near a hill called the Stapler, in ground favourable for cavalry to act, so without waiting for the footmen – although the odds were heavy – he at once charged them furiously with his handful of horse. The engagement was short, sharp and decisive. The Mackintoshes gave way and fled in wild disorder into the bogs and peat mosses to escape their mounted pursuers, leaving sixty dead. The leader of the Mackintoshes was much censured for his unskilful generalship in this affair.

"O Willie Mackintosh, O Willie Mackintosh, far left ye a' yer men?"

“I left them in the Granes o’ the Gauch ta feed the Cabrach swine!”

Then came a grievous time for the Mackintoshes, whose lands were again plundered and wasted by Huntly’s forces from Inverness and Strathbogie in a most barbarous manner.

Powerful enemies however were plotting for the Gordon’s downfall; all the ingenuity and resource of the Reformers, hounded on by the malignity of Queen Elizabeth, was exerted to crush the three “Popish Lords”, Huntly, Angus, and Errol, who still held their proud places in spite of all the covenanting laws and edicts. They were shortly accused of participation in the plot for a Spanish invasion, and Argyll was despatched to seize Huntly and lay waste his lands of Strathbogie.

Macallummore mustered a powerful force in the lowlands, as well as the fighting strength of his own great clan, but such was the power and prestige of the Gordons that he dared not approach the fierce old Strath without further augmentation. Accordingly he made a northerly circuit, summoning to his standard all the Whig clans and families, in the West and North, and all the enemies of the House of Gordon from every quarter. Strathbogie was rich and well stocked, and so the hope of plunder speedily attracted half a score of warlike Macgillaverys, Macgregors, Macneils, and several others with their chiefs and nobles, while the neighbouring and unfriendly septs of Munro, Forbes, Fraser, Ogilvie, Leslie, Cheyne, and Irvine also mustered their forces to aid Argyll.

The great “Cock of the North” privately assured of the king’s sympathy, displayed no sign of dread at the approach of this overwhelming combination, but he saw that the only hope of saving his estates from utter desolation lay in striking a sudden and decisive blow before the junction of the two hostile parties.

The great “Cock of the North” privately assured of the king’s sympathy, displayed no sign of dread at the approach of this overwhelming combination, but he saw that the only hope of saving his estates from utter desolation lay in striking a sudden and decisive blow before the junction of the two hostile parties.

Up Strathbogie, Kildrummie, and the Cabrach, down by Enzie and the Garioch, everywhere over his wide estates, flew the meteor of war, the Fiery Cross, summoning every vassal and clansman who possessed a horse and a sword to meet his lord in haste on the Cabrach hills, properly mounted and armed. Eagerly was the order obeyed. Better, our brave forbears thought, to fall fighting pro aris et focis than to see Strathbogie blazing, their lands wasted, and their wives and daughters in the hands of the wild islesmen of the west, or the scarcely less ferocious covenanters.

Moving from Strathbogie to the Cabrach, with four small brass guns, Huntly was A.D. 1594 joined by the Earl of Errol and some cavalry, and by all his own mounted gentry and vassals. Marching with great secrecy and speed to Glenlivet, he fell upon the army of Argyll before the arrival of the Forbeses, and a furious battle ensured in which the bravery and experience of Strathbogie’s warriors, and the superiority of their discipline and armament, carried the day against overwhelming odds. Soon the braes of Glenlivet were covered with the shattered and flying remnants of Argyll’s host, while in that terrible glen the blood of seven hundred slaughtered Highlandmen ran into the waters of the burn.

Meanwhile he other covenanting clans of Forbes, Fraser, Leslie etc. had advanced to Druminnoir, intending to burn Rhynie and ravage the glen of Bogie down to the Deveron, but on the news of Argyll’s defeat they altered their intentions and decamped without loss of time.

Then there was high wassail in the stately halls of Strathbogie Castle, and joyous gatherings in every mansion and clachan in the brave old Gordon country. Proudly the famous pipers sounded the triumph of their chief, the unvanquished “Cock of the North,” and merrily the brave lads and happy lasses footed the “Reel o’ Bogie” to such blithesome music. Good reason had they for rejoicing and well might the men of Strathbogie cock their bonnets. Had not their good swords scattered the finest troops of the lowlands and cut the fiercest clans of the North and West to pieces; and their malicious neighbours, the Kirk-going Forbeses and

Leslies, w ho would have fain harried the howe and made a bonfire of their belongings; where were they now with all their Solemn Leages and Covenants, sour faces and dismal doctrines? Why did they turn tail at Druminnoir when they heard the old men of Rhynie who watched the ford of the Bogie down by the Kirk-yard calling in mockery "Byde and! Byde and -!"

Short-lived was their rejoicing. King James – whatever his private views – was compelled to take action to vindicate his authority and, coerced by the infuriated nobility of the Reformed religion and a "claikin o' ministers", chief of whom was the venomous Andrew Melvile, started in person at the head of a considerable army to avenge the defeat of Argyll.

His advance was unopposed. To the Gordons his Majesty's person was sacred, and their chiefs fled to the hills. The king wished to act leniently but, at the rapacious hands of Argyll's western clansmen, poor Strathbogie and its wretched people suffered most miserably. Its magnificent palace was blown up with gunpowder, other castles or houses of consequence or that had been "polluted by the mass" shared a similar fate. All the brave chiefs and clansmen who had drawn sword at Glenlivet, if captured, were forthwith executed. Cattle, crops and property were wantonly slaughtered or destroyed, and every vile passion gratified on the miserable people by this saintly horde who, in such courteous manner introduced the benefits of their new religion to our benighted forefathers.

Strathbogie was speedily a seen of dreary desolation. Its lord, with other noblemen and gentry "were fugitives and wanderers, hiding in the caves and forests and dreading every hour to be betrayed into the hands of their enemies." Its starving and maltreated inhabitants – those who had not lost their lives in defending the honour of their families – had mostly fled to the hills and remote glens, until at last famine spread its gaunt hand over the fertile valley, and compelled the godly forces to fall back on Aberdeen, leaving behind them a hatred for the western Highlanders, especially the Campbells, which is scarcely yet effaced.

But Huntly, though a fugitive and an outlaw, was still a chief and his fiery spirit chafed with fury at the sufferings of his clan. A heavy tax or fine in addition to all their previous misery had been inflicted on the wretched people; and Argyll, now the Governor of the North, shortly demanded its payment. Huntly fiercely forbade it, boldly threatening "to hand up any retainer of his, high or low who dared to pay the fines levied", and his people, dreading the consequences of their lord's displeasure more than the cruelties of Argyll, refused to pay. Here was afforded another chance of propagating the faith, persecuting idolatry, and picking up a little plunder, and the unappeasable Argyll, with all his Campbells, was soon on his way to ravage our wretched country, on pretence of exacting funds from the famishing people. Huntly in vain petitioned the king. The Earl of Mar and several northern clans joined Argyll, and again fire and sword made havoc in fair Strathbogie; "then," says Tytler, "married women were ravished under their own roofs, houses with their miserable inmates burned amidst savage mirth, and the land … utterly wasted by fire, plunder, and the total cessation of agricultural labour."

Huntly, unable to defend his people, commended them to the king's mercy and, with the other Popish lords went into exile. The king, however, although he granted him a private remission, could not for some time do much to assist either Huntly or his clan,

but after fifteen months he and his
A.D. 1599 Popish associates, having been
pardoned and recalled, signed the

Covenant at Aberdeen for the sake of peace. Immediately thereafter Huntly was created a Marquis and the king, disgusted by the ungovernable prejudices of the reformed ministers and the ferocity and excesses of their followers, succeeded, with the aid of the North country ministers, who were animated by little or no zeal in the covenanting cause, in establishing Episcopacy in Scotland. Our forefathers, as may be imagined, were not then consumed with any burning desire for reformation and, once rid of Argyll, they mostly relapsed into their ancient rites, in which faith the great Marquis also died.

The burning of the Earl of Aboyne, Huntly's eldest son, in Frendraught tower, was an event which caused much commotion throughout Strathbogie,

A.D. 1630 where it was generally believed to have been an act preconceived out of revenge by the Crichtons and, as the law would not recognise it in this light, the inhabitants of the Strath, who resented it deeply, harried and wasted the Frendraught lands most cruelly. Having seized the "strong house they took it up royally and caused to kill altogether three score marts and an hundred wedders – some they salted, some they roasted, and some they ate fresh; they boasted and compelled the tenants of Frendraught to bring in meal, malt, cocks, customs and poultry etc." These lawless proceedings, in which many of the best families of the Strath – including Lesmoir and Noth – were implicated, continued until Huntly was bound over as surety for the behaviour of his clan.

Chapter III

The solemn league and covenant
Cam whiggin' up the hills, man,
Thocht Hielant trews durst not refuse
For to subscribe their bills, than

Jacobite Song

There's nae covenant noo, lassie; there's nae covenant noo.
The solemn league and covenant are a' broken through.

Allan

He spurred to the foot of the high castle rock,
And to the Gay Gordon he gallantly spoke –
"There are hills beyond Pentland, and streams beyond Forth.
If there's lords in the South, there are chiefs in the North.
There are sild dunniewassals, three thousand times three,

Will cry Hoigh for the Bonnets o' Bonnie Dundee!"
Scott

The second Marquis of Huntly, who had commanded the Scots Gens a 'Arms of the Royal Household of France (a noble commission long hereditary in the House of Gordon) being by far the most powerful nobleman

was vainly importuned, by the Covenanters to espouse their cause and assume their leadership. They offered him an immense sum of money to pay his debts contracted in France, and assured him that the rejection of their offers would mean the undoing of himself and the ruin of his family and estate. But the loyal lord of Strathbogie despised their offer as much as their insinuation, and made them answer "That his family had rose and stood by the favour of the Kings of Scotland, and if the event proved the ruin of the king he was resolved to bury his life, honours, and estate under the rubbish of the king's ruins."

A.D. 1637

He and his followers firmly opposed the Covenant, and the City of Aberdeen also refused to subscribe until twice seized, notwithstanding Aboyne's gallant defence, and cruelly pillaged by the Covenanters under Montrose.

By a discreditable breach of faith this nobleman also entrapped Huntly and his son, and had them cast into prison until the kind came to terms.

While the Marquis lay in confinement, his enemies, the Forbeses, Frasers, Leslies and Crichtons, seeing, as they thought, a good opportunity, mobilized their forces at Turriff prior to laying waste the Gordon estates, but were suddenly attacked and dispersed by the Gordons from Strathbogie, who also drove the Covenanters in Moray across the Spey. Soon after, Aboyne, Huntly's son, arrived with a commission of lieutenancy from the king and, having assembled 3,000 foot and 500 horse in Strathbogie, took the field against the Covenanting forces, whom he engaged at Stonehaven and the "Brig o' Dee, with little success, but causing such consternation amongst the Covenanters throughout the country that they speedily agreed to the treaty of pacification, by which the Marquis of Huntly regained his freedom.

A.D. 1639

Charles, however, again persisted in his insane efforts to force Episcopacy upon his Scottish subjects, and the dauntless Covenanters were instantly in arms for their rights and liberty. Aberdeen, loyal as ever, declared for the king, and the Fiery Cross speedily summoned Huntly's faithful followers to the field again for their royal master. Before he could rally the full strength of his clan, Argyll and Munro were on the march north with an overpowering force of Covenanters, and Huntly's gallant efforts to drive back the advancing tide ended in defeat and disaster. His forces were dispersed and he had to flee the country. Munro seized the pillaged Aberdeen and marched on to Strathbogie. Poor old Strathbogie! In the Covenanters' cruel clutches it was soon a scene of misery and desolation. Most of its men were still scattered, but Munro's rough Christians had no mercy and robbed its inhabitants of everything worth taking; destroyed their corn, three out what meal was left in their girnals, slaughtered their cattle, burnt their blood-soaked horses to the ground and, amidst the reeking ruins compelled the miserable survivors to subscribe to the Solemn League and Covenant. After wasting the country for several weeks, until famine and disease joined them in their fell work, and they could no longer subsist themselves, the noble Reformers marched off.

Spaling says: "They left the country almost manless, moneyless, horseless, and armless, so spitefully was the same borne down and subdued."

Three comparatively peaceful years followed, in which the king conciliated the Covenanters, and won over Montrose, but fell out with his English Parliament, which speedily formed an alliance with the Scots Covenanters for the "extirpation of Popery, prelacy," etc. and soon Leslie and Cromwell were in the field against their king.

On the first sign of rebellion, Huntly, who had returned, came to the North with the king's commission, raised what friends and adherents were still left on his devastated possessions, marched to Banff and defeated the Covenanting forces. Argyll, however, was quickly in the field against him with four regiments of foot, the Clans Campbell, Forbes, Fraser and other Whig septs, and all the forces of the Covenanting gentry from the shires of Fife, Perth, Angus, Mearns and Aberdeen. Utterly unable to successfully oppose such an army, Huntly disbanded his forces and retired to the hills. His clansmen returned to their homes, except a party under Colonel Nathaniel Gordon, who stormed the town of Montrose and spiked the Covenanters' ordnance. Then, joining the daring Montrose, they fought gallantly at Tippermuir and, by their furious charge on Lord Burleigh's left, at the battle of Aberdeen routed the Covenanters, and ensured a victory.

Argyll, however – his overwhelming forces augmented by 5,000 Whig militia, closed swiftly on Montrose – but the latter, by a masterly move, succeeded in extricating his party. Then ensued another season of horror for our native glen. "Argyll," says Spalding, "marched forward from Aberdeen to Strathbogie with an army of horse and foot, when he destroyed the haill raws of Strathbogie, cornfield lands, outsight, insight, horse and sheep, and all other goods they could get." Several of the Gordon chiefs defended their castles gallantly against Argyll, Sir John Gordon of Haddo, in particular, who was eventually taken and beheaded. Montrose encountered Argyll at Fyvie, having "a good number of Huntly's vassals from Strathbogie" in his ranks, but had to fall back, after an indecisive action, on Strathbogie, where he occupied "the raws". Argyll followed, and encamped on Tullochbeg, but dared not attack his enemy while so posted. Montrose remained four days and, seeing no hope of successfully engaging Argyll, retired to the hills. Strathbogie was again defenceless, and again the cruel Campbells burnt and terrorised with merciless barbarity, for there was now little left to plunder.

But revenge is sweet, and doubtless those of our forefathers who were with Montrose when he ravaged and desolated the Campbells' country with such rigour did their full share of the cruel work, and amongst the loyal Highlanders who

> "Swept the Campbell clan
> By Inverlochie's shore"

there were none who rejoiced more deeply at the overthrow of their arch enemy than the 200 Strathbogie men there engaged.

At Elgin two of Huntly's sons – the Lord Gordon and Lord Lewis – having escaped from Argyll, joined Montrose, bringing with them from the vast Gordon estates, in the shires of Banff and Aberdeen, 2,000 foot and 200 horse. The latter especially were of the utmost service and fought most gallantly in several encounters during Montrose's masterly retreat from Dundee, after the capture and sack of that town.

Lord Aboyne, with more of Huntly's vassals, then joined Lord Gordon in person, which completely penetrated the enemy's ranks, and hurled their left into confusion. The gallant Lord Gordon performed prodigies of valour, receiving his death-wound as he gripped General Baillie
by the sword belt, and called on him to surrender.

The Gordon clansmen, who had charged on foot along with their mounted comrades# rushed under the enemies' horses, stabbing them in the belly with their dirks, and striking down their riders with axes and claymores. Aboyne on the left, with his division, charged with equal vigour, and a panic seized the Covenanters.

Baillie, with a party of cavalry, escaped, but nearly all the footmen were slaughtered, only 12 officers being taken prisoners, while most of the plunder from Strathbogie was recovered.

To the South was Montrose's next move, persecuting and plundering the unhappy Covenanters, our forefathers, no doubt as merciless as any, with with the memories of their own ruined homes and murdered relatives in Strathbogie vividly imprinted on their minds.

A.D. 1645

At Kilsyth they again attacked the Covenanting army with extraordinary fierceness, their footmen stripped to their shirts and kilts for the bloody fray, in which they shot or cut down 4,000 of the Covenanting troops, whose terror-stricken men they pursued and slaughtered for fourteen miles.

This manner of fighting would seem to be inherent in the Gordons. At Waterloo the gallant 92nd charged along with the Royal Scots Greys in precisely the same manner.

The army was on the point of starting for the Borders, when the clans Gordon and Macdonald, discovering that Montrose had ignored them in his reports to the king, withdrew and returned north, excepting only a few Strathbogie men who remained with Colonel Nathaniel Gordon. At Philiphaugh, Leslie soon after surprised and defeated Montrose, and the gallant Colonel Gordon, taken prisoner in this fight, lost his head on the scaffold.

In this desperate crisis Montrose saw that some instant step must be taken to retrieve the failing fortunes of the king. His greatest, almost his only hope, lay in the support of the Gordons, so back he hurried to the old glen, whose chiefs, although stung by his early treachery and resenting his later ingratitude, were ever loyal.

Aboyne sent round the Fiery Cross, and three days afterwards he mustered 1,500 foot and 300 horse on the Muir of Rhynie. But now Huntly – who seems never to have been quite able to forgive Montrose for his betrayal and imprisonment, and had hitherto stood aloof – appeared on the scene and declared that as the King's Lieutenant he would himself conduct the war. Montrose, finding him obdurate, entered into an agreement and started for Inverness to raise more troops; while Huntly, joined by the loyal Forbeses of Strathdon, marched on Aberdeen and summoned the Covenanters to surrender the town. Montgomery returned a haughty defiance, and Huntly at once attacked and stormed the city with great fury.
Gordon and Montrose were now about to join their forces and march south, when orders for disarming were received from the king who had in the meantime surrendered to the rebels, and accordingly both disbanded their troops.

The Covenanters handed their king over to Cromwell for a consideration of £200,000 and, having no one to restrain them, sought to vent the fury of their revenge on the proud house of Gordon. Accordingly Middleton and Leslie, with a strong and well-equipped army, against which Huntly deemed it vain to contend, entered and laid waste the Gordon country with barbarous cruelty. Again the terrible hue of human blood darkened our native streams, and the bitter voice of weeping and the unavailing screams for mercy rose from haugh and glen. One by one the various castles were stormed or subdued, many of their garrisons hanged, and several lairds beheaded. The castle of Harthill, a chief of the Leith sept, was captured, and Harthill's "wife, children and servants taken out and shot one by one before the gate." At last the marquis himself was seized, after a desperate struggle, and hurried into the castle of Blairfindie in Glenlivet, but in six hours the castle was surrounded by 500 fierce Highlanders, sworn upon the dirk to release their chief or die.

Poor heartbroken chieftain! How altered now in body and mind! Once the undaunted Cock of the North, high spirited, kindly, and proud, now, like the wounded eagle, with draggled wing and broken pinion, sick, weary and dejected. All that he said, as he gave orders for the dispersion of his faithful men, was: "That, almost worn out with grief and fatigue, he could live no longer in hills and dens; that he hoped his enemies would not drive things to the worst; that, be it as it would, he would not choose to outlive the sad fate he

foresaw his royal master was like to undergo; and that he doubted not but the just providence of God would restore the royal family to its former state, and his with it."

Vainly King Charles, then a prisoner, endeavoured to intercede in his behalf. His own royal head was soon to roll on the scaffold, and his most anxious efforts to preserve the lives of the famous Montrose and the gallant chief of Strathbogie were unavailing.

The vast estates of the Gordons now fell into the hands of Argyll – that patriotic nobleman deservedly known and

Revered by the majority of his
A.D. 1649 countrymen as "the good Argyll",

whose "last sleep" and harsh execution have furnished lofty themes for the artist's pencil and the poet's lay – who doubtless endeavoured to enlighten our ancestors' darkened minds on the errors of their ways and the benefits of the new religion, into whose precepts they had been so rudely initiated; and we are bound to admit that during the thirteen years Argyll remained in possession, the Reformed Faith was firmly established, and the authority of the Kirk rigidly maintained, with much benefit to the community, who enjoyed unwonted peace and prosperity, notwithstanding the heavy taxes imposed by Cromwell.

The energies of the Kirk were much exercised at this time in the suppression of witchcraft or black-art, in causing the patches of land* set apart from time immemorial to the evil one to be cultivated, and in persecuting the Papists. A number of Argyll's people also obtained settlement amongst the old families, by whom they were long regarded with much dislike; but amongst the small garrisons of English soldiers which the Protector posted here and there in the neighbourhood for several years, were men of considerable technical knowledge and mechanical ability who imparted much useful instruction and were of great service to the community.

With Cromwell's death, the great Commonwealth his genius had reared speedily crumbled to pieces. Charles,

by general acclamation, was
A.D. 1660 called to the throne of his fathers

and amid national rejoicing; the estates of the Gordons reverted again to their rightful possessors, who now basked once more in the sunshine of royal favour, their chief being by and by created Duke of Gordon by James II, and receiving Viceregal Commission of King's Lieutenant in the North.

*Called Gweedman's Crafts.

Both Charles and James unfortunately persisted in their suicidal attempts to compel the unwilling people to accept Episcopacy, and subjected the Scottish Presbyterians to the most horrible persecution and outrage, which was long endured with exceeding patience and fortitude, and (although our fathers had no share in the honour) we who owe them so much, cannot but conceive the deepest admiration for the noble principles which guided, and the steadfast conduct which characterized a large number of these high-spirited and pure-minded Covenanters, who maintained their simple and unwavering faith so heroically in such a terrible season of trial, in which many of them sealed their devotion with their blood. Our forefathers, however, had only known them as their oppressors and with good reason regarded them as their bitterest and most relentless enemies, so they felt little, if any, sympathy with them in their sufferings, having themselves accepted a modified form of Episcopacy without demur, satisfied with whatever pleased their chief.

The death of Charles brought the persecuted no respite, his brother's ministers continued
A.D. 1685 the same inhuman barbarities and,

driven at last to rebellion by untold-of tortures and persecutions, the Covenanters unsheathed the sword in sheer desperation. The young Argyll's disastrous insurrection added to their miseries, filled the death vaults of Dunotter and sent hundreds of mutilated wretches into slavery on the American plantations. Little wonder that the persecuted portion of our countrymen cried for deliverance to the Prince of Orange.

William came, supported by the majority of the nation, but in the North two great noblemen stood faithful to the Scottish king; the duke of Gordon, then Governor of Edinburgh Castle, and "Bonnie Dundee," who loyally maintained the cause of his master in council, until Edinburgh,
A.D. 1685
growing too hot for the gallant Grahame, he galloped away to the North with his troop of Scots Life Guards, halting but to scale the Castle rock and hold that last memorable interview with the Duke of Gordon.

"And where go you now?" was the parting query of Strathbogie's chief. "Wherever the spirit of the great Montrose may guide!" answered the fearless cavalier, and the two loyal nobles parted forever.

Edinburgh Castle was ill provided for a siege either in stores, arms or ammunition, and the entire cost of its defence had to be defrayed from the Duke of Gordon's private means. In his straits, however, our Strath did not desert its chief, for from it "a few gentlemen retainers to the Duke came in as volunteers, resolving to run all hazards with him, and being resolute and loyal did him good service," so although his miserable and uncertain garrison numbered but two officers, four sergeants, and one hundred and twenty men, yet with the assistance of his own brave North-country men, he held out gallantly against incessant attacks for three months through terrible hardship and privations, until his provisions and powder were expended and his garrison so reduced by sickness and desertion that a further defence was impossible.

In the North the faithful clans and the mounted gentlemen of Perth, Angus and Aberdeen were speedily ranked below the royal standard and "Bonnie Dundee" led them out to strike a blow for their native king. The Earl of Dunfermline, with the Duke of Gordon's Commission had called the Aucht-and-forty to arms, and from our hills and glens led forth a gallant troop of horse and foot for the royal service. On the other hand the Forbeses had mustered a hundred horse and five hundred clansmen for the cause of the Covenant. Again and again the hostile armies traversed Strathbogie. Dundee and his royalists to recruit, the Covenanters to punish, to plunder and to overawe.

At Killiecrankie the Orange troops and the Jacobite forces came face to face, and the
A.D. 1689 Orange pennon went down before the furious charge of the northern horse and the fell swoop of the kilted clans, but Dundee, the gallant and dauntless, who had ridden in the van of that glorious rush, lay dead, his loyal blood welling through that ill-omened scarf of the fatal green.

His loss was a death-blow to the Stuart cause, although for the next two years the Jacobites maintained a desultory warfare, during which our glen was repeatedly occupied and traversed by both forces, and suffered much in cattle and property, and especially in the destruction of the growing corn.

The disaster at Cromdale disheartened most of the Jacobites, but the Farquharsons and Gordons made one more determined stand for the Scottish cause at Braemar. Victorious at first, they were ultimately defeated with heavy loss, and Deeside delivered over to fire and sword, 1,400 houses being burnt to the ground by the Orange troops, and all the fertile country about Abergeldie laid waste.

With this defeat faded the hopes of the Stuarts, until the obnoxious union with England
A.D. 1707 and the continued hostile actions and persistent attempts of that nation to suppress and destroy every feeling of Scotland's national honour and independence again stirred the hot embers of Jacobitism into a furious blaze.

During the intervening years our countryside, which was fairly peaceful and prosperous, owed much to the munificence of the princely house of Gordon, whose members, debarred by the laws from holding office in

the realm, devoted much treasure and attention to the improvement of their people and possessions. Trade rapidly increased, much money was earned by weaving and stocking-knitting for the Dutch merchants, and the famous Rhynie "Bull Markets" were known all over the country. Great droves of cattle traversed the glen from more remote regions, many of the study, well-armed Highland drovers being little better than catterans, who annexed, without scruple, any live stock seen near their line of march and were, moreover, in league with the professional cattle reivers who lurked among the hills. Many a rough tussle had the Strathbogie folks in pursuing and recovering their cattle from these daring tykes, the details of which are not yet entirely forgotten.

By and by the burdens and indignities entailed on poor Scotland by the Union seemed too grievous for patriotic souls to bear; the professors of the Reformed Religion were also exceedingly intolerant, and wide through the oppressed but unchanging North grew the unuttered desire for

"The auld Stuarts back again,"
until from Kildrummie, the ancient seat of Pictish and Scottish royalty, the Earl of Mar gave voice to the widespread sentiment, and called
A.D. 1715 on the clans to rise for the Scottish
Race of kings. Then the Standard was up on the Braes o' Mar, and loud and sairly sounded the gathering pibroch. The best blood in the Highlands throbbed at the summons, and "Frae hill and glen" the loyal and the brave flocked to the banner. There, amongst other patriotic nobles, was the Duke of Gordon, with two battalions of Highlanders and two squadrons of horse, gathered from our fertile Strath, and from every dauch and glen of the old Gordon country, Enzie, and the Garioch; there the few loyal Forbes lairds, and the brave Leiths of Strathdon; there, also, the faithful Glenbucket, a very Saul in stature, magnificent in the splendour of his Highland dress and ornaments. And with all these mustered many of their old allies – the trusty clans who had maintained the cause of the King in the days of Montrose and Dundee; while again confronting them came their arch enemy, Argyll, with all his Whig clansmen and lowland troopers.

At Sheriffmuir the armies engage, and in the first wild rush Argyll's left wing is cut to pieces by the Jacobite claymores; but the right, better posted, is more fortunate, and bravely withstands the assault. "Oh for an hour of Dundee!" cried the gigantic Glenbucket, as Mar, instead of launching his reserve at the stubborn foe, held back, and permitted Argyll to withdraw in good order, thus rendering the victory so uncertain and ill-secured, t hat it proved a death-blow to the Jacobite cause, and brought success to Argyll even in his defeat. To t his nobleman's credit be it said he was most generous and humane with his disbanded adversaries, and suffered heavily thereby in the estimation of his unscrupulous master.

The Chevalier, who had landed at Peterhead, and received an enthusiastic welcome from the Aberedonians, had again to fly. Kildrummie's ancient and noble pile was burnt by the English troops, and the surrounding country laid under heavy contribution. The Duke of Gordon, however, was fortunate enough to secure an early remission, and Strathbogie thus escaped with some slight exactions and a sham disarming.

An attempt at road and bridge making in the district, soon after this, was at first most unpopular, and for long afterwards goods, etc. continued to be carried on horseback in currachs (panniers), or bags; but by and by a few wheeled vehicles began to crawl along the highway with creaking wooden axles. Smuggling flourished, every glen or clachan having its own whiskey still. Broken or outlawed men, who lived by poaching, robbery and cattle stealing, were plentiful, Corrielaur being for a long time a next of such catterans; and farmers in pursuit of their stolen cattle, did not scruple to make reprisals by carrying off the beasts of enemies whom they considered likely to be implicated; while market days seldom closed without scenes of violence, and frequently bloodshed, occurring between the members of rival clans or families, who swaggered about with belted claymores, in the tartans of their various Septs or Superiors.

Chapter IV

Saw ye the lads wi' their bonnets and white cockades
Leaving their mountains to follow Prince Charlie.
Hogg

Mackintosh, the gallant soldier,
Wi' the Grahams and Gordons gay,
They have tak'en the field of honour
Spite of all their chiefs could say.
Jacobite Ballad

Culloden is lost and my country deplores.
Campbell

But when the rate of battle ceased,
The victor's soul was not appeased;
The helpless and forlorn must feel
Devouring flames and murderous steel.
Smollett

Peace spreads her balmy wing,
Discord and feuds are sunk in realms of night,
Astrea reigns, and Vulcans Cyclops are
To ploughshares beating helmet, sword and spear.
Laing

In Scotland the Jacobite spirit was
Not yet dead. All over the North a blind but deep-rooted love for the exiled Stuarts still held sway, and the aggrieved and disappointed everywhere joined in the cry for their restoration. Then in a halo of romance and adventure came Bonnie Prince Charlie, the idol of Jacobite love and devotion, the deathless hero of A.D. 1745 song and story; and around him the devoted chiefs loyally mustered their warlike clans in the vain effort to win back for "The Chevalier" the throne of his fathers.

At Prestonpans the disciplined forces of King George formed in contempt to drive back the kilted line. There was one tearing volley, one delirious rush, and the Hanoverian battalions were scattered like chaff.

How acted our old Strath in these stirring times? Were our fathers false to the Jacobite preceipts of their progenitors, unfaithful to their glorious legacy of unswerving loyalty? Not all. Hamilton, the Duke's Baron-Baillie in Huntly, was the first in the saddle, and with a joyous troop of loyal young farmers galloped in to the "Braif Toun" of Aberdeen, and compelled the Town's Herald to proclaim the Chevalier at the market cross. There he staved in several butts of wine, and with his jovial Jacobites drank heartily to the health of King James, striving vainly at the same time to persuade the cannie Lord Provost to do the like. Right gallantly did these Strathbogie troopers bear themselves under the Prince's banner. Hamilton, their brave leader, after many adventurous deeds, was left in the northern retreat to hold Carlisle. It was a forlorn hope, but the bold Baron-Baillie of Huntly made a most resolute though unavailing defence. An overpowering force captured the place and Hamilton lost his head.

The Duke of Gordon played a waiting game, but his uncle, the gallant Lord Lewis, was speedily in Strathbogie, striving with all a Gordon's zeal and success to rouse the clansmen and retainers on the Gordon territory. All infatuated by ancestral tradition and a love for the cause answered his call with enthusiasm, the more lukewarm farmers sent only their Highland shearers but, in a short space of time he had mustered a goodly troop of horse and two splendid and fairly-armed battalions, one commanded by Gordon of Avachie (or Abbachie), the other by Moir of Stonywood, the former mostly recruited in the Cabrach, Kildrummie and Bogieside, the latter from Deveronside, the Garioch, and Morayshire.

At the same time brave old Glenbucket with the loyal Forbes lairds of Strathdon had mustered a fine battalion in that region, half Forbes, half Gordon, which marched into England with the Prince and behaved with signal determination and courage; and on Deeside the warlike clan Farquhar furnished another splendid regiment under "Bonnie Monaltrie with the gowden hair." The venerable Lord Forbes of Pitsligo, "the last of the Scottish Cavaliers" also took the field for "Scotland's richtfu' King" with a small troop of well mounted gentlemen, so that probably no other county in the kingdom contributed more to the cause of the Prince wither in men or money than did the good old shire of Aberdeen.

Gaily the encircling hills reverberated with the rattling echo of the drum and the joyous skirl of the bagpipe, as with hopeful hearts and high spirits our local battalions left their native glen and the agitated hearts and tearful eyes of those they loved, and made their way to Aberdeen to be more thoroughly equipped and uniformly habited in full Highland dress. Scarce had Lord Lewis rendezvoused his forces in the "cold city of grey granite" than the Hanoverian troops were after him. No lowland rabble either but Macleods, Grants and Munroes, under their respective chiefs, yet but half-hearted in the enterprise.

Halting for a night in Strathbogie, now at their mercy, this force committed no outrage and were very courteously treated by the good folks of Huntly, who jestingly said they would "seen hae them back in a hurry wi' sair heeds." Next morning the Grants, five hundred in number, and at times old allies of the Strathbogie folk, turned back, as they said, to protect their own territory. The MacLeods went on to Inverury and Lord Lewis at once moved out to meet them. Strange that at so late a period the dormant power of Celtic superstition – the Druid's terrible belief in the need for blood – should have asserted itself so strongly amongst our civilized forefathers. Yet so it was; to ensure success they had solemnly determined, in accordance with tradition, to slaughter the first living thing they met, and near Keith Hall they deliberately sacrificed a sow with young which crossed their path, and sprinkled each other with the blood. Night fell before they

came in contact with the enemy, but the pale moon shone so clearly that the colour of the rival cockades could be distinctly seen, and before the onset to the Gordons and Farquharsons the Hanoverian forces fled in disorder. Some of them, 'tis said, getting their '"sair heeds" bandaged next morning in Huntly by the ladies whose husbands or sweethearts had probably inflicted the wounds. Lord Lewis took many prisoners, amongst others Macrimmon, the famous piper to Dunvegan, who was treated by his captors with no ordinary respect. A king amongst pipers, venerated for his own perfect mastery and skill, and for the musical powers of a long line of progenitors, everyone sympathized with him in his captivity, and on their way back to Aberdeen, when the instruments of the Deeside and Strathbogie musicians should have made the air ring with triumphal music, every chanter was mute.

At Stirling the Strathbogie men, with Lord Lewis's forces, joined the Prince's main body
A.D. 1746 and shared in the victory at the battle of Falkirk.

Cumberland however was on the march with reinforcements and the Highland army began its retreat northwards to Inverness in two divisions, the Prince's marching through the central Highlands, and Lord George Murray's by the east coast. The four Aberdeenshire battalions and all the mounted men were in the latter, but part of Avachie's battalion and of the clan regiments of the Ogilvies and Farquharsons, with some other men belonging to their districts, were soon detached from Lord George's main body and marched by a more direct route nearly due north through Braemar, Strathbogie and Keith.

Cold and dismal was the winter's morning on the 16th of February, when this little flying column left Tarland on its northern march, and sad the partings of many of the gallant lads with friends and relatives who had accompanied them thus far from Deeside and the Braes of Angus. Snow lay deep in the hill passes, and for some time after starting the great soft flakes fell fast. By and by the downfall ceased, giving place to a bitter frosty wind, and before long the Rhynie people could hear the shrill sound of the bagpipes and discern the long column defiling down the Strath. They encamped for the night at the Kirk of Rhynie – the scene of many a strange gathering – receiving every kindness and hospitality the good folks of the little village could bestow, while from the Cabrach and the surrounding district, people came flocking to seek for friends and relatives, bringing with them supplies of food and such dainties as could be hastily prepared. The Highland troops had only a few tents, but the villagers gave all they could a kindly shelter in their rude fell cottages, and a hearty breakfast ere they began their next day's heavy march through the snow to Keith.*

Meanwhile, Lord George Murray's main body, including the headquarters of Stonywood and Glenbucket's battalions, reached Aberdeen and continued the march by Old-Meldrum, Turiff and Banff. Moir of Stonywood, with a wing of his regiment and some horse, forming the rearguard which only evacuated Aberdeen on the 27th, as the van of Cumberland's army entered.

It is gratifying to note the high discipline and excellent behaviour which characterized our local regiment on the line of march, especially when Cullen House was

*The Rhynie folk of two generations ago loved to narrate how several of the Prince's men, belonging to the place carried their little children on their shoulders as far as Miltoun of Noth, beyond which their wives were not allowed to accompany them; and dilated on the great length of the column, the head of which had passed New Noth before the outlying pickets to the south and west of the village were called in.
plundered by the handful of Irish pickets under Major Glasgow and a few Highlanders. The gallant Avachie was furious at such lawless proceedings and, extending the Strathbogie regiment at the Hill of Boghead, compelled the pillagers to halt with their booty, and would have forced them to carry it back but for the arrival of an order to abstain from all interference.

After the concentration of the Prince's forces, Lord Lewis Gordon's men were engaged at the capture of Fort Augustus, of which Lord Lewis with part of Stonywood's battalion for some time retained command.

To facilitate the obtaining of supplies, small detachments were now distributed in the most fertile and important places, and part of John Roy Stewart's Regiment and of Avachie's Strathbogie battalion (400 foot in all, with 50 horse) came to garrison Strathbogie where, being amongst friends and relatives, they were received with the warmest cordiality.

A few days after their arrival 150 were hurried off late at night to intercept the your Laird of Grant who, however, gained the shelter of Druminnoir Castle, a fortress they were unable to capture without artillery. So after a weary night's exertion they had to return next day to Huntly, which some of them reached at 1.00 p.m. weary and footsore, to learn that General Bland with 100 Campbells, 100 Grants, 2 regiments of horse, 4 battalions of foot and 6 guns, had marched from Old Meldrum that
morning to attack them. Moreover, as a number of their men belonged to Upper Strathbogie they had been allowed to fall out and visit their homes on passing, so that many of the party were then straggling down the glen miles away.

It was determined to hold out for one hour to give the stragglers a chance of coming in, and then fall back upon Fochabers.

In a short time Bland's advance guard came in sight. The handful of Jacobite horse at once moved out between the village and the "Bogie Brig," and by clever manoeuvring and skilful retirement, delayed the enemy so long that the stragglers were able to rejoin, and the foot to retire safely into ground where the Hanoverian cavalry dared not pursue.

Kingston's horse were the first of Cumberland's troops to enter the village of Strathbogie (Huntly). They found the doors shut and barred in their faces and people "evil disposed and disaffected," so they smashed in the doors forthwith and helped themselves with a free hand.

Bland also burnt the "non-huring meeting house" and pillaged the farms and houses of known Jacobites, detaching parties for this purpose to scour the neighbourhood, one of which came as far up as Miltoun of Noth* but turned back at the hostile attitude of the Rhynie people.

From Strathbogie 70 Campbells and 30 of Kingston's dragoons were sent forward to occupy Keith, but at night the Highlanders from Fochabers, led by young Stewart of Strathdon and Glenlivet, under direction of Major Glasgow, fell upon them and only six escaped.

Cumberland left Aberdeen on the 8th April with the last division of his army, marching by Old Meldrum and Banff. As he passed the castle of Fyvie, its lady with her young son, came out to see the soldiers go by. "Who are you, madam?", said Cumberland. "I am Lord Lewis Gordon's sister!" replied the fearless lady.

*The doings of this party, the profanity and gluttony of the Sassenach troopers, and their extraordinary efforts to kill or capture hens, long furnished a theme for local conversation. Several unfortunate roosters at Auld Noth, whose legs had been broken by the dragoons' missiles, were regarded with much interest and commiseration as long as they were able to "hirple aboot" but, of course, they eventually died of old age.

General Bland's forces from Strathbogie, now augmented to nine battalions of infantry, joined Cumberland's headquarters at Portsay, and next day the Hanoverians crossed the Spey.

A few days more and the two armies are about to meet on Drummossie Muir.

What a terrible contrast. On one side the comfortable and warmly-clad Hanoverians, abundantly feasted, well rested and fresh. On the other, the shivering Highlanders now stretched on the damp ground in the snell wintry blast. Ragged, miserable and famished; so utterly exhausted that with a battle imminent they are dozing in benumbed unconsciousness. For weeks they have been almost without shelter and miserably fed, their only ration for the past forty-eight hours has been two half-pound bannocks baked from "sidds" (the husks of oats and coarse unclean dust). All the long weary night they have been toiling and marching in the hope of surprising the foe, but the attempt has failed and hope might well give place to despair. Hark! The gallop of horses! Tidings for the Prince! The Hanoverians are advancing! "Play up pipers; sound the gathering for your clans!" Hastily the famished Highlanders are roused, and leaping to their feet with wild enthusiasm the warrior spirit of Alban's ancient race soars for the time superior to weakness and suffering, as with high courage they take their post for the last time to meet the foe.

In two slender lines the Prince has formed his little army. Almost in the centre of the first the yellow-haired Monaltrie marshals the brave Farquharsons. The other Aberdeenshire regiments are placed in column on either flank of the second line; Strathbogie on the right, Strathdon on the left – the posts generally assigned to the most veteran and reliable troops, on whom will fall the duty of protecting the flanks and supporting the fighting line, as well as the more terrible task of attempting to retrieve the fortunes of the day should the first attack fail.

The enemy comes into position some six hundred yards in front, and soon the Hanoverian cannon are spreading death amongst the weary Highlanders – whose few small guns are well nigh worthless – and they chafe and fume in t heir helplessness with wild impatience. A biting wind blows fiercely in their eyes, and a hurricane of snow and sleet almost blinds them as, anticipating the order, they swoop forward in that wild rush.

Such a charge! Six hundred yards of a race over rough ground and gnarled heather, in the teeth of a wintry hurricane, with grape shot and musketry sweeping the intervening space like hail, and pouring in a furious enfilade from the right flank, while triple rows of bayonets, fixed and ready, await the exhausted survivors.

Is it wonderful that such an attempt should fail? Greater wonder that it could be delivered with the slightest effect; yet, not only was it delivered, but wherever the Highlanders lived to cross that fearful space, the first Hanoverian line recoiled shattered and broken from the impact.

Gallantly did the Deeside men deliver their desperate charge, and though sixteen officers and seventy-nine men fell to rise no more, they hurled back the 34th Regiment in confusion upon Fleming's, "and cut their way back when all was lost."

On the right the "traitor Highlanders" of Loudon and Argyll, creeping stealthily round the brae, have broken down the dyke on which rests the right of the Prince's army. The 10th and 11th Dragoons pass with them unnoticed through the gaps and, as the first line of Highlanders rushes forward, they ascend the brae and charge from the right rear on the second line, thinking to carry panic and defeat amongst the astonished Jacobites. Vain hope – in a twinkling Avachie Gordon faces the stalwart men of Strathbogie about, the rear company and flank men level t heir guns, and a volley rings out through the driving sleet. Quickly the now worthless weapons are dashed to the earth and in another instant the blades of their naked claymores flash through the pelting hail as with a thrilling slogan they rush like tigers at the advancing squadrons, driving them helter-skelter down the brae and chasing the Campbells headlong over the wall.

Avachie's men, with some horse, quickly form line to the right rear to hold the baffled foe at bay, while the leading wing under Stonywood swiftly deploys to the front, but even as it moves a scene of horror bursts upon its gaze. Back from that cloud of blinding sleet and fire and smoke, flying Highlanders, grim and

bloody, come dashing through their ranks with bitter cries and imprecations, and in a moment they are hopelessly mixed with the shattered remnants of the Athol regiment and the Camerons of Lochiel.

On the left, the sulky Macdonalds – excepting the brave Clanranald – have hung back, a fatal gap is widening as the charging line rushes on and the flank is exposed. Perth's and Glenbucket's regiments are hurried up, for already Kingston's Light Horse and Cobham's Dragoons are bearing down, and the brave lads of Strathdon rush to meet them deploying as they go. Too late! Recoiling from the shock and decimated by an overpowering fire, the flying wreck of Clanranald and of John Roy Stewart's regiment masks their fire and destroys their cohesion. Already the sullen Macdonalds are in steady and orderly retreat. All is lost, and the survivors of that glorious but fatal charge either stand and die gallantly or, joining in the rout, break madly through the second line. The Hanoverian horse gallop wildly in pursuit, the demons or murder and rapine are loose, and the sun sets on scenes of cruelty and horror such as have seldom disgraced the name of man.

Atrocities and loathsome degradations followed; whose hideous memories can still awaken a most passionate resentment in the hearts of those whose forbears suffered so cruelly. Nor can we help comparing the brutal conduct of the Hanoverian troops with the nobility and gentleness which, in their hour of triumph, the Children of the Mist had ever displayed.

The main body of the Highland army retreated in gloomy despondency through Badenoch and Deeside to Clova, and there dispersed to seek their homes or skulk amongst the woods and hills. Soon the Hanoverian troops were scouring the country, housing down the hapless fugitives, killing their cattle and destroying their effects so that many of their families died of starvation. Most implicated persons of any note were outlawed, but many managed to elude detection until the act of amnesty was passed. Others were less fortunate and there are few more affecting incidents than that connected with the capture of Gordon of Dalpersie, one of Lord Lewis's officers, who was seized by a party of English dragoons while disguised as a labouring man, and dragged before the parish minister for identification. The good man, however, could not recognise his laird, so they took him to his own house and brought his wife to look at him, thinking that in her fright she was certain to disclose his identity. The brave lady, however, retained perfect self-possession, looked on her husband without a tremor and inquired why they brought the strange man there. Deceived by her calmness they were on the point of letting him go when his little children, happening to come to the door, at once ran to him, crying "Daddy! Daddy!" and thus, poor innocent things, brought their brave father to the block.

Deeside suffered most severely at the hands of the Government troops, but fortunately the Duke of Gordon's professed loyalty stood his tenantry in good stead, although many outlawed men forced from their homes, took to the hills and drifted into a course of robbery and crime.

Thus ended the last scene of actual war in Strathbogie. Soon after the district contributed largely to several fencible Highland regiments and was the cradleland of the gallant 92nd Gordon Highlanders which still draws many of its best men from the region of its birth.

Everyone knows how the beautiful Duchess went round the markets on horseback, in a tartan habit and a soldier's jacket and bonnet, coaxing the pretty men to join with her guerdon of a guinea and a kiss, and how many cadets of the best families thought it no discredit to march in the ranks of this famous regiment. Which has since served with distinction in all quarters of the globe, and holds a place second to none for bravery in the field and behaviour in quarters.

The gallant deeds and honourable achievements of the "Gay Gordons" in late years cannot but throw a reflected lustre over the Gordon country, and perhaps the high efficiency of the Gordon Volunteers, and the favour with which they are regarded may be accepted as some indication that the warlike spirit of the past has descended on the present generation.

Up to the date of Culloden, it had been fashionable, perhaps necessary, to wear arms when travelling any distance, and on gala days, marriages, or markets, the gay sparks of Strathbogie affected the Highland dress with its barbaric adornments, but the disarming act of 1747, which also prohibited the wearing of tartan or

any portion of the Highland breeches, and sleeved vests or tailed coats of hodden grey, became the ordinary articles of apparel, until succeeded by the hats, trousers and jackets of later make.

The rigorous persecution enforced against Scottish Episcopacy almost annihilated that form of worship; laws against the Roman Church were equally severe and its oppressed adherents could only worship in secret. The great house of Gordon, however, held fast to the ancient faith and was still powerful enough to offer homes and protection to the "hunted priesthood" until religious toleration gained the ascendancy, but by this time the adherents of the Church of Rome were few in number.

Although Strathbogie's warlike days were past, the ministers of the district did not allow the name of our Strath to disappear so perfunctorily from the historic page. Every student of ecclesiastical affairs is aware of the strange proceedings which took place at the Auld Kirk of Marnoch in 1841, bringing the Strathbogie Presbytery into such prominence, and of the results of the great Disruption which followed. Dissenters had been numerous in the district from an earlier date, and numbered amongst them many earnest and patriotic men, who did much to awaken and stimulate an active interest in religious matters. Since then, in the present age of free religious thought, the number of sects in the neighbourhood has multiplied considerably.

It is needless to dwell on the general advancement of the Strath since '45. General Wade's military road was the precursor of an extensive network of roads and bridges. The Aberdeenshire canal aided materially in developing the resources of the district, and finally the iron horse came puffing Keith-wards from Aberdeen. The removal of the chief seat of the Gordon family to Castle Gordon*
No doubt seriously affected the welfare of the Strath, although the old Dukes were not unmindful of their former home and did much to promote its benefit, but the

*Although the principal residence of the Gordon family was transferred to the Bog of Gicht after the execution of the "Great Marquis" the eldest son still had his seat at Huntly, and the Victual Chamberlains, or Baron Baillies, resided there up to 1760.

frugal and hardy crofting communities which had dotted the glen in numerous clusters, and furnished the majority of the fighting men in bygone days, gradually disappeared; their smallholdings being added to the larger farms, where a better and more costly system of agriculture was introduced. Landlords began to drain and plant, better houses to be built, the virtue of the turnip and potato was discovered and the value of the farmyard refuse appreciated. One by one the antique implements were superseded by more modern inventions and manual labour to a great extent by mechanism; until, with improved systems and chemical aid, the present advanced stage of cultivation – or exhaustion, as the reader pleases – has been attained, for no one will venture to affirm that the Strathbogie farmer has not kept well apace with the times in this respect.

The once invaluable domestic accomplishments of cairding, spinning and weaving have passed away with the pack-merchant, the spae-wife, and the whip-the-cat. Knitting will probably soon follow, leaving the entire monopoly of the woollen industries to the machinery of the Bogie mills. Flax cultivation has also gone, and with it the great linen trade for which Strathbogie was famous 250 years ago, but in its place have arisen other necessary industries, and the capital of the Strath, now firmly wedded to the name of Huntly, has attained to an eminently respectable size and appearance and maintains all the ordinary modern institutions and improvements with vigour and success. Many of its present inhabitants may not be of the old Strathbogie stock, yet a rare originality, manliness and determination, redolent of the soil, is said to mark all who are reared in the brave old Gordon country, many of whose sons have gone out into the world and risen and excelled in nearly every art, trade and profession.

With the death of "George, Fifth and last Duke of Gordon" in 1836, the title became extinct until revived forty years later in favour of the Duke of Richmond, a great-grandson (on the female side) of the Fourth Duke of Gordon, who also succeeded to the estates and is the present Lord of Strathbogie, and one of the kindest and most indulgent landlords in the kingdom. The Marquisate of Huntly devolved at the "last"

Duke’s death on the Sixth Earl of Aboyne, whose successor is generally recognised as the High Chief of the Clan Gordon, although some would claim this honour for Gordon of Pitlurg.

‘Nellie Grant’s Hoosie’ (the last of the fell cottages at Rhynie).

LAYS AND BALLADS OF STRATHBOGIE

and

OTHER POEMS

The Toon Leddie's Lament

They say I'm a cankersome boddy
And sometimes nae easy tae byde
Ye hardly wad think I'm the deemie
That gaither't tae auld Bogieside.
My man has a hugger o' siller
My hoose is fell cosie and braw;
Bit, Oh! For the haughs o' the Bogie
And the happy young hert that's awa.

The days fan my life was like music
And toil feis't content and reward;
Fan the smile o' the maister was gladness,
Lat wark-jots be ever sae hard.

Nae chiel was sae protty as Donal
And baith o's war brimfu' o' glee,
And tho' licht I made o' him I'm certain
That Donal was daft aboot me.
M'bbe that made the hairst-rig sae happy,
We wish'tna for cliack I fear,
For I ance made a slip-band* and promised
Tae fee for his scythe the neist year.
But afore the neist hairst I was marriet –
Ded aye! And fat else wad I dee?
For my man has baith gear and position
And Donal was naething tae me;
But here in the toon, wi' its clatter,
'Mang riches, and servans, and a',
Oh! Life has nae sunbeams or music –

My glaidness o'hert is awa.

And Donal! He gied tae the sojers
And far aff in Egypt they tell
That, w' bleed dreipin' doon ower his tartans,
He focht like a prince till he fell.
And aften I think o' the bygones
And wonder if I be to blame;
Hert-sick o' a life that is eesless
And tired o' my man and my hame.

Then, Oh! Tae be ance mair a lassie
And hairstin sae lichtsome and blithe.
Aye, liftin' the gowd tappit corn
Frae aff o' the neb o' the scythe.

And, Oh! to be making a slip-knot
And Donal my bandster tae be,
Ae hairst by the banks o' the Bogie
War worth a' my lifetime tae me.

*'The bandster' can claim a kiss from the 'Gatherer' for each band whose knot slips in the binding. When both are young, and one is fair, such forfeits are frequently incurred with amazing rapidity.

Her Presence

Soft is the zephyr,
Sweet is the night;
Surely my heart beats
Quick with delight.
Silver stars glisten,
Sparkle on high
In the far azure
Dome of the sky.

Whence all this happiness
Why such delight?
Is it the beauty of
Witching starlight?
'Tis not their silver rays
Streaming above
But the dear presence of
Her that I love.

Blossom, ye flow'rets gay,
Streamlets roll on;
More flowers will follow you
When ye are gone;
More brooks will murmur
After the rain;
But love's delicious dream
Comes not again.

A Silver Night

A silver night, a starry sky
A young moon shining in the blue,
One tender kiss, a long sad sigh,
My heart I left on leaving you.

No other lips were pressed to mine
Since first to thee my heart was lost;
Oh! had my love been false as thine
I had not thus been anguish-tossed.

A summer night, a moonlit sky
And I am waiting, as of yore
To see you pass in beauty by,
To see you once, and nevermore.

With queenly grace you come again,
But other arms are round you cast,
On other lips your kisses rain –
Oh! can you thus forget the past?

Ah! you might laugh if you but knew
How much I loved, - how on that hill
I lay, by Arab spears pierced through
And smiled to think you loved me still.

The dream is o'er! You loved me not;
And mocked me with your words so kind -
Oh! that to die had been my lot
Whilst faith was strong, and reason blind.

Tempora Mutantur

Fan I left my kwintra pairis,
Weel I kent it a',
Ilka hoose and ilka yairdie,
Ilka byre and sta'.
No the feck o'things are alter't
So the papers say –
Little by the haughs o' Bogie
I would ken th' day.

Hamely hooses doon are tummel't
Far I've aften met
Roon the warm and couthie ingle
Wi' a hairtsome set.
Heicher hooses noo are biggin',
Windows bulged and braw,
Fairms hae bress-plates, bells and carpets,
Grates for coal and a'.

Peats, like brose, are oot o'fashion,

Spinnin’ wheels dae hairm;
Hypophosphates, French, and music’s
Needed on a fairm.
So the quynes gang tae the ceety
‘Stead o’ tae the byre,
And they workna wi’ the servans
Roon the kitchin fire.

Weel kent folk awa are weirin
Frae the aunchent glen,
Unco’ fowk their places fillin,
Fowk I dinna ken.
Leal auld friens and honest nee’bours
Dee like a’ the rest;
Fain wad I wi some forgaither
That I ken’t the best.

Unco, unco, a’thing’s unco,
Roon the dear auld place,
Wids and dykes, and fowk and hooses
Hae a stranger’s face.

Naething noo but hills and watter
Left that I wad ken,
And the names upo’ the lairstenes
Roon my dear auld hame.

By Bogie’s Banks

By Bogie’s banks I kiest a line;
The maril’s minnins tae beguile;
Bit there the heuk wis fest in me,
That winna tyne the haud this fyle.
‘Twis faur the leafy sauch hings doon,
Aneith the bonny airn tree,
That first my ain true love I saw
And fan the sparkle o’ her e’e.

‘Twis sitting on the floory bank
And plaitin’ garlan’s for her hair,

She spied me with her E's sae frank:
"Young man, I see ye keekin there!"
Quo' I, "Braw lass, I keist my line,
A speckilt troot tae catch the noo,
But little thocht I at the time
Ta angle sic a prize as you!"

Quo' she, "Your rod is unco short
Yer line it winna rax ta me!"
Quo' I, "I'll wyde the burn in sport
A' for yer witchin' glamourie!"
"Fat think ye will ye get," she said,
"Tho' ye sud through the Bogie wyde?"
"Ae kidd, my dear, is a' I'll speir,
And leave to seat me by yer side!"

"Byde still! Bye still! Young man," she said;
"Yer bait'll nae gie doon wi' me;
Aneith it a' a barbit blade
Might pierce me sair in treacherie!".

Quo' I, "Sweet lass, 'tis yours the airt,
The tether twinkles frae yer e'e,
Yer cruel heuk is in my hert
And hauds me bund that ance was free!

"I canna byde – yer line is ticht
It drugs me throw the burn tae you,
Dazed wi' yer ees' bewitchin' licht,
And hinny sweetness o' your moo."
My waun I flung upo' the grun,
I plowdert throw the wimplin river,
Tae help me oot she rax't her hand –
'Tis mine! – and shall be mine forever.

Johnnie Cran

Johnnie ken't a winsome lassie,
Kin' and blithe a'wyte wis she,

But the limmer widna heed ‘ im,
Only hysed and leuch wi’ glee.
Johnnie hidna muckle siller,
He wis bit a seervan’ chiel,
Janet wis a crafter’s lassie
Singin’ as she spun the wheel,
Gang awa and ca’ the harra,
Ca’ the harra, Johnnie Cran,
Tho’ yer gowd micht fill a barra,
‘Twidna make ye my gweedman.

Johnnie thocht that he could keep her
Snodly wi’ his scanty fee;
Janet only leuch and tauld him,
Dinna fash yer thoom for me,
Johnnie grew baith glum and dowie,
Ilka anterin job gied wrang,
And he spak himself o’droonin’
Janet laugh’s the mair and sang,
Gang awa and ca the harra,
Ca’ the harra, Johnnie Cran,
Tho’ yer gowd micht fill a barra,
‘Twidna make ye my gweedman.
.

Janet’s uncle dee’t and left her,
Something ower a thousan pown;
Johnnie voo’t that noo Miss Janet,
Wid nae mair acquantance own,
But she keppit him ae gloamin’,
And she sneckit fest the style,
Heild him back wi joy umfoonert,
Singin saftly a the fyle,
Come awa and ley the harra,
Lay the harra, Johnnie Cran;
I hae gowd ta fill a barra,
Ye shall be my ain gweedman.

N.B. Johnnie went.

The Banks o’ Essachie

Grand the soun’ the Kirkney sends
Roarin’ owe the rocky lynn,
And the rush that Gaudie lends
Has a sweetness in its din;
Dear the wimple throw’ the trees
Bogie rins sae couthilee;
But nae tunes my hert can please
Like the springs o’ Essachie

Bonnnie are the birks in Simmer,
Fan their trimm’lin leaves o’ green
Glint again wi’ fairy glimmer
In the Bogie’s glessy sheen;
Bonnie, bonnie boo the birks
In the haughs aneith Winsee;
But gie me the auld craw-widdie
And the banks o’ Essachie.

Bonnie nods the heather blue
Hingin’ owe the Ordhill brae,
Blobbin’ wi’ the cystal dew
At the dawin o’ the day;
Bonnie nods the heather bell,
But the vi’let’s mair tae me,
Blinkin’ in the girsy dell
By the banks o’ Essachie.

Sweet the faces that the Dee
Mirrors back upon its tide,
Fair the lasses that ye see
Bleachin’ claes on Bogieside;
But the fairest that I ken –
Dearer than them a’ tae me –
Is the lass I ca’ my nain,
On the banks o’ Essachie.

Money pleasures rare may gie,
And the rich may hae the maist;
Bit the share that fa’s tae me
Is the sweetest I can taste.
A’ that warl’s gear could lend
Widna compensate tae me
For the happy oors I spend
On the banks o’ Essachie.

O Softly Flowing River!

O softly flowing river,
Upon they flowery brink –
Ere soul from body sever –
I strive once more to drink.

Shot on the distant picket,
Before the scouts' recall;
Alone in yon dense thicket,
No comrade saw me fall.

Into the crystal water
My life-blood curdling runs;
I hear the din of slaughter,
The distant boom of guns.

The furious volleys rattle
Like drum-rolls far away –
O God! How goes the battle?
Who nobly wins the day?

I hear our slogan ringing,
My old battalion's cheer,
While I – life's moments winging –
Am worthless – dying here.

Oh! for one hour of vigour
To reach my comrades' side,
And hurl this mangled figure
Into the battle-tide!

Ha! there, with colours flying,
And pibroch proudly blown,
What coward would shrink from dying? –
But here! – unseen – alone!

Fainter the strife seems growing,
Hotter my fevered lip'
Again, O brook soft-flowing!
I fain they tide would sip.

My writhing makes thee muddy –
But ah! I know a stream;
Its waters – never bloody –
I see as in a dream.

‘Twixt green, wide haughs it windeth
And mirrors bush and tree –
Sweet Bogie! - something blindeth
My eyes – good-bye to thee!

Again, lips parched and moaning,
I lap th’ ensanguined flood,
And think, in anguish growning,
Of water and of blood.

O Christ! from pain deliver,
In mercy lead me on
To that great crystal River
Clear-flowing from the Throne.

Sic Transit Gloria Mundi

Cold they hand, and closed for ever
Is thy bright and fearless eye;
Tears o’ercome me – comrade, never
Thought I thus to see thee die.

Here, w hen ends our strife and troubles,
Even the honours of the brave
To the soul seem but as bubbles –
Shrinking, shivering from the grave.

War, with all its pomp and splendour,
Fades and dwindles in the eye;
Hollow, hollow is its grandeur
When the solemn hour draws nigh.

What are blood-stained flags unfurled –
Victory – or base defeat –
To the soul that leaves the world
For the awful Judgment Seat?

Earth's Sadness

As we sail down life's dark river,
Sad and solemn sounds we hear –
Sounds of agony that quiver,
Throbbing in our ears for ever,
As adown that dreary river
Swift we steer.

Mournful tones for ever telling
Tales of agony and woe;
Broken hearts and dismal knelling,
Death's dread hand for ever felling,
As adown the surging, swelling
Stream we go.

When shall cease such terrors frightening?
Shall not some grand flood of bliss
Come, each heart in sorrow brightening,
Every soul in anguish lightening,
Every heavenly pleasure heightening?
Yes! – ah, yes!

A Reverie of Home
(written in India)

Bright twinkle the stars in the darkness,
The night bird flits over the lea;
And scenes of my youth, in a vision,
Come wreathing their glamour o'er me.

On the Tap of the Noth's (1) lonely mountain,
The heather's sweet bloom is my seat;
The glens, and the homes of my fathers,
Are stretching afar at my feet.

With red-gold, with amber, and crimson,
The sunset is painting the West,
And glows in the waters of Kirkney (2)
From over the Cabrach's wild crest.

The muir-fowl and blackcock are winging
Their flight o'er the sides of the hill;
The fox (3), in the stillness of evening,
Is lapping the cool mountain rill.

In the mists of past ages forgotten,
What struggles these muirlands have known,
Disclosed by the spade or the ploughshare,
Unearthing the weapons (4) of stone.

The eagle-plumed (5) hosts of the mountains,
In tartans (6) and warlike array,
Have grappled and fought with the Norsemen,
And stained the bright broom of the brae.
O bloodthirty offspring of Odin,
'Twas here that ye fled, when assailed;
Like cages wolves ye fought in yon fortress
Till only with hunger ye quailed.

How often, on yonder green hill-top
To Thor's mighty hammer was poured
Human blood in a sickening oblation,
Till red grew the green hill of Ord.

Ah! these are the days that are perished,
And naught of their mem'ry remains,
Save the story that's breathed by the streamlet
And mystical echo of glens.

I see the great rock* which the chieftain
Of Noth, at his enemy hurled; (7)
In the days when those mighty magicians
Disputed the rule of the world.

There still in the side of the mountain
The crag's solid masses reveal,
Where 'twas stayed by the Bennachie warlock
And stamped in the ground with his heel.

Behind on a stone (8) near the Kirkney,
The fiend played his horrible part;
With the witches who gathered at mignight
To revel, and study black art.

*This rock is just below the huge crag called "Clochmaloo".

And there is the misty Knock-caillich#
Where dwelt the dread sorceress of old;
Tho' fled are these warlocks (9) and witches,
The terror of stackyard and fold.

Sweet, sweet is the scent of the heather,
The breeze blows it softly o'er me;
And wafts to my hearing the music,
The laughter of swift Essachie##

But faded is now the old legend
Of lady in gossamer dressed,
Who sat in a gorge of the mountains,

And poured out the streams from her breast.

Ah! Miltoun of North where for ages
The ploughshare and axe (10) held their own;
There Druid ancestors did homage,
Before the two pillars of stone.

I see where our Prince's true clansmen,
Were hid in yon hollow of brown;
With berries and water to feed them,
While red-coats were hunting them down.

#Knock-caillich – Hill of the hag or witch.

Essachie – Usgie-a-chiod – Water of paps. A huge serpent is said to inhabit the sources of the Essachie.

And there is the old farm* steading
With garden and stackyard and tree;
Above is the temple (11) of greenwood
And circle of weird mysterie.

'Twas there in the ages grown hoary;
Within that dread circuit of stone;
Neath the great waving branches of firwood,
The Druid erected his throne.

And there with a terrible symbol
He severed the mistletoe bough;
And offered an awful oblation,
To Theautis with blood streaming lowe.**

I mark the great stone (12) near the Bell-knowe (13)
Mysterious, ancient and vast;
A record that none may decipher
Of days and of deeds in the past

Th'Auld Mossie (14) is there with its "showdies"
The home of the wild duck and teal;
With the bright sheets of ice that in winter,
Re-echoed the ring of the steel.

* Easter – Bogieside.
** Bonfires on Hallow E'en and Midsummer's Night are still . lighted in many places. Forty years ago, over 100 bonfires . . could be seen from the summit of the Tap on these occasions.

There lies the morass where the Kelpie,
Beguiled the herd-boy and his kye;
Far down in its quagmire unfathomed,
The quaicks and wee-herdie lie.

And there is the old Muir o'Rhynie (15)
I know every building and stone;
The auld Kirk uprearing its belfry,
The bell (16) with its soft mellow tone.

The Muir of the "King of the maidens!"
Who now the old legend can tell,
Of the fair Pictish prince who so nobly
For honour of womanhood fell?

I see the grey stones that are marking
The place (17) where two chiefs are at rest;
One hand in the hilt of a claymore,
And each with a dirk in his breast.

And there on the grey market muirland,
Brave Lulach the son* of Macbeth,
Fought his last gallant fight for a kingdom,
Ere closed were his soft eyes in death.

There rested the men (18) of Glenlivet,
Who harried Druminnoir's domain;
And revelled, and danced to the bagpipes,
Untroubled by thoughts of the slain.

*Stepson

There oft did the Combich and Cattach,
With Alnach and Anreas fight:
And later in day has the Gordon,
With Forbes contested his might.

O valiant old Barons of Gordon (19)
Who held all this fertile domain,
Since the days of King Robert the noble
For service on blood-covered plain.

Each crag on the mountain and valley,
Each linn in an echo rings forth,
The fame of your tartan-dressed clansmen,
Who followed the "Cocks o' the North".

But tell not the tale save in whispers,
Those heroes with sinews of steel
Were the sons of the Cummins and Alnachs,
Re-christened with measures of meal.

Oh! fair are the haughs of Strathbogie,
But where are the Gordons all gone?
O'er the land where they numbered in hundreds
The surname (20) is almost unknown.

Where now are the chiefs of the Gordons,
And care they aught for their weal,

That their clansmen seek other employers
And toil for a measure of meal?

Down there, in the deep Craigbeg (21) valley
The spectres flit past with a scream;
Dead candles, and ghost-lights in winter
Will hover and dance on the stream.

Yet eerier far, and more gruesome
That howe (22) where the black beast is feared;
Where the phantoms of funerals, and armies
Of ghosts, pass with standard upreared.

I see the old ruins of Lesmoir (23)
And yonder the castle of Craig (24)
And far to the South is Kildrummie (25)
With legends all ancient and vague.

I think of its siege and betrayal,
When multitudes conquered the few,
Of the noble old chiefs and their clansmen,
So loyal, and dauntless and true.

Beyond flow the Don's (26) silent waters,
Tho' Lonach I cannot descry;
There still meets the old clan of Forbes,
Where gained they their proud battle cry.

O'er the Bogie's the house of Druminnoir (27)
The Kearn goes past with a roar;
'Twas there, as they feasted, the Gordons
Were faithlessly slain in their gore.

Near by is the Kirkyard of Kearn (28)
Where, clad in steel armour and rust,
Lie sixteen bold Barons of Forbes,
Their ashes commingling with dust.

'Tis there, in the dusk of the gloaming,
The wraith of the wee murdered bairn
Starts up with a wail from the wayside
Or sits on the stones of the cairn.

Tillyangus I see, where the clansmen
Empurpled the heatherbell's bloom
And the mounds where the slain in the battle
Were hastily laid in the tomb.

And there is the well where Black Arthur
Was slaughtered when stooping to drink,
And yonder the halls of Knockespock

And pond with the tree-covered brink.

Fair! Fair are the birks of the Bogie
That deck the wild glen of Win'see;
The gorge and the glad have a beauty
As lovely as mortal may see.

'Twas there that the green-coated fairies (29)
Assembled in jovial ring,
And still, with his ear on the greensward
The ploughman can hear when they sing.

Above is the Tongue of the Corbie,
The cliffs and the forests of fir,
Where softly the roebuck reposing,
Starts up if a leaflet but stir.

And there where the waters run swiftly,
All blasted in branch and in twig,
Lies the tree that was levelled by magic,
And known as the "Deil's awfu' brig."

The countryman fears as he crosseth,
For well is the penalty known;
Whoever shall fall in the water
The black fiend shall seize as his own.

I see where the fairies and elfins
Guard marvellous treasure untold
In the heart of the Dunnideer mountain (30)
And gild the sheeps' teeth with their gold.

Afar flows the water of Gaudie
Adown by the big Bennachie,
And a longing and love for the mountains
Comes thrilling and stirring in me.

I see their dim shapes in the distance,
Green Morven and dark Lochnagar,
Macdui, the Buck, and Ben Rinnes,
And Mormond so lonely and far.

I gaze on each blue peak of grandeur,
My passion! it knows not a name;
My love! It is almost devotion;
I feel I am something of them.

(For explanation of numbers (1) to (29) see Descriptive Notes at pages 208-257).

Sweet Kate, Goodbye!

An echo from beauteous Erin,
A song from the Em'rald shore,
As golden tints of sunset
Are flashing the waters o'er;
A farewell soft and tender,
As down the lovely bay
Yon ship with cloudy pinions
Is bearing thee away, sweet Kate!
Is bearing thee away.

In rippling lines of splendour
The wavelets rise and fall,
And on the vessel standing
Thou seemest queen of all.
The sea-birds flutter round thee,
The waves reflect thy grace,
The breath of eve, caressing,
Kisses thy winsome face, sweet Kate!
Kisses thy winsome face.

To th' misty land of mountains
Thy queenly steps return,
To hands that long to clasp thee,
And hearts with love that burn.
In brightness of thy day-dreams,
In joys to youth so dear,
Oh, wilt thou think of Erin
And friends thou leavest here, sweet Kate?

The friends thou leavest here.

When thy bright eye bewitching
Rests on some Highland Ben
Wilt' mind the hills of Wicklow?
The Dargle's fairy glen?
That long, long day of sunlight,
The music of the stream,
The driving and the singing,
The dancing on the green, sweet Kate -
The dancing on the green?

Thy ship speeds on in triumph,
It fadeth from the sight,
And sadness, like the darkness,
Steals downward with the night.
Beyond the land-locked basin
There flows the ocean wide,
Calm be thy voyage, and pleasant,
Across its azure tide, sweet Kate,
Across its azure tide, sweet Kate.

Thus from youth's love-locked harbour
Thou sail'st into life's sea,
Bright in thy stately radiance
Of joy and purity;
Glad be thy voyage for ever,
And he who gains thy heart
Be worthy of the treasure,
The treasure that thou art, sweet Kate,
The treasure that thou art.

Hurray for the Swish o'the Scythe

Hurray for the swish o' the scythe,
The swipe, the swish, and the draw,
And a lassie sae bonnie and blithe
Tae gaither the craps that fa'.
A lassie baith cantie and trig,
Eident, and forcey, and clean;
Oh! the days on the hervist rig
Are the happiest I hae seen.

Three scythes are a' that we hae,
And I am the youngest chiel;
But my bout's the snoddest, they say,
And my corn is laid fu' weel.
The deems that gaither are three,
And keep close up tae the men;
But Jessie, that lifts tae me,
Is the bonniest lass I ken.

A lass like poppies and cream,

Wi' hair like the gowden corn,
And a glint in her starry een
That my hert has fairly torn.
Soople and straucht as a sauch,
She can boo' like a bonnie flooer,
And sweet is her lilt or lauch,
Frae a joyous hert and pure.

The verra risp o' the stane,
As I shairpen the auld scythe blade,
Cries "Jessie is a' yer ain!
Be glaid! Be glaid!"
And at ilka bite o' the scyte,
I keek wi' the tail o' my e'e,
For Jessie, tho' eident, is blithe,
And aft gies a blink tae me.

Wi' a swish my scythe cuts through
The girse and the gowden corn,
And scatters the draps o' dew
I' th' rosy blush o' morn.
For the lift, wi' the mornin's ray
Is reid fan we yoke tae wark,
And short are the oors we hae,
'Tween the lowsin time and the dark.

Yet sweet can she lilt a sang
Fan the day's lang tyauve is by,
As we slowly hamewith gang
Tae the milkin' o' the kye.
Last nicht 'or I closed an e'e,
As I preed her hinny moo,
She promised tae mairry me
Fan the corn-yaird wis fu'.

Then hurray for the swish of' the scythe,
The swipe, the swish, and the draw,
And a lassie baith bonnie and blithe
Tae gaither the craps that fa';
A lassie like poppies and cream,
Wi' hair like the gowden corn,
A lass like the bonnie young deem
That will be my bride some morn!

Cycling Song

Hurrah for a run, with frolic and fun;
Merrily, merrily, spin the wheels.
Up and away, light-hearted and gay,

Down through the woodlands round by the bay,
Away, away,
Till each cyclist feels
Hermes exuberant flying on wheels.

Sweet through the trees come the sunlight and breeze.
Merrily, merrily spin the wheels.
Joyous to fly, ‘neath th’ blue summer sky,
Lady alongside, ‘witching and shy;
Tender the sigh;
Oh! each cyclist feels
Cupid has wounded him flying on wheels.

Tin-a-ling-ting, how the happy bells ring,
Merrily, merrily, spin the wheels.
Trills the glad thrush, as by him they rush,
Laughter and merriment, fair cheeks aflush –
Is this a blush?
Ah! each cyclist feels
Psyche is flying beside him on wheels.

Hurrah for a race, give th’ ladies a chase,
Merrily, merrily, spin the wheels.
Wild with delight, like swallows their flight,
Features aglow, eyes sparkling and bright –
Rapture the sight –
Oh! each cyclist feels
Apollo might envy him flying on wheels.

Oh! the joyous rest, and the song and jest,
Merrily, merrily, spin the wheels.
In th’ tender shade of a sylvan glade
Love will be lurking, court will be made,
Kisses repair –
Ah! each cyclist feels
Hymen must catch him, tho’ flying on wheels.

Elsie

Happy little Elsie,
Like a sunbeam bright,
Eyes so blue and sparkling,
Beaming with delight,
Down upon her shoulders,
Flood of wealth untold,
Fall the sunny tresses
Like a shower of gold.

Cheeks so fair and tender,
Lips so rich and red,
Never had a cherub
Such a pretty head;
Feet like fairy's, tripping,
Hands so soft and small,
Happy little Elsie
Has no care at all.

Steadfast little sweetheart,
Always leal and true,
Never had a lover
Constancy like you.
Ever fast and loyal,
Faithful little maid –
Though a trifle jealous
Sometimes, I'm afraid.

Like the morn's soft twilight
Childhood's days pass o'er
Soon will little Elsie
Be a child no more.
Like the bright sun rising
Over field and wood,
Comes the noon-day glory
Of her maidenhood.

And as comes the brightness
Come the shadows, too,
Worldly wisdom growth,
Feels the false and true,
Folly, joy and fondness,
Sadness, tears and care,
Elsie! little Elsie!

In those days beware.

Other lips, my Elsie,
In impassioned tone,
Will a story tell you,
Seek to touch your own,
While your softest whisper,
Or a pressure light
Sets another's pulses
Beating with delight.

In those days, I wonder
Will you be as true
As the little Elsie
With the eyes of blue?
Will your heart be faithful
As in days of old
When on girlish shoulders
Waved the flood of gold?

Fair and Pure

Was ever a spark so bright in the dark
As the eye of my ladye dear?
Was ever a dove as true in its love,
Or a maiden more sincere?

The sound of her tongue, like the vespers sung
In the evening twilight's gleam,
Enraptures my heart like the joyous part
Of a sweet child's guileless dream.

With an angel's grace her beautiful face
Subdues the passion of sin;
I tremble in fear as I look, and hear
Rebukes from my soul within.

Like the air that blows o'er a sweet June rose
There is fragrance in her breath,
And her heavenly form could never be born
To fade in the dews of death.

No other I meet is so fair, so sweet,
And my heart feels oft-times sure
That the angels white to the land of light
Will bear away one so pure.

Voces Naturae

In rustling leaves
I hear a song
The yellow sheaves

Preach sermons long;
Each bird, and flower, and tree,
Whispers a tale to me –
Secrets in all I see,
Tender and strong.

Dulce Meum Terra Tegit

After the Dauphin's death, Mary, Queen of Scots, assumed a device which was a stalk of Liquorice. "Duquel la racine est douce; mais tout la reste, hors de terre, amer; "with the motto, "Dulce meum terra tegit.! !The earth covers my sweetness.

Dulce meum terra tegit –
Mary, Queen of Scots, 'tas thou,
In the anguish of bereavement,
Wrote the words I utter now;
Deep they cup was filled to pledge it,
Dulce meum terra tegit.

Queen beloved, but ever dearer
In thy woe to Scottish heart,
Could not aught restore the sweetness,
Heal the anguish, ease the smart?
No! they mournful words allege it,
Dulce meum terra tegit.

No! the bitter pangs of parting
See no brightness in the sky,
Feel no sweetness in creation,
Tears bedim the loving eye,
Each soft word has grief to edge it.
Dulce meum terra tegit.

Ah! how many anguish-laden
Hearts have throbbed with woes like thine,
Feeling all they lonesom blackness
When their loadstars ceased to shine.
Breaking hearts in tears still pledge it,
Dulce meum terra tegit.

Queen of Scots, beloved and lovely,
Woman-like, with heart to feel,
Oh! we love thee, even for weakness,
Such as words like these reveal.
Grief – ah! words may ne'er assuage it,
Dulce meum terra tegit.

Glendalough

"That lake whose gloomy shore
Skylark never warbles o'er" - Moore

Ah, sullen lake and gloomy shore,
I saw thee in the sun's bright ray;
Waves, rippling, ran they bosom o'er,
The trees were green, the flowrets gay,
And beauty's witching smile was near,
The eye to charm, the soul to cheer.

Above the blooming heather grew,
The graceful fern adorned the fell,
Birds sweetly twittered as they flew,
Goats gambolled o'er the fragrant dell,
And joyous song, and music gay,
Came from my groves and ruins grey.

On tiny boat we ploughed thy wave,
And floated laughing o'er the tide,

We dubbed Saint Kevin “cross old knave”
To drown so fair, so fond a bride.
O joyous days, so bright, so few,
When life was love, and love seemed true.

O Glendalough! In blacker day
I saw they sullen shore again;
When hopes, like leaves, were swept away,
When love was false, and beauty vain,
And on my weary soul there lay
A load of anguish and dismay.

Ah, then I saw thee as thou art,
Black, sullen, ‘neath a sunless sky,
All dismal as a human heart
Whose one great longing is to die;
Then seemed Saint Kevin’s stony bed
The meetest place to rest my head.

Whispers in the Forest Leaves

“Men love me … I play with them … what more can any female creature want?” Pascarel

Whispers in the forest leaves
Waken words of long ago,
Grief with gladness interweaves,
Dreams my heart no more may know.

Ah! another voice to me
Here hath charmed with sweeter tone,
Thrilled my heart in ecstasy –

Love! I worshipped one alone.

By the brook again I stand
Where its waters noiseless flow;
Here I held her by the hand,
Kissed her in that long ago.

O ye pines that tower above,
Ye were witness to our plight
Heard the tender vows of love
‘Neath your boughs that starry night!

Here a jewelled ring I gave,
Ere in tears we turned to part;
On my breast a tress of hair,
And her presence in my heart.

Here again by tree and stream
Come I; but I come alone;
Finding it was bur a dream,
All its truth, its rapture gone.

Other rings are on her finger,
And another claims her faith –
She whose hand in mind did linger
As she whispered “true till death.”

Woman’s love and woman’s vow
Once I trusted like a boy –
Woman! Bay! I hold her now
But a plaything and a toy.

A Song of the Lews

A song of the kindly isle,
Its rocks and its sounding sea,

Of its hearts untouched by guile,
And its welcome frank and free.
Yes! Health to its hardy men,
And its maids like the morning dews,
And joy be in every glen
Of the dear old land of Lews.

No trees uprear their shelter
O'er its moorlands' dripping lea,
And the dreary peat bogs filter
Tainted waters to the sea;
But there's many a happy clachan
Where the kye can sweetly browse,
And the corn rigs are laughing
In the dear old land of Lews.

No placid and waveless lake
Encircles its rock-bound shore
But its shuddering coast might quake
At the fierce Atlantic's roar.
And fighting a fearful strife,
'Mid the waves and wild sea-mews,
With death in their boat – is life
To the gallant lads of Lews.

And maidens tender and true,
Their life is no trifling ease,
Distress for the tossing crew,
A wailing cry to the seas;
And toil with crops, and sea-ware
That an angry ocean st rews;
Yet spotless in heart, and fair,
Are the bonnie maids of Lews.

But round the glow of the peat
Bronzed faces are bright with glee,
Songs rise that are grave or sweet,
Stories are told of the sea;
Till life, with toil and sadness,
Its hardship seems to lose
In the love, and peace, and gladness,
Round the evening fires in Lews.

On the solemn Sabbath air
No cathedral chimes are rung,
But rises the song and prayer
In the grand old Highland tongue.
In simple faith that for ever
Each upright heart imbues;
May it lose its hold, oh, never,

On the dear old land of Lews.

Then health to the kindly isle,
Its rocks and its sounding sea,
To its hearts untouched by guile,
With their welcome frank and free.
Yes! health to its hardy men,
And its maids like the morning dews,
And joy be in every glen,
Of the dear old land of Lews!

Fair is your Face

Fair is your face, my bonnie lass,
And bricht the sparkle o' your 'ee;
But I maun say, or gloamin' pass,
My last gweed-bye tae thine and thee.

The settin' sun shines on yon heicht,
Like burninshed gowd it gilds the snaw,
But here are smiles as fair the nicht,
Wil turn like ice fan I'm awa.

The pirr-lin o' the Wan-Watter,
The wind amang the sauchen tree,
Are singin' duke-sangs tae my hert,
And fessin' saut tears tae my 'ee.

The lanesome nicht afore me streams,
The road o' life lies wild and far,
But your sweet memory ower me gleams,
Tender and pure, a gidin' star.

Unfitted for such combat, how may I
By any means escape the sweet infection,
Unless my base retreat I quickly hie
And 'neath my shattered colours seek protection.

Those Eyes

What a strange thrill goes thro' one when he looks
First straight into the murd'rous cannon's flame,
And yet it is – I've somewhere read in books –
A fact, that eyes affect one just the same.

Yet, still you will not mask those merry eyes,
But aim your batteries with exultant art,
Darting your arrows, heedless of the sighs
That break unwanted from each shattered heart.

But yet beware, for at the foeman's gun
The maddened soldier rushes, wins or dies,
And by some wounded one will yet be won

The wner of these soul-distracting eyes.

Unfitted for such combat, how may I
By any means escape the sweet infection,
Unless in base retreat I quickly hie
And ‘neath my shattered colours seek protection.

Fare-thee-Well

Fare-thee-well! Farewell for ever,
Fate hath spoke the stern decree;
And again, my lost love, never
Shall we meet by stream or tree;
But forever sundered dwell,
Darling, darling, fare-thee-well.

Fare-thee-well, the words are spoken;
Burden not thy heart with woe,
Cast aside each link and token,
And forget me when I go –
Let not mem’ry sorrowing dwell
On this last, this long farewell.

Fare-thee-well, and when the waters
Bear me through the ocean’s blast,
Fairest of earth’s lovely daughters,
Droop not, thinking of the past –
List not to the ocean swell
Echoing “Darling, fare-thee-well.

Fare-thee-well – when others o’er thee
Bend in lovers’ fond delight,
Whispering how their hearts adore thee,
Conjure not before thy sight
Him whose sorrowing accents tell
This sad parting – “Fare-thee-well.”

To _____

A Queenly form, a stately step,
Bright orbs of tender hue,
A wondrous grace in mien and face,
Attract all eyes to you,
Fair dame,

Attract all eyes to you.

A winning smile, a gentle voice,
Melodious, sweet, and clear,
A flood of song, whose echoes long
Will thrill the listening ear,
Fair dame,
Will thrill the listening ear.

A presence where rich graces blend,
A soul clear as the sky;
Thoughts pure, benign, thy heart enshrine
In aspirations high,
Fair dame,
In aspirations high.

No mincing prude – the mazy dance
They dainty foot can tread,
Nor lighter heart e'er played a part,
Or harmless frolic led
Fair dame,
Or harmless frolic led.

An open hand, a heart to feel
For other's woes and sighs,
To those in need thou seem'st, indeed,
An angel in disguise,
Fair dame,
An angel in disguise.

John Gordon Missing

“Strike the tents at four to-morrow!”
Said the Sergeant at tattoo.
“Gordon John! For baggage escort –
Weary work, my lad, for you!”

Long the rapid march in darkness
Ere the sun in splendour rose,
And the vanguard of the column
Felt the hissing touch of foes.

Arid earth and treeless hillocks,
Scorching in the solar blaze,
Stretched away until by distance
Blended into sky and haze.

O’er the open, swiftly riding,
Mounted foes at times were seen,
And their straggling shots came hissing
From the hilltop and ravine.

Strong patrols of foot and horsemen
Searched and scoured the front and flanks;
While the anxious baggage master
Massed his beasts in triple ranks.

There, with fourteen lumbering camels
And their drivers, John had seen
Break its line the rearmost camel,
And bolt up a close ravine.

In hot haste he followed after
But the brute increased its speed,
And amid the shots and tumult
No one noticed or gave heed.

Over thorns, up from the nullah,
Climbed the brute with grumbling roar,
And the saddle lashings breaking,
Stewed with kits the hillside o’er.

Slipping as he leaped some bushes,
Gordon fell with stunning force
Down among the massive boulders
Lying in the nullah’s course.

Lamed and dazed, ‘twas some few minutes
Ere he could resume the chase,
While the camel still went shambling
Onward at a rapid pace.

Parched with thirst in that fierce sunlight, Gordon followed, faint and hot,
Till upon a plain descending
Sudden came a musket shot.

With a gasping cry he started,

And a stinging in his side;
While o'er snowy belts and pouches
Ran a red and horrid tide.

And behind him, from the hillocks
Yelled with joy a group of foes,
Swooping down upon the level,
With their wounded foe to close.

Did he quail, the stalwart clansman
From Strathbogie's fertile glen,
No! The brave old Gordon country
Rears no chicken-hearted men!

Like a flash he fixed his bay'net
Sank with knee upon the sand,
Thrust a cartridge in his rifle,
Hissed "Come on! Bydand! Bydand!"

True his aim, his action rapid,
Swiftly flew his stinging lead,
Down the foremost foemen tumbled,
Back the others turned and fled.

Farther from their cowardly ambush
Gordon sought in pain to toil,
While their bullets round him flying
Whisk'd in clouds the sandy soil.

Ah! again a bullet strikes him,
Crashing through his powerful thigh;
Out the blood spirts on his tartan,
And he staggers – falls – to die.

*"Bydand" – the motto of the Gordon Clan and Regiment.

Far ahead a leader signals
For a foe to hurry on,
And, like wolves their coverts leaving,
Gordon notes that they have gone.

Rallying by a mighty effort,
He his puggaree unties,
And to staunch and bind the bleeding
Earnestly he feebly tries.

Round his thigh some lengths are knotted,
Cartridge o'er the artery set,
And his bayonet twists the bandage
Tight as any tourniquet.

Ha! the drain upon his life-blood

Almost staunched, with joy he finds,
And the remnant of the muslin
Round his bleeding side he binds.

Parched with thirst, he drains his bottle,
Frantic effort makes to rise,
Moans with pain, and backward falling,
Fainting on the ground he lies.

On his maimed and senseless figure
Beats the sun with furious rays,
Till the arid waste around him
Glows as in a furnace blaze.

Far away the shots and clamour,
Still receding, fainter grow,
Where his march-worn comrades toiling
Yet repel the annoying foe.

Hours roll on in deadly stupor,
Opes at last his blood-shot eye,
And from lips all black and swollen
Comes in pain a choking cry.

Raging fires of fevered anguish
Burn in eyeball and in brain;
Poisoned floods of molten lava
Seem to scorch each bursting vein.

Throbs in agony the shattered
Limb, now thrice its usual size,
Clotted blood on wounds and garment,
In the fierce heat putrefies.

Water, water, oh, for water,
Swollen his tongue, like flame his breath;
Oh, for one small drop of moisture
In the agony of death.

Waspish flies in buzzing millions
Swarm his wounds, his mouth, his eyes,
And the hideous snaky lizard,
O’er his tortured body flies.

Oh, for death to end such anguish;
Tongue nor pen can ever tell
How intense the thirst and horror
Of this agony of hell.

Almost now his maddened senses
Fall into another swoon,

And he dimly sees around him
Shadows of old Huntly toon.

And the Duke's great stony statue
From its post upon the square,
Seems to move across the desert,
And to smile upon him there.

Then his dear old Scottish mother,
In her kindly Doric tongue,
Bids him hail, and, ah, another,
Winsome sweetheart, fair and young.

And he hears the rush of Bogie –
"Water! Water!" O'er his eyes
Joyfully his hand he raises –
Oh, the pain, the thirst, the flies!

In the lurid sky of evening
Sinks the sun a molten ball;
Oh, for water, water, water!
Oh, for death to end it all!

Like foul specks upon the crimson
Mantle of the setting sun,
Hideous blots of plague enlarging,
Lo! The loathsome vultures come.

And they scream and gloat upon him,
As with heavy swing they soar,
And the flappings of their pinions,
Rouse the dying man once more.

Once again he grips his rifle,
Rising upward on his hand,
And from throat all cracked and fly-choked
Hoarsely strives to shout, "Bydand!"

Vain! He sinks. The fell death-raffle
Chokes the gallant heart's essay,
And another fearless soldier
For his Queen hath passed away.

One more Highland laddie missing
When the roll his Sergeant calls,
One more brave Strathbogie hero
Fallen as every Gordon falls.

Fallen as fell his sires before him,
Loyal, staunch, and fearless loon;
Ah! but broken hearts are greetin'
In the far off Huntly toon.

Cleopatra's Grief

Lone! Lone! Heart-sick and sorrowing,
All that I loved from my bosom has fled;
Gone! Gone! Dreams my heart harrowing,
Bring me my lost one, the silent and dead.
Oh, soul! countless the cost,
Lost with thy lover, for ever love lost!

Sped! Sped! Sweet was our dalliance;
Sinful the embrace, enraptured delight;
Dead! Dead! Parted our alliance,
Hopeless dismay fills the watches of night.
Oh, Death! horrid they wave,
Hiding my lover, the kingly, the brave!

Dear! Dear! Love's fond enthralling,
Soft was its melody, sweet was the strain;
Dear! Dear! Oh, future appalling,
Strings that are parted sound never again!
Oh, heart! blood be thy token,
Bonds with thy lover are severed and broken!

Breath! Breath! Flowrets sweet innocence!
Odorous essence! Lips opening like day;
Death! Death! Gone is the elegance,
Moulders the beautiful, moulders away.
Oh! soul! scorched with fire,
Die with thy lover, beside him expire!

Man and the Moth

Ofttimes when the flick'ring candle
Lit my still and sultry room
Have I watched the bright moths flying
Madly to a fiery doom

Clad in wings of fairy velvet,
Red and purple, rich and rare;
One would think they longed for brighter
Robes of fire, to flaunt and wear.

Fluttering round the glowing candle,
Oft they kissed its fiery cone;
Scorched and tortured, yet returning,
Till the spark of life was gone.

Burnt and blackened fell their bodies –
All the gorgeous beauty lost.
Who but fools would kiss a furnace?
Man would surely count the cost.

***

Standing on an Afghan mountain,
Heliographing o'er the dead,
By my side the battery's thunder,
Bullets shrieking overhead.

There I saw the brave advancing,
Splendid in their martial gear,
Tossing plumes, and banners dancing,
Weapons flashing keen and clear.

And my heart aflame with triumph,
Thrilled in rapture at the strife;
All things else seemed mean, ignoble,
To a soldier's glorious life.

But with night each ravaged village
Burned more lurid than before,
And the dead, all maimed and ghastly,
Looked – oh, horrid! in their gore.

And I said, in haste off-turning
From the sight, with sickening loath –
"Hollow glory! War's a candle
Man more silly than the moth!"

And there shall be no more Sea

A Widow's Soliloquy

In the breezy, boisterous evenings,
Oft I wander by the shore,
When the waves the rocks are beating,
With their wild, relentless roar.
And I watch the heaving billows,
In their strong and boundless might,
Mocking at me in derision,
Foaming, fretting for the fight.

And I think me: Oh, how many,
In this raging, surging sea,
Have those cruel breakers tortured

In their life's last agony!
And of lovers' hopeless waiting,
And the many teardrops shed,
And the hearts bow'd down in anguish,
For their dear sea-covered dead.

And I think me, ah! I think me,
What was once a thought of joy,
Of my husband, brave and tender,
And my noble sailor boy.
But, alas! their graves are hidden
In the ocean's sullen deep,
And my fireside now is lonely,
Where I sit, and think, and weep.

So I wander forth at evening,
By that wild, remorseless sea.
And I watch the heaving waters,
For they hide my loved from me;
And the thunder-sounding breakers,
As they dash upon the shore,
Seem but scoffing at my sadness,
With their deep and sullen roar.

Yet I hear their hateful thunder,
And I smile upon their rage,
And I think, with strong emotion,
On that great prophetic page;
Where 'tis said the restless ocean,
With its surge, and plash, and roar,
Shall give up its priceless treasures,
And be heard, ah! nevermore.

And my Heart believes the message,
I will find my lost again,
And will dread no more the roaring
Of the cold and cruel main.
And the weeping by the sea-side,
And the watching on the shore,
Shall be past and gone for ever,
For the sea shall be no more.

Then no more the foaming billows
Shall engulf the reeling bark;
Nor the swimmer cry in anguish
From the water cold and dark;
For the Lord's own Book hath said it –
And its words are life for me –
That the waves shall lose their treasures
"and there shall be no more sea."

The Southern Cross in South Africa

O Holy Cross! so calm, so bright,
Suspended yonder in the blue,
The tender radiance of thy light
The soul's affection wakes anew.
Thou seem'st, indeed, God's token given
Of love, and peace, and joy in Heaven.

Lost on the great Namaqua wild,
The huntsman hails thy gentle glow;
Thou guid'st the desert's thirsty child
To streams unceasing in their flow.
Yet sweeter far thy light gives birth
To thoughts of stream too pure for earth.

Thoughts of gentle, sinless life,
That heart of tender love and care,
Which mourned o'er mortal woe and strife,
And loved a simple child-like prayer –
The life that on the cross was given,
To open wide the gates of Heaven.

Art thou, O radiant cross I see,
A love-light o'er Heaven's gate so high;
A guide to happy souls set free
From earthly bonds, who star-ward fly;
And there within thy shining gate
Do loved ones greet the friends they wait.

The Skylark

From the gloomy sky is falling
Heavily the drenching rain,
Yet there comes a rich enthralling
Music, in a heavenly strain
From a skylark, soaring, singing,
Upward in yon murky cloud,
Till the leaden pall is ringing
With its sweetness, clear and loud.

O, sweet songster, whence thy gladness,
When all else seems black with woe,
And a wailing dirge of sadness
From they breast might overflow?
Wet thy wings with raindrops quivering,
And the dismal night draws nigh;
In they next all drenched and shivering,
Can'st thou live, or wilt thou die?

Naught thou fear'st! thy music swelleth
Sweetly, as if skies were blue:
Dost thou trust in One who dwelleth

Higher still, and cares for you?
And upon His love depending
Thou art happy in the rain,
Knowing all comes by his sending,
And the skies will smile again.

O, dear songbird, teach me also,
When earth's storms grow sad and dark,
And the angry tempest rages
Round my weary, aching heart –
Teach me to be patient, clinging,
Trusting that the sun will shine,
Till my heart can soar in singing,
High and happy, even as thine.

The White Rose

A tear bedews the rose I kiss,
So white, and pure, and brave.
Dear flowers! I love them all, but this
Grew on my Mother's grave.

My Mother! Oh! I love her still
With all my arden power;
That love floods o'er me with a thrill
At this her favourite flower.

Again I see her noble face,
So pale, yet kind and warm,
As 'mongst the flowers, with gentle grace,
She leaned upon my arm.

I hear her voice, so soft and low,

That never spoke of ill;
Her gentle words, where'er I go,
Can cheer me, soothe me still.

The Rose, the Rose, of snow white hue,
My forebears loved it well;
Perchance 'twas in their bonnets blue
When for the Prince they fell.

Emblem of love, pure, loyal, brave,
Tender and firm and true,
The noblest thing the heart can crave,
My Mother, like to you.

And the same stem that gave its store
Of flowers to deck the brave,
Now sheds its scented blossoms o'er
My dear old Mother's grave.

Be, thou, a charm to me, sweet Rose,
To feel my Mother's power,
To live like her, and die like those
Who wore the loyal flower.

To a Lady on Receipt of some Verses

Dear friend, your carte and "singing leaves"
Came safe to hand some days bygone,
With welcome as such thought receives
From senses kindred to its own.

Your face, as by the leng pourtrayed,
Seemed still as fresh, and bright, and fair,
As when I last beside you strayed,
And breathed our native mountain air.

And pleasant still your flowing lines,
Tho' ah! methought there seemed a strain
Of sadness blending through at times –
The echo of a spirit pain.

A jarring tone, as if the lyre
Of life, that erst so sweetly sung,
By some harsh, rasping hand of fire
In tones of agony was wrung.

Yet wait, sad harp, each throbbing band
In life and gladness yet shall thrill;
Some true, caressing master hand
Shall wake thy tones with matchless skill.

Is there a sea that knows no wave,
A lake unwept on by the rain,
A land on earth without a grave,
A human heart unvexed by pain?

Ah, no! upon each sea-washed shore,
Be't sand or rock, the wild waves beat;
So through each heart for evermore
Grief steals at times with aching feet.

Earth's blithest spirits, light and gay,
Have many a pang to hurt their peace,
Nor, save where reigns unending day,
Can sorry die or weeping cease.

Lochaber No More (31)

Cease that wild dirge, piper! Hush, as God loves ye,
Torture me not with that heart-breaking strain
Bring not the ghosts of dead comrades above me,
Stir not the madness of parting and pain;

Weird and woe-giving; oh, piper, give o'er'
Sound not a note of "Lochaber no More."

Dirge of affection, of links that are sundered,
Firelight extinguished in coldness and gloom,
Exile and banishment, heart-throbs unnumbered,
Loneliness, mis-ry, a far away tomb.
Chords of affection that thrill the heart's core;
Hush thee, oh! hush thee, "Lochaber no More."

Voice of the soul, in its agony calling,
Farewell for ever, my loved one, my nain;
Blackness and darkness and sorrow appalling,
Wailing and anguish the hopeless refrain.
Joy from life taken, earth cannot restore;
Never, oh never "Lochaber no More."

Dirge of the slain. Have I not heard it ringing
O'er the wide grave yawning horrid and red?
Every wild note like an agony bringing
Grief for my comrades all mangled and dead,
Blanket-wrapt, heaped in that trench in their gore,
Solemn and awful – "Lochaber no More."

Dirge of the dauntless, when God shall have taken
Friends from the battle-rank back to the earth,
Then only the, let such echoes awaken
Feelings too sacred, too solemn for mirth.
Over the open grave hearts that are sore
Throb with thy wailing, "Lochaber no More."

(After W S Gilbert's Duet)

Who our love-linked hearts shall sever,
Rent affections that entwine?
Bound in bliss we stand together,
Thine am I, for thou art mine.

Thou the bird's flight, I its pinion,
Thou the odour, I the flower,
Thou a queen and I dominion,
Thou the fortress, I the tower.

Every pleasure, every pleasure
That with joy thy bosom fills,
Yet again in equal measure
Thro' my own with rapture thrills.

Thou a star and I its radiance,
Thou the fire and I its glow,
Thou the harp-thrill, I the cadence,
Thou the winter, I the snow.

Not a quiver, not a quiver,
Swells in that dear heart of thine,
But like ripple o'er a river
Throbs responsively in mine.

Thou the calm and I the stillness,
Thou the sadness, I the tear,
Thou the night and I its chillness,
Thine the dread and mine the fear.

One in mirth and one in sadness,
One in weal and one in woe,
One in grief and one in gladness,
Can we part? Love answers "No!"

Thou the clap and I the keeper,
Thou the sabre, I the blade,
Slumber thou, and I the sleeper,
Thou the tartan, I the plaid.

Blended hearts are ours for ever,
Floating past life's flowery shore,
On love's tender throbbing river,
Rolling sweetly evermore.

I the mist, and thou the vapour,
I the ripple, thou the stream,
I a flame, and thou the taper,
I a dreamer, thou the dream

LINES Written on a copy of the Koran belonging to a Young Lady

"No soul has woman", old Mahomet said,
"And heaven's intended but for man alone!"
His Koran he'd have burnt, I'm sore afraid,
And spurned such heaven, if he had only known
Yourself fair maid.

Far among the Misty Islands

To the past my thoughts will wander,
Back to realms of "long ago,"
Days when life was fairer, grander,
Tinted with a richer glow.
Dreamily my heart will wander,
Over many a vale I know,
And the moors I loved to see,
Far among the misty Islands
Far ower the sea

Who so happy and light-hearted,
When I led my merry men
Through the Isles, and gaily startled
With our pipes each dreamy glen?
Oh! how merry and light-hearted,
Life was very joyous then;
Full of merriment and glee,
Far among the misty Islands
Far ower the sea.

Sweet the breeze blw o’er the heather,
While the music cheered our way,
As we gladly marched together,
Gaily danced at close of day;
On the green or on the heather,
Danced the reel or blithe Strathspey
With the maidens good and free;
Far among the misty Islands
Far ower the sea.

Where are men more brave and fearless,
Than upon that rocky shore?
Hearts are warm if life is cheerless,
And if billows ever more
To their hearts so true and fearless,
Speak of death with sullen roar,
Men more noble seem to be
Far among the misty Islands
Far ower the sea.

Where the pines o’erhang in sadness,
Once I met a maiden rare,
And we walked the woods in gladness,
And she seemed surpassing fair.
Saint-like, yet devoid of sadness,
Pure and sweet as summer air;
And another tryst made we,
Far among the misty Islands
Far ower the sea.

Ah, a saddening strain is blending
In the memories of the past,
As across the misty waters
Comes the dirge’s wailing blast,
With the wind and waters blending;
Soon is sunshine overcast.
And such days no more may be,
Far among the misty Islands
Far ower the sea.

To H.M.M.

Comrade true in days of ore,
Friend whose favours much I prize;
One whose mighty soul can soar,
Freely towards the Empyrean skies;
Let my feeble muse bring forth,
Grateful tribute to thy worth.

Genius, subtlety and power,
Have endowed thy facile pen,
With a vast and princely dower,
Ranked thee high o’er common men;

And with all the talents given,
Thou for right and truth has striven.

In past years when hope was bright
Bowed we down at Mars fierce shrine,
Till ye saw a nobler light
From Apollo's altars shine;
And she read aright the word
"Stronger is the pen than sword."

Mars to thee was God no more,
But with pen thou well hast striven,
And with right thy heart before
Upward! Upward thou has risen,
I but watch thy flight afar,
Mine is still the God of war.

Lord Lewis' Listin' Sang

From a fragment (the 1st and 2nd stanzas) of a ballad said to have been popular when that nobleman was recruiting for the Prince.

Strathbogie wuds war fu' o' buds,
The sun was shinin' clearly;
To Tap o' Noth the win' blew south,
Wi' tidings o' Prince Chairlie.

A Heilan' loon by Auchendoon,
In brogues cam' runnin' rarely,
Wi' letter braid whilk plainly said,
That needin men was Chairlie.

And summoned a' the Gordons braw,
MacFarquhar, Leith and Airlie;
And tauld Auchline (32) to lowse nae time
But hurry on ta Chairlie.

Oh, sic miner, and sic a steer,
I trow was seen but rarely;
The lasses a; cried "Fye giewa,
Set aff and fecht for Chairlie."

Lord Lewis cam' tae raise the Clan,
Throw a Strathbogie shairlie;
Frae Cabrach hills tae Huntly mills,
They're drinkin' healths tae Chairlie.

The Noth's grey pow is in a lowe,
By miltoun lichtet fairlie;
Fowk left their kail reid-coats tae fell
And set the croon on Chairlie.

The smiddies rang wi' braidswoords' clang,
And durks war heftit rarely;
Nae smith forbye his pints could tie,
For strauchtin scythes for Chairlie.

Tho' Forbes dour look unco' soor,
And hide their spleen but sparely;
They'll change their tune fan on the throne
There sits oor royal Chairlie.

Come on braw men fae Bogie's glen
Lord Lewis wants ye sairly';
Wi' gun and plaid and fyte cockade,
Ta glory win for Chairlie.

There's gowd and gear, and stirk and steer,
Across the Border fairly;
A gweed claymore will get galore,
That fechts for royal Chairlie.

Sonnet

To J.A.M.

There may be forms more noble than thine own,
And music sweeter than thy charming notes;
I have not seen, nor heard them, nor have known
More queenly womanhood than round thee floats.
And the dear nightingale who sits and dotes,
Upon his love, with silver-shining wing,
Has not a melody whose tender notes
Can match the thrilling music when ye sing.
Rich gifts and kindly graces in thee meet,
The beautiful, the good, the true, and kind,
The heart of purity, the cultured mind,
Thou dost embody all things soft and sweet,
Yet thou art troubled oft, and fault would find
In thy pure breast where evil pulse ne'er beat.

Heads Up!

Soldier! bear thy haughty head
Loftily in warrior pride!
Lo! before thy martial tread
Meaner things must turn aside.
What the riches craftsmen crave
To the honours of the brave?

Poor in wealth, but rich in fame,
What to thee the miser's dross?
Thou w ho seek'st a deathless name,
Stak'st thy life for star and cross,
Lift in stately pride thy head
O'er the living and the dead.

Who the model God's own Book
Gives the Christian to direct?
Is it draper, tailor, cook,
Lawyer, grocer, architect?
No, the soldier, armed for strife,
Is the noblest type of life.

Then let every heart be strung
To despise whate'er is vile;
Careful guard the thoughtless tongue,
Shun the haunts of vice and guile.
Guide thy stately steps in pride,
Heedless though the herd deride.

Only at thy Maker's throne
Should thy proud head humbly bend.
In the battle He alone
Will unfailing courage lend.
Let us dread of death appal,
Fearless fight and nobly fall.

Kirkney Burn

The mist’s on Knock Caillich,
The Noth’s in the drift,
The cloods ower the Cabrach
They darken the lift;
Big, big swall the burnies,
And roar at a rate,
Till the watter o’ Kirkney
Has risen in spate.

The frost is has lippen
The rain it comes doon,
And gloamin is gading’
In darkness an’ gloom.
Alang the weet roddie,
Wi’ snifter and grane,
A draggel’t young lassie
Plashed by in the rain.

“Oh, lass!”, quo’ the mistress,
“Come in frae the weet;
Come change yet bit cotties,
And warm yer feet;
Oor deemie’s bit beddie
Has room in’t for twa,
And the Kirkney is floodit,
Sae dinna gie-wa!”

“Oh, it’s thank ye, kind mistress,
Big dinna me blame,
For a maun gang onwith –
The Bruntlan’s my hame.
My mither’s at Huntly;
She’ll hame be the morn,
And if I’m nae afore her,
I’ll rue I wis born!”

“Oh, lassie, peir lassie,
I doot ye’ve gien vrang,
Fat hae ye been deein
And far did ye gang?!
“Oh, it’s mither, she wints me
To mairry Jock Bain,

He his a bit craft
At Belhinnie, ye ken.

“Bit I never will tak’ him,
And a’ that I care
Is for young Jamie Gordon,
The grieve at Auchlair.
So I’ve jist gien ta see him,
And he has tell’t me
If my mam pits me oot,
Till his aunt I’m tae gie.

“That’s a’ I had deen,
And I think it nae blame,
For Jamie’s a lad
Winna fess me ta shame.
So aff I maun heist me
Awa, doon the glen;
I widna for warl’s
My Minnie sud ken!”

Awa set the lassie,
The mistress look’d wae/
“I’m feart for the craiter;
In siccan a day
The stepping-steins’ cover't
For certain” quo’ she,
“And the lassie may miss them,
And droon’t she will be!”

The spinnin wheel birrl’t
Wi bicker and speed;
Bit the mistress wis han’less
Awa flew her threid.
“Oh, hy! Sandy Finlay;
Mount up on the shaft,
And ride for the Kirkney
Withooten a halt.

“And it’s up and aside ye
Yon deem ye will tak,
Set her doon ower the feuard
Gin she winna come back!”
Awa rade the shaltie
Wi clatter and splash.

“Foo did we nae keep her,
Sae senseless and rash?”

Oh, mirk was the darkness,
And fearfu’ the sooch,
As the Kirkney gied teirin
Alang throw the heuch.
“Gweed save us and sain us!”
Auld Sandy did cry;
“We daurna gang throw it,
The horsie and I.”

The big stepping steins
War a fathom aneth,
Far roar’t the fool watter,
And crossin’ wis death.
The droon’t sheep and lammies
War sweelin’ aboot,
Wi’ the collies that tried
The peir things to tak oot.

Auld Sandy gied up
And auld Sandy gied doon,
And as he saw naething
Rade back ta the toon.
“Och, hey!” and “Oh, wae’s me!”
The kin’ mistress said;
“Gweed guide the bit lassock,”
I howp she’s in bed.”

The sun raise neist morning,’
But fat saw he then?
He saw an auld shepherd
Far doon in the glen.
His heed it wis bare,
And his ‘een they war meet,
And his twa collie dogs
Sat and yowl’t at his feet.

And there lay a lass
At the side o’ the burn,
Bit sichtless and ghaistly
Her ‘een did upturn.
The snawdrift wis on her,
The ice on her hair,
For the watter o’ Kirkney
Had cairr’et her there.

Oh, fair was her facie
As lips ever pressed,
But the cauld kiss o' Death
Had its features caressed,
And roon her sma middle
And fingers sae nice,
On her vreests and her queeties
War shackles o' ice.

At Bruntlan' there's greetin'
And sorra and wae,
And Jock Bain the crafter
Bemains said the day,
But there's ane that said little
Fan's hert it did bleed,
Oh, it's peir Jamie Gordon,
He wished he was deid.

A Lassie's Lilt

My jots are bye, till I milk the kye,
So I'll slip awa frae th' toon,
And meet my love on the Bogie-brae,
As the gowden sun gangs doon.

The auld oo' mill will be hushed and still,
But its lade will soun' sae sweet,
As it fain wid cry wi the joy that I
And my love ken fan we meet.

Tae his gowden nest in the purple West
The great sun sinks sae grand.
Syne, oh! the bliss o' my true love's kiss,
And the magic l' his hand.

For the wanin' licht o' the faain' nicht
Has a glory that's mair than day,
And a joy that thrills as oor herts it fills,
Ah! deeper than words can say.

Till up in the sky, sae blue and high,
The siller stars we see,
As they slyly peep at the tryst we keep,
My ain true love wi' me.

Oh1 life and love, will ye sicker prove?
I kenna, I daurna think
But the cup sae fu' is at my moo,
And, oh! I maun surely drink.

Memories of Cabar Feidh*

Reminiscences of an aged Veteran

Ah! what strange emotions fill me
When I see that ancient sign,
Like a summer dream before me
Come those joyous days of mine.
Dancing plumes, and golden banners,
Comrades true in love and fray,
Musket flash, and cannon's thunder –
All revive at Cabar Feidh.

Kindly smiles a Highland cottage
'Mongst the ferns and yellow broom
Long-lost faces – how I loved them –
Muirfowl's nests, and heather bloom
And the stag's great antlers hanging
O'er the ingle's iron swey
And my father's thrilling legends
Of the mighty Cabar Feidh.

Oh! what wondrous fancies filled me
When upon the sentry's beat
First I trod, with ready musket,
In the night air, cold and sweet.
Then the voyage across the ocean,
And the star-bespangled sea –
All those dreamy days of languor
Waft their memories over me.

After that, the raging tempests,
Shattered sails, and billowy roar,
And the joyful sense of freedom
When we stepped upon the shore.
Then the dwarfish yellow Bushmen,
And our march by night and day,
And the Caffre hordes retreating
From the mighty Cabar Feidh.

Well I mind our fierce engagements,
And the Caffres' furious yell,
As their spears pierced through the bodies

Of the Highlanders who fell.
Ha! but clear Keiskama's river
Rushed with crimsoned tide that day,
When across the 'sanguined waters'
High we bore the Cabar Feidh.

Bothena's soul in terror trembled
When our pipers, in their pride,
Sent a stinging challenge over
Amaloti's silver tide.
And when by the Great Kei river
Rose the sounds of desp'rate fray,
Loud our pibroch pealed the triumph
Of the glorious Cabar Feidh.

Murray's Kranz, and bright Isomo,
Saw Tyoli's hosts o'erthrown,
And in Issi-dengi's marshes
Corpses as thick as leaves were strewn.
Fierce Macomo quailed in terror
'Mongst the jungles, where he lay,
When the breeze by mount and river
Bore the strains of Cabar Feidh.

Oft when pacing in the starlight
Have I heard the lions roar,
And the leopards fight and snarl
By the Amaloti shore;
Oft o'er lone unburied bodies
Heard the foul hyaena cry,
And have started, half affrighted,
At some dying Caffre's eye.

Oft times, by some reedy margin,
Have I heard behemoth call;
Python, wolf, and alligator
Oft have felt my deadly ball.
Many a rare rhee-buck and pallah
Stained their beauty in the clay,
Furnishing a dainty morsel
To the lads of Cabar Feidh.

Oh, those days! So wild! So joyous!
One day, 'neath acacia's bloom'
Next through marshes, fiercely fighting –

Merry on the verge of doom.
Oh, what songs! what heartfelt pleasure
Round the fire at close of day;
How the echoes in my bosom
Wake to life at Cabar Feidh.

Many a far and distant country
Hath been trod beneath my feet,
But the Caffres' claims my memory –
There my dearest comrades sleep.
Years have rolled their winters o'er me,
Bushy locks are few and grey,
And the hands are frail and palsied
That have fought for Cabar Feidh.

From my eyes the sight is failing,
Hearing from my ears has flown,
Earth has but a lingering echo
Of the gladness I have known.
Yet my heart with deep emotion
Throbs to know that far away,
Nobly hid the battle's thunder,
Triumph's still the Cabar Feidh.

Ah! the earth is growing darker,
Life's long march is nearly o'er,
Youthful hands bear high the banner,
I may guard it nevermore.
Proudly let it flutter o'er you,
Loved yet feared, in peace and fray;
Though my eyes may not behold it,
I am with the Cabar Feidh.

*"Cabar Feidh" (the stag's head of the Mackenzies) is the crest of the 1st Seaforth Highlanders, who are commonly spoken of as "the lads of Cabar Feidh." The colours of the regiment are also frequently referred to as "the Cabar Feidh," although the stag's head is not emblazoned on the stand now in use.

*Miltoun o'Noth

Fa's this comes racin' up the glen,
And fat may be his eerin?
I wat its Riddel frae the Raws,
His speed is worth the speerin!

Hetfit he ran alang the Noth,
Wad nether turn nor terry;
At ilka toon he cried "Come furth!
There's reid-coats come ta herrie!"

And fyles he raced, and fyles he ran,
Sair wis his paich and grainin;
But wi' the sojers at his heels,
His breath he wisna hainin'.

But "Min hersells!" was aye his cry,
"And hide her gear richt smairtly;
The English knaves are reivin' a'
Abeen the foord o' Gairtley!"

And on he raced, and ilka ane
That met him heard his tidin's'
And some begood tae drove their nowt,
And some tae look for hidin's.

A' Smiston's kye and hantles mair,
Wi' mony a skelp and wallop'
War chaced oot ower the Teyloch hill,
As fest as they could gallop.

And frae the raws, and baith the Noths,
They draive kye up the hillside;
Sae strait the brae the English horse
Could efter them but ill ride.

But fan the word tae Rhynie cam'
There was a sair commotion;
Tae lose their gear tae English loons
Fowk had but little notion.

Some cried, "Rin up the Craigbeg brae,"
And hide amo' the funs, man!"
But maist cried oot "Lat's hae a feicht,
Sae fill wi' lead yer guns, man!"

Syne some gat guns, and some gat swords,
And some their scythe-blades cairrie't'

And voo't they'd cut a bleedy hairst,
Afore their hames war herrie't.

John Grant, the claikin' wheep-the-cat,
Tae shew, did himself sattle;
Meg pat the spurtle in his han'
And dreive him oot tae battle.

And some said this, and some said that,
And coonsell'd wise or faulty;
Fan, ridin' up the road, they spied
Auld Miltoun on his shaltie.

Quo' he "Gin a Stra'bogie's loons,
War here that follow Chairlie;
My faith we'd gie the reid-coats brose,
Wad spoil their stammacks sairly.

"Come on my protty Rhynie chiels,
They'll get a sair begeck, sirs;
We'll hand them back at Miltoun foord,
A'maggar o' their necks, sirs!"

Sae on the brae, o'er Essie Burn,
They filled the road wi' brenches;
Wi' Miltoun's harrows, cairts, and plews,
And syne they howkit trenches.

Till fegs there was but little chance
O' horsemen comin' near them'
And Miltoun's wife brocht cheese and breid,
And usquebagh tae cheer them.

Ower Gairtley foord cam' Kingston's Horse,
And tae the Raws they rade, sir;
But fi'nt a' coo tae steal they fan'
And wild mineer they made, sir.

Their Kornil bann't and swore a sweir
That made the door-cheeks dirrle;
The verra dogs howl't wi' the fleg,
It gart't the weeming skirl.

He swore anither awfu' sweir,
Fowk shook wi' fear and wonner;
It gar't the bairnies tak the grips,
And soor't the milk like thunner.

He steekits neives, and swore agreen,
His face turn't fairly blue, sir;
An awfu' aith, that stoppit's breath,

And wadna ley his moo, sir.

Sae fan he stack, the lave begood,
Ye never hard sic swearin;
Gweed kail will never grow agreen,
Aboot the Raws I'm fearin'.

But nether stirk nor hogg they got,
Altho' they swear't sae bonnie'
They fell't some hens wi' peats and stanes,
But nae that verra mony.

They pang't their wames wi' cheese and breid,
Wi' ream their faces clortit;
They left the pigs o' fuskie teen,
The butter kirns they sortit.

Sic galshach breets war never seen,
And at the Quynes aye haulin',
But wi' the chapper, some stoot deems
Gied them a halesome maulin'.

At ilka place alang the road,
They did the verra same, sir;
But little coft they 'cep the hens
And fowk war maist frae hame, sir.

Then ane cried oot, as on they rade,
And spy't the hoose o' Miltoun,
"Gweed Lord!" there's heilan deevils here I see ane wi' a kilt on!"

Syne on the brae, ower Essachie,
They saw the road was stappit;
Their Kornil swore ageen wi' fricht,
His sword he near han drappit.

For there the strappin' Rhynie chiels
Did fleerish sword or scythe man;
And troth tae feicht in sic a place,
The reid-coats warna blithe man.

"Come on!" cried Miltoun "Sass'nach whigs!"
And wi' his gun loot blatter;
Twas but a dose o' sparra hail,
But faith it gar't them scatter.

They turn't and spurr't wi' micht and main,
And yell't like deils dementit;
They'll comena back this gait ageen,
They saw mair than they wantit.

*See Page 77

To the “Singing Bird” of Strathbogie*

Dear Singing Bird, my pen I take,
And humbly my devoirs do make.
How fleetly quiet time moves on!
‘Tis months, yet scarce a week seems gone
Since by your ingleside I sat.
Oft I recall that merry chat –
Your good old mother’s maxims sage,
Leaves from your sister’s fresher page,
The many fields our fancies ranged,
Each prospect brighter as it changed,
Rare gleams that flashed our minds athwart
As fireflies through the limes might dart,
And, vanishing, still leave behind
A witching glamour o’er the mind.
Oh, pleasant hours, so swiftly sped,
What fancies strange their musings fed!
Much had I counted ere I came
To that dear place I call “my hame”
On your fair presence as a light
To make my own dull lamp grow bright.
I came – that light but briefly shone
Across my pathway, and was gone.
Yet oft I’ve felt its radiant beam
As light reflected in a stream.
Your thrilling words, when far away
Beneath the tropics’ scorching ray,
Hath oft times chased from out my brain
The weary march’s aching pain,
Until in deserts I would dream
Of Rhynie and my native stream,
And on fierce Egypt’s burning loam,
Could feel my heart was near to home
So, fair enchantress, pray thee take
My grateful thanks, and long may wake
The music of thy noble heart,
Striving, with all its thrilling art,
To nerve men for a nobler mood,
To shun the bad, to choose the good,
To live and toil, fight on, endure,
For what is brave, and just, and pure,
And love the soil whereon they stand –
Scotland, their brave old Fatherland.

Bogie's Banks are Bonnie O

A wife was singin' aside yon tree,
Oh! Bogie's banks are bonnie O.
And she nursed a bairnie at her knee,
And the birk hings doon ower the Bogie O.

The saut tears trinkelt as she sang,
Oh! Bogie's banks are bonnie O,
And the wint it wailed the trees amang,
And the birk hings doon ower the Bogie O.

Quo' she, "Sweet babe, your faither's deid,
Oh! Bogie's banks are bonnie O.
Drummossie muir has drank his bleed,
And the kirk hings doon ower the Bogie O.

"His well-faur'd face the corbie kens,
Oh! Bogie's banks are bonnie O;
And the reid tod snifters o'er his banes,
And the birk hings doon ower the Bogie O.

"Oh!" ruthless butchers play'd their part,
The Bogie's banks are bonnie O;
They shot the wounded tae the hert,
And the birk hings doon ower the Bogie O.

"The brave Lord Lewis, faur is he,
Oh! Bogie's banks are bonnie O,
And his pretty men, sae blithe and free,
Oh, the birk hings doon ower the Bogie O.

"And faurs the hert and faurs the han',
Oh! Bogie's banks are bonnie O,
Will haud my bairn fae scaith and vrang,
Oh! the birk hings doon o'er the Bogie O.

And faurs oor Prince? My hairt is sair!
Oh! Bogie's banks are bonnie O,
I'll bless and love him evermair,
While birk hings doon ower the Bogie O!"

Outpost Musings

Here, upon my lonely outpost,
Knee-deep in the Afghan snow;
On the wild and dreary mountains,
I am watching for the foe.

Watching, watching, lone and silent,
Sad at heart for comrades slain;
In the wing their ghostly voices,
Surely speak to me again.

Shadowy phantoms, vague, uncertain,
O'er the brushwood and the snow,
Seem to flit, or is it branches
That the wind waves to and fro?

Is it not the shadowy spirits
Of the gallant dead, who fly
Shrieking to their gory cairns,
From the regions of the sky.

As in tales of other ages,
Such as Selma's bard hath sung,
Came the ghosts of chiefs and sages,
Calling in a feeble tongue.

Oh, my comrades, redly sundered!
Ye, who fell before my eyes,
In the glory of your manhood,
Shouting forth your battle cries.

Gone, even when your aspirations,
Brightest glowing, high would soar;
Whither? – ah! where truth and honour
Live unsullied evermore.

Are ye here and watching with me,
As ye did but yesternight;
When we sat around the camp fire,
Speaking of the coming fight?

Are the secrets of the future,
To each spirit sense made clear;

And ye fain would tell them to me;
As ye gather round me here?

Rest in calm, ye dauntless heroes,
For avenged ye shall be;
And ere night again brings darkness,
More will join your company.

Like God’s eye, supreme with pity,
Gazing on the wrecks of war,
In the sky by gloom o’ershaded,
Lo! I see one lonely star.

Oh, fair star, another evening
Will mine eyes reflect your flow;
Or wilt thou behold me lying
With my life-blood on the snow?

The Scotch Fir

I love the tree that towers so high,
Whose giant branches screen the sky,
Where wheeling eagles scar and cry;
Whoe’er may fly,
STAND SURE.

A king enthroned upon the crown,
Of Highland mountain, wild and brown,
Stupendous crags around it frown;
Tree of renown,
STAND SURE.

The roots which rear its giant stock,
Are bedded in the solid rock;
Proud o’er the tempest’s fiercest shock,
Its might can mock,
STAND SURE.

The raging North winds vainly whistle;
Its branches, plumed like Scottish thistle,
In stern defiance sway and bristle,
Through blast and drizzle,
STAND SURE.

The ponderous rocks may crash and break,
The mountain sides in terror quake,
But Scotland’s fir, tho’ earth should shake,
Will refuge make,
STAND SURE.

And like thy grand old Scottish tree,
While Scottish earth is under thee,
Old Race of Noth, thy motto be,

Loyal and free,
STAND SURE.

Egypt

Through the scorching blast of battle,
And the deafening cannons' roar,
Lo! I stand like one enchanted,
Nilus, by they sacred shore.

And at last I gaze upon thee,
Mystic realm of ages fled,
Cradle-land of art and science,
With thine ever fragrant dead.

Ruined cities, wrecks of ages,
Fonts of fable, and of dream,
Mighty Thebes, and mystic Memphis,
Still bestrew they sacred stream.

At my feet, in placid grandeur,
Flows thy glorious river-sea,
Calm as when to sacred Isis
Pharaoh bent his royal knee.

Still the Sphinx in radiance basking,
From the blue unclouded skies,
O'er the flood is ever gazing
With its great and solemn eyes.

Vast the Pyramids are towering
O’er the lonely desert sand,
As when Cleopatra’s splendour
Spread a halo o’er the land.

Kings and chiefs for ages resting,
In their shrouds of scents and balm,
Hear not now the tumult round them,
Slumbering, slumbering, hushed and calm.

Green the sycamores are gracing
Abasseyeh’s fairy glade;
As when HE, the great Redeemer,
‘Neath their umbrage found a shade.

And across the boundless desert
Still the weary camel flies;
As at night the son of Ishmael
Guides him by the starry skies.

Fades our own brief toil and struggle
In oblivion, as we see
Those unchanging, everlasting
Emblems of eternity.

Seems to sink our wild ambition,
Pales our proudest enterprise,
At that Sphinx, so calm and placid,
And its melancholy eyes.

Years, and centuries, and ages
Has it gazed on changing scenes;
As the actors came and vanished,
Phantoms in earth’s troubled dreams.

Now we come, and pass before it,
And, like them, will fade away;
But, unmoved, that changeless figure
Triumphs over man’s decay.

Emblem of the Vast Eternal,
Thou dost tell of endless time,
As the stars above thee waken
Heavenward longings, great, sublime.

*Win’see and the Watter’Kelpie

Win’see he sat by the deep deil’s pat,
Nae far frae the Corbie’s tongue,
And the troot war loupin’ at the flees,
And the wattercockie sung.

He had sell’t fu’ dear his milk’fyte steer,
And it’s unco’ tired wis he,
For at Lumsden market he had been
And had drunk o’ the barley bree.

Noo the homewith road it wis geyan broad,
And his weazin it grew dry,
So he took him doon to the Bogie’s side,
A slycockin drink tae try.

Oh, he drank his full, and he knappit his mull,
And he sneez’t three times and three,
But he patna the horn weel intill’s pooch
Fan it’s fest asleep fell he.

He sleepit soun till the mirk cam doon,
And he never turn’t him ower,
And the wee wattercockie was reestit soun,
And the hoolets beginnin’ ta glower.

Bit fat wis that frae the deil’s deep pat
That raise wi an awfu’ yowl?
Nae wonner Win’see grew wan wi’ fricht
And trummel’t his verra sowl.

Oh, fear’t wis he at its quile-like e’e,
As it rairt its form aboon,
For he saw, gweed faith, ‘twis the Kelpie’s wraith
That was mintin him tae droon.

“Oh, weel-a-wyte, fat for sic spite?”
He cried, “Fat did I dee
That ony ane o’ the Kelpie’s breed

Sud beir ill will tae me?”

“Fat ist ye did?” cried the Kelpie wi’d
“I’ll wirry you wi’ anger!
Far is the bonnie snaw-fyte steer,
That it I see nae langer.

“Oh, Kelpie, dear,” cried Win’see. “Hear,
Gin truth it maun be tauld,
John Reid the bootcher boucht the beast,
This day it has been sauld.”

Like bodach-more did the Kelpie roar,
And skirl-t sair wi pine.
“Sall Kelpie’s breed thole sic a deed
Frae ocht o’ human kin”?

“That milk-fyte steer I heild fu’ dear;
‘Twis mair thocht o’ by me
Than your gweedwife, and twa big loons,
And protty dochters three.

“Yer bairns and wife for a’ their life
Will hae gweed cause ta murn,
For sin ye’ve sae begeckit me,
I’ll droon ye in the burn!”

“Oh! dee nae vrang, but let me gang,
My wife sits up for me;
Her hert will brack gin I comena back
Tae the loons and dochters three.

“Oh, Kelpie, say, fat will ye hae
Tae let me gang in peace –
A dog or soo, or quaik or coo,
Or sheep with lang saft fleece?”

Oh! the Kelpie yowl’t and the Kelpie gowl’t
And the Kelpie shook his heed.
“It’s awa’ from my hand ye sudna gang
Till I sook yer reid her’t bleed.

“Bit if truth be tauld, my fairmer bauld,
I hae just ae thing tae name;
If ye’ll gie’t tae me, fativer it be,
Oh, it’s scaitheless ye’ll gang hame!”

“Speak oot! Speak oot!” cried Win’see stout,
“Gin it’s mine tae keep or gie,
By the Sawbith knell o’ the Auld Kirk bell,
I sweir tae gie’t tae thee!”

Oh! the Kelpie danced and the Kelpie pranced,
“Oh, it’s ye hae dochters three,
And the best and the bonniest sall be mine,
So it’s gie me young Baubie.

“And sweir ye an aith, o’ dule and scaith,
And curse on treacherie,
That ye’ll tak’ yer dochter tae the brig,
And heave her ower tae me.”

But Win’see grain’t and Win’see main’t.
“Oh, yer bargain disna please,
For I like my Baubie best o’ a’,
So it’s I maun you refeeze.

“My wife she smiles, and ‘s canker’t fyles,
And sometimes sair tae t hole,
But I widna gie her owe tae you
Tae haud me frae the hole.

“And Meg, ye see, my auldest, she
Has unco’ little airt,
But sorry, sorry wid I be
War she and I tae pairt.

“But Baubie braw, she’s flooer o’ a’,
Baith gweed and bonnie tee,
If th’ ithers are nae like tae gang,
Yet far less chance his she.”

With frichtsome squeal, like the yowl o’ deil,
The Kelpie made a turn;
A grip he keist o’ Win’see’s breist.
And heav’t him in the burn.

The watter slobbert, froth’t, and blobbert,
For sair tae brack his beins.
The Kelpie tried, as peir Win’see
He yarkit on the steins.

He gasped for air, and thocht a prayer,
For haith he fest wis droonin.
Syne he bethocht on beuks he boucht
For saicrament communin.

Fat’s this it wis bit the Cattygiz;
He tore them oot undauntit,
And ramm’t them in the Kelpie’s moo,
The Kelpie fairly fantit.

Win’see that nicht, wi’ a’ his micht,
Did rin in frichtfu’ style,

Tho’ a’ the yird aneth his feet
Wis shoggin like a swyle.

Bit, ouw! The track that he cam back
Alairm’t a’ Winsee;
His dochter Meg got sic a flet,
She thocht it wisna he.

A’ muck and weet, he took a seat,
And tauld his frichtsome tale;
His mistress said he heed was turn’t
Wi’ something waur not ale.

Quo’ she, “Auld carle! Ye fuskie bar’l
Ye micht turn black wi’ shame’
Tae get sae foo, ye naisty breet,
Ye cudna manage hame.

“Wae’s me, sic life for luckless wife,
` It’s gweedness will ye help me;
My drunken man fa’s in a dam,
And thinks he sae the Kelpie.

Fan neist ye gang awa for lang
And drink – ye feel, confoon ye –
I hope the hairy Kelpie’s wraith
Will fairly grip and droon ye!”

Quo’ Bab, tae cheer, “My father dear,
Take nae mair than a gill,
And I’se be kaishin that the wraith
Will neither fleg nor kill!”

“Lament of the Catteran’s Widow

Oh, bairnie, bairnie, bonnie loon,
Fat will yer mammy dee?
Yer father lies a cauld, cauld corp,
And streekit he may’na be.

Fower nichts bygeen, as raise the meen,
He beltit on his plaid;
“Goodbye, gweedwife! Goodbye,” quo he,
“There’s spulzie tae be made.

“There’s a’ Glenlivet’s catteran lads

Are waitin on the hill,
They're bun' for braid Druminnoir lan's,
Ta herrie and tae kill!"

He buckel't on his braid claymore,
Likewise his pistols twa,
A skean-more, and jock-ta-leg,
And didna' he leuk braw?

W flyin' plaid, and pheelabeg,
And siller heiftet durk;
Fan reavin' baun had creich on haun
He wisna blet tae work.

Tae me he wis a husband gweed,
And a father kind tae you;
He keepit the girnal foo o meal,
And we milket the spulziet coo.

He wis a reaver teuch and bauld,
He scorn't ta lift a sheep;
But he eased the Forbes Clan o' kye,
And paidna for their keep.

But noo he is a cauld, cauld corp –
Oh wow, this day o' dree!
My Farquhar's lyan stark and cauld,
Fat can yer mither dee?

They took the gait wi' a' their set,
Grant, Big MacBean an a',
Ta reave the Forbes' gear and kye,
And herrie hoose and ha.

They liftit mony's the drove o' nowt,
And mony a shaltie gweed,
And mony a beild in a bleeze they set,
And its maister left for deid.

Syne hamewith set by Rhynie meir,
Far freen'ly Gordons lie;
But first they ca'ed at Bogieside
Ta eese them o' their kye.

There fand they a' the doors war fest,
And study chiels did staun,
At ilka winnock on the watch
Wi graip or gun in haun'.

"I cowshin ye," cries Bogieside,
"It's deith tae touch my byre!"
Quo Jamie grant, "Lat oot the nowt,
Or we'll set yer hoose on fire!"

Quo Bogieside, “Make heels yer freen,
Or certies we’ll lat fly!”
Says big MacBean, “Come oot, ye scrunt,
Come oot and lowse yer kye.”

Says Jamie grant, “Behaaud ye, man!
I never turn’t ma tail afore;
But I’ll rather rin than get a shot,
Ta plaister ma harns across the door!”

Syne up and spake yer father bauld,
“Oh, it’s back ye sanna win;
I’ll stick my claymore in the wame
O’ ony man that turns ta rin!

“Oh, dool upo’ ye, big MacBean!
And shame befa ye, Jamie Grant!
For it’s latten a Forbes see yer back
Is aneuch to anger a verra sant.

“A stoud Glenlivet man ta rin!
The like ws never heard afore.
Just follow me, and ye sall see
Hoo I’ll brak down the big byre door!”

Wi’ that he lap the midden heuch,
Ahint him flew his plaid,
His braid-sword glintit in his han –
Hooch! Prottier man was never made.

“Turn back! Turn back!” cried Bogieside,
Turn back, or ye shall dee!”
!Come oot! Come oot!” cries Farquhar bauld,
“Till I gar yer puddins flee!”

Wi’ that he struck a manfu’ thud
Upon the byre door,
And on the griep in bits it fell,
And the kye begood to roar.

They fired a shot, yer father leuch,
Quo he “It’s bleeze awa;
I hae seen some gunners afore the day,
Bit sic sheetin I never saw!”.

Wi that there came anither shot –
It strack him on the head,
And then, och-hey! Och-hey! My bairn,
He fell I’ the greepie deid.

Then barn, and byre, and corn, and peats,
War bleezing a’ the nicht’
But there, ochone, my bonnie man
They burye’t oot o’ sicht.

So bairnie, bairnie, bonnie loon,
Yer father brave is deid;
There's name ta gie us mate, or claes,
Or beild abeen oor heid.
Nae mair he'll sing his bairn's baa-loo,
Nae mair the bagpipes play,
Aliss! Aliss! My bonnie man,
That I should see the day.

We'll heist us tae my kith and kin,
The reid Macgregor Clan,
And byde wi' them, my winsome bairn,
Until ye grow a man.

They'll teach ye there tae draw the durk,
And sheet wi' pistol true,
As mony a man o' the Forbes clan
May hae gweed cause ta rue.

Ye will avenge yer father's death,
My braw, my bonnie loon;
Ye'll sook the reid Druminnoir bleed,
And burn their hoosies doon.

For, oh! this is a dreidfu' day.
Ochone! Ochone! a rhi!
It's I'm a weeda, cauld and lane,
And fatherless are ye.

The Obi's Spell
Ane Ballet Maist Ghaistly and Gruesome

O, gowd and gear regaird wi' fear,
Unless it's fairly gotten;
Tae covet sair will breed despair,
And turn a true hert rotten.

The muckle deil may gie ye zeal,
Tae joord and scrimp and hain;
But tak ye tent, ye'll sair repent
An unco greed for gain.

Frae Glesca toon set furth a loon,
Tae some far Indian isle;
And there he saw a leddy braw,
And sair did her beguile.

Her een war bricht, her fitfa licht,
Her waist sa sma’ and neat;
Her touch sae saft that men gied daft,
And knelt at her naked feet.

On a silken string her pearls did hing,
Rich jewels war roon’ her rowed;
Her lips war reid like a scarlet threid,
And her white teeth plugged wi’ gowd.

Her skin was dark as the ebon bark,
But rich and prood was she;
Wi’ anxious airt he won her hert,
And wi’ foul hypocracie.
Till at his side, she stede a bride,
And dreamed he loved her dear;
Nor ken’d that he cared never a flee
For aucht but for her gear.

Her jewels braw, and riches a’,
He gaithered up wi’ care;
And wi’ his wife and treasure rife,
Tae ship did seen repair.

Scarce could they be a week at sea,
A week but barely twa;
When ilka wave plashed in a rage,
And loud the win’ did blaw.

“Oh! a mistress black is at my back,
And she has gowd galore;
But she sanna be in my companie,
Fan I set my fit on shore.

“As moonbeams spread she shares my bed,
And hauds me in her airms;
But dule on me if I should be,
A faither tae her bairns.

“Her gowd sae rare, I’ll gaird wi’ care,
Wi’ tent her jewels hain;
But my black wife mun lose her life,
Or I see th’ land again.

“Ho! Busk and braid, my bonnie maid,
Though dark the nicht may be;
Sic ferlies braw ye never saw,
A’ sailin’ on the sea!”.

“The nicht is cauld the win’ is bauld,
The lift’s bereift o’ licht;
What ferlies braw war seen ava,
On sic a fearsome nicht?”

“Busk, busk, and braid, my bonnie maid,
Busk, busk and heist wi’ me’
For a’ the mermaids and mermen,
Are sailin’ on the sea.

“Alang the side upon the tide,
When I looked ower the ship;
Were mermaids fair and mermen rare,
That ower the waves did skip.

“And fairy boats, wi’ crystal floats,
What’s shairger sailors sma,
Sune spied the rings I’ my niz that hings
I hadna laid awa.

“Wi’ eldritch skreich they loupit heich,
They cleucht me by the niz,
Into the sea they plumpit me,
The watter ower ‘s did fizz.

“Tae the Obi dark, wi’ th’ weidfu mark,
I harkin’t a spell o’ prayer,
And here again by ‘s power I came
Tho’ my niz dreips bleid fur sair.

“So, husband dear, hae ye na fear,
There’s nocht can hairm me;
For in ilka plicht, black Obi’s nicht,
Comes oot rich wondrouslie.

“But woe and dule will skaith the fule
Wha fause wad me betray;
For the Obi’s spell, that name daur tell,
Hings owe me nicht and day!”

“Oh! wi’ my guidwife I’ll haud nae strife.
Tho’ her story’s far frae true;
Bit for some foul gait she ne’er will set
Her fit upon the lan.”

He took a cup, and filled it up
Wi’ a pushon fell and deep,
“Oh, wife o’ mine, will ye drink some wine
Afore ye gang tae sleep?”

She took the cup, and she drank it up,
And grat as she laid her doon,
“Oh, its siccan a drink, my dear, I think
That my heid is turnin’ roon.!

But he up the stair, and he left her there,
“It’s guid-bye, my leddy dear;
For a single sip wad pushon the s hip,
So ye’se drink nae mair, I fear!”

He lifted ‘s feet throw wind and weet,
For an oor, or barely twa;
Syne tirl’t the cleek, and his wife did speak,
“Oh, ye’re welcome, come awa!”

“Oh! the wind is bauld, and the nicht is cauld,
And yer wine wis no the best;
But the Obi cam wi’ anither dram
That put awa the taste.

“Then lie ye doon, there’s touth o’ room,
So heist and come in ower;
But o’ Obi beware, and tak unco care,
For his een had a bailfu glower!”

“Oh! wi’ my guidwife I’ll haud nae strife,
Tho’ her story be nae true;
For when I was gtane twas nae Obi came,
But she had a halesome spue.

“Oh! the winnock is wide and soople the tide,
And I’m rife for bluidy work;
And the Obi’s han’ will e nco strang,
If he hauds agin my durk.

“Come nearer, my bride, on the far awa side
I’ll streek me doon by you!”
Wi’ his durk he strack on her briest a crack,
And the blade in flinders flew.

He strack her a crack, on her briests sae black,
“Guidman! Guidman! Tak care;
Neither gullie nor dairt can pierce my hert,
For the Obi’s spell is there.

“Take tent, tak tent for a hert o’ flint
Will trummel afore the deil!”
“Nae spell wis that that withstade my whack,
But a plate o’ tempered steel!”

“Noo, husband dear, just streek ye here,
And for ae nicht freenly be;
Syne the Obi’s spell that gairds mysel
In the mornin’ ye shall see.

The win did blaw till the day did daw,
And the ship she warsilt deep;
But when mornin’s licht had owermaster’t nicht

They had never a blink o’ sleep.

“Guidwife!” he says, “Tis time we raise;
Lat’s see that Obi’s charm,
For feint a hair for yer fiend I care,
Tho’ he dreep wi’ brumstane warm!”

“Oh, husband dear, I mickle fear
Yer eyne is near at hand;
For the Obi dreid has roon her heid
Thrice waved his deadly wand.

And a laithfu’ dairt will pierce her hert,
For deeds sae foul and fause;
Will ye gie yer aith tae keep true faith,
If I plead wi’ him your cause?”

“Ye haverin’ jade! De ye think I’ll fleg
At your silly eldritch craw?
I’m no sae feel as tae dreid yer deil,
Nor yer deevilocks ane and a’!”

She rase frae her bed, tae her kist she made,
And she gied him a boxie sma’;
“Oh, it’s open’t yersel but tak tint o’ the spell,
And the wyte be on you for a’!”

He turn’t it roon ‘tween’s finger and thoom,
And white, white, white grew he;
“Denum the time that a heathen quyne,
Should hae seen the like wi’ me!”

Wi’ a frichtsome yell, he loupit and fell,
And writhed and gaped for breath;
Nor did the serpent stang annoy him lang,
Till he lay stark cauld in death.

“Oh! dule and wae befa the day,
And sair, sair did ye dee;
The vipers cheep as roon they creep
On a corpse as black as me.

“Oh, hairtless airt had your hard hert,
Fause, fause ye was tae me;
But, whatever betide, I’m aye your bride,
And will keep ye companie!”

***

“O, Captain bauld!” said a sailor auld,
“I’ve seen a fearsome sicht’

For, guid keep me, in the hauld ye'll see
Twa corpses black as nicht!"

"Gie doon tae the hauld," quo' the Captain bauld,
"But tell nae ane but me,
And tie thae corps wi' chains and ropes,
And heave them in the sea!

"Denum the win', sic a smell I fin',
Like a pushon fell and strang;
O, sailor auld, come up frae the hauld;
Why tarry ye there sae lang?

"He comes nae back frae the corpses black;
Gie doon, my lads and see.
Nae human deem wis that black quean,
But a witch that sail't wi me!"

"Oh, Captain bauld, my bluide runs cauld,
And the words dee at my lip;
Guid keep my soul frae the pest so foul,
But the Plague is in your ship.

"In the hauld sic a sicht ne'er saw the licht
As what may there may be seen;
The sailors drap wi' their faces black;
And some are turnin' green!"

The waves they lashed, and the watter plashed,
And the sea-goos screeched fu sair,
But the plague ship sail't, and the birds' wings fail't At a gust o' the laithfu air.

And o'er the side, in a green, green tide,
Dreeps doon that laithfu bree;
And the fish float deid if it pass overheid,
Or sink doon in the sea.

'Neath a ghaistly moon that ship gied doon
Where the coal-black seas did gap,
And at the wheel steer't the great black deil
In the Obi's fearsome shape.

Sae be cowshint a, baith great and sma;
True love has the richest measure;
The deil's on the watch, and the man he'll catch
That wad marry a blaik for treasure.

Violets

Received in India from home

Fair one, I fondly prize
Those violets blue,
Borne by the swelling breeze

Over the distant seas,
A gift from you.

Oft when night's curtain spreads
From pole to pole,
Some lone star's friendly light,
Shining one moment bright,
Will light the whole.

So when these blossoms came
In hours of sadness,
They chased drear sorrow's dart,
And filled my beating heart
With thoughts of gladness.

Memories of happy days.
When violets grew
'Mongst the auld-mossie fens,
And in the heather glens,
'Twixt mountains blue.

Dearly I prize the gift,
So sweet and rare,
Sent from my native land,
Culled by the gentle hand
Of one so fair.
Farewell to Strathbogie

Dear home, far in the distant hills,
With smiling glens and peaks of blue!
An anguished chord my spirit thrills
At leaving you – at leaving you.

Land where my loyal fathers fought!
Land where my mother lowly lies!
My spirit chides me that I sought
For other lands – for other skies.

Farewell, MacDhui's distant peak!
Farewell, majestic Lochnagar!
To you my exiled heart will speak
From lonely wilds – from lands afar.

O, grand old Noth, with scorched crest,
Dark Buck, and bonnie Bennachie –
Hills that my mem'ry loves the best,
Farewell to all – farewell to thee.

Farewell to Kirkney's sparkling fall,
And Gaudie with its silver gleam,
And Bogie, sweetest of them all,
The stream most dear – my dearest stream.

Farewell, ye solemn woods of fir,
And bonnie birks on Bogie-side;

Your mem'ries shall my heart-strings stir
Beyond the tide – beyond the tide.

I'll mind the spot where bell-flowers grew;
And egrons nodded sweet and fair;
But oft they'll bud and bloom anew
Before I pluck them – pluck them there.

Farewell companions frank and fair;
Our youth is over; scattered we
O'er many a path; but none will dare
To follow me – to follow me.

Ye mighty hills that mock the storms,
Each wimpling burn, and flowery dell,
Bright eyes, and smiles, and fairy forms;
Farewell to all! – a long farewell.

Ev'n now, the great ship's iron keel,
Is dashing through the ocean foam,
And saddening thoughts upon me steal,
At leaving thee, my Highland home.

DESCRIPTIVE NOTES

"THE NOTH'S LONELY MOUNTAIN" (1)

The mountain which obtrudes itself in the central background of the illustrations at pages and
Is called the "Hill of Noth" (or Noath), and shelters a large extent of Upper Strathbogie from the Northern blasts. Its S.W. extremity, rising in a lofty and graceful cone to an altitude of 1,400 feet above the valley, is termed "The Tap o' Noth," and possesses a more commanding position, a wider prospect, and features and fortifications more wonderful and extraordinary, than any other mountain in all Scotland. From its summit, on a clear day, parts of a hundred parishes can be discerned, situated in a dozen different counties. To the East are some of the famous dauchs of Strathbogie, the grand old Gordon country; beyond is the rich and fertile Garioch, guarded on the South by the peaks of Bennachie, and defended on the North by the hills of Foudland and Culsalmond; while rolling away to the North and Eastward is the vast expanse of Buchan, with its distinguishing landmarks – the White Horse and the solitary hill of Mormond.

Looking over the other side we see Kirkney, the lonely glen with its thousand graves, ranges of heather-clad hills, Huntly, and the fertile valley of the Deveron; while far away, on the Banff coast, is a narrow space of the blue sea. The Knock, the Hill of Durn, and the Binns of Cairnie and Cullen intervene, and again comes the distant sea, while far beyond it rise the shadowy outlines of the hills of Caithness, Sutherland, and Ross.

To the S.W. the prattling burn of Essachie flows along the Brae of Essie, past ancient relics and ruins. Wooded Knock Caillich stands in the middle ground. The huge Buck of the Cabrach and the other mountain sources of the Deveron rise beyond, while in the distance the great giants of the Grampian chain rear their kingly summits into the clouds, Mount Keen, the Cairngorms, and many other lofty peaks, from Dark Lochnagar to Clochnaben. Ben Rinnes frowns defiantly to the West. Southward lies Culbean and Morven, separated from us by the upper waters of the Don and the Bogie, and a varied expanse of moor and mountain, forest and glen, dotted with castles and ruins, the witnesses of many an eventful scene of war and splendour.

Such is a faint and incomplete outline of the vast and varied prospect viewed from "The Tap" – an expanse teeming with wonderful traditions, and with stirring and warlike associations; where every stone has its story, and every hill and stream is redolent of harmony, emanating from poets in every rank and position, from King James and the Duke of Gordon, to the ploughboy and the weaver.

The summit of the Tap is a green saucer-shaped oval, with diameters of about 60 and 160 yards. A huge rampart of stones, loose or fused into great cinder-like masses, encloses it, some 20 feet in breadth at the base, and the same in height. In a hollow within the saucer is the famous well, once furnished with chain and ladle, and mysteriously maintaining (imaginary?) connection with a spring about a mile distant. The supply of water within the fort enabled its garrison to withstand long investments. An outer defence in the shape of an earthen breastwork, with massive stone revetment, encircles the cone near its base, and must be nearly two miles in circumference. Mr Lawson of Huntly, estimates that in all there are 20,000 cubic yards of solid masonry, weighing 40,000 tons, the collection of material for which would take 1,000 men 200 days, even if stones could be found on the hill, and that 6,000 or 7,000 men could not have completed the work in a year.

The Picts are generally supposed to have been the builders, and to have spent forty years at its construction, the stones being passed in fire-bucket fashion from hand to hand along many lines of people, extended at arm's length from the top to the bottom of the mountain.

Another unlikely tradition gives the Norse invaders the credit of its erection. So complete is the fusion of the shale, trapp, and limestone wall for a few feet on either side that the learned for a long time believed it, despite local tradition, to be an extinct volcano.

On the other hand, farm servants had an idea that it owed its origin to infernal agency. The Prince of Darkness, said they, constructed the castle, by means of a multitude of warlocks, for Jock o' Noth, but on its completion Jock, having in some manner outwitted his architect, refused to implement his part of the compact, whereupon the Evil One in a rage touched up the towering edifice with the tip of his tail, and astonished the neighbourhood with a pyrotechnical display of unparalleled brilliancy. Some say he fastened his defaulting builders inside before lighting up.

After all, it is yet a matter of doubtful conjecture how a heat intense enough to melt and fuse the stones for several feet could be obtained and applied internally and externally to the walls.

There is a tradition that the name was derived from the Norsemen, who penetrated thus far, and retired with their plunder to the Banff coast, leaving a garrison on the Tap. This garrison, being vigorously assailed, held out until on the verge of starvation, and at last came out unarmed, crying "Noth!" Noth!" – Nothing to eat! The Celts, again, are said to have suitably termed it, "Taip a nochd", the mount of observation; while Mr Lawson propounds three other possible theories as to the origin of the name:

Gaelic – "Tobar Nuath," the well of Noth.

Teutonic – "Top of Noth" , the top of need or last extremity.

Cymric – "Tappa nid," the heroes' nest.

In the warmest day of Summer there is always a cool breeze on the Tap, and frequently the snow of one year remains in white patches until the succeeding Winter. Those born or reared in the vicinity regard the mountain with a wonderful degree of veneration. "I wid gang will gin I tint the Tap" was a favourite expression of the old Rhynie ladies, who were proud to say that in all their travels they were "never oot o' sicht o' the Tap."

THE KIRKNEY (2)

This is a fine trouting stream, and is supposed to have, amongst its other finny inhabitants, a huge black trout, covered with long hair, which can bellow as loud as a bull. Tradition says that this monster was last hooked by a "cyurd" or gipsy of the "Faa" tribe, who cut a notch in its dorsal fin before returning it to its native element.

THE FOX (3)

Called the tod, is now less frequently seen. Formerly foxes existed in such numbers as to cause serious loss to the farmers, who were occasionally forced to seek the assistance of the professional todhunter. This respectable vulpicide – generally famed for his skill as a marksman – was the possessor of a ragged pack of all

sorts of tykes and mongrels, from the superannuated hound to the ferocious bull-dog. His plan of operations was to post men with guns in all likely laces, while he, with his dogs, hunted reynard from his covert. Several foxes generally met their fate in these battues, nor were hares or roe deer always allowed to escape.

The lst of the todhunters was genial John Macpherson whom some of the oldest residenters can still remember. A kind, soldier-like, old gentleman, with long silvery locks flowing from beneath a broad blue bonnet, and a tartan plaid wrapped about his erect figure. A "skeelie" man who understood much about cattle and their ailments, and the secret virtues of herbs and simples; who was moreover deeply versed in the habits of beast and bird, and loved to study Nature form her own wonderful book. Amongst his canine friends he kept several dogs for badger and otter hunting, and created a wonderful sensation by killing an immense brock a little below Smi'ston.

WEAPONS OF STONE (4)

Large numbers of flint arrow-heads (termed elfin-airas or elf-shots), and stone celts (axe heads) have been found at various times in this neighbourhood. The arrows are nearly all lozenge-shaped of yellow flint, or barbed or red flint. The largest find is that referred to by Logan, when in 1823 between 40 and 50 were discovered under a large stone in trenching a waste part of the Brae of Essie. About a dozen were found by an old man named John Robertson, or John Phon, when reclaiming some waste ground for the writer's father, who himself subsequently picked up half a dozen others and a stone celt. Another stone axe and several arrow-heads were uncovered near the same spot by the late Mr Hardie of Windyfield, by whom they were presented to the Banff Museum.

The "breemie-knowe," where most of these were found, was a considerable hillock, beside the dam for Mill of Noth, w which before cultivation bore distinct traces of ancient fortification, the saucer-like summit – 25 yards in diameter – being encircled by several little concentric walls and ditches, which had been quite unnoticed until shorn of the broom. In the ante-sulphur ages, it would have been a strong position.

Some of these arrow-heads were of great size and beautiful design – perhaps tips for spears – and were kept carefully locked up in a funny old chest, with a curious assortment of antiquarian relics and odds and ends jealously guarded from boyish fingers. One day, when it was open – the writer's father showed him the upper stone of a quern, very much worn. This, he said, had been an heirloom in the family for unknown generations and admonished him to preserve it for its antiquity and associations, adding with a smile, "oor auld fowk ees' tae say, 'fa'ever keeps this winna wint lan' tae grow corn!" The last time it had been used was in grinding malt at the farm of Bogieside.

Unfortunately on his death these instructions were forgotten, his antiquarian treasures went astray and the precious quern is apparently lost beyond recovery.

Many of the surrounding farmers possess fine collections of these relics of the Stone Age, which, it is to be hoped, they will patriotically retain in the district where they were found, instead of meanly selling to Cockney collectors. The collections of Mr Shand of Longcroft, and Mr Knight of Cransmill, are particularly interesting; the Laird of Clova has also an extensive and valuable museum, while on many of the old farms one or more "elfin airas" are to be found carefully stowed away in the gweedwife's kist, their possession being counted lucky.

In olden days these flint arrows were said to be the darts shot at men or beasts by malevolent fairies, cattle being the commonest victims. When an animal was struck there was no wound on the hide, yet the inner membrane was punctured and, if the beast died, a mortified spot would be found below the skin. This was evidently some fatal malady which was once, without doubt, very prevalent. In Strathbogie, an animal suspected to be elfshot was treated by attaching sprigs of roddan to the head and tail and turning the beast about. The wound could then be localized by feeling all over until the "sair bit" was discovered. Salt and tar or some other singular preparation was externally applied, and a warm drink containing meal, salt, crushed rowan berries, or herbs from a "skeelie boddie" administered, the efficacy of the latter being in-

creased by dipping an arrow-head, a piece of silver or – better still – the famous adder's head, into the cog. "Roddan" trees are consequently to be found at all the old farmsteads.

Baubie Allan, who has given her name to a "burnie" and a "wuddie" near Rhynie, was famous for her skill in treating cattle thus bewitched or elfshot.

EAGLE-PLUMED (5)

The High Chief of a Clan wore three eagle feathers in his bonnet; Lairds and near relations, two; gentlemen, one; clansmen and retainers wore a hawk's feather. At a marriage, however, a plume of heron's feathers was the correct thing, while contempt for a fop was expressed by saying, "He wid pit a paycock's feather in 's bonnet!"

The clan badge was also displayed on the bonnet or in the shoulder brooch.

TARTANS (6)

The principal tartans etc. of the neighbourhood, as far as I can make out, are as follows:

Clan or Family	Colour of Tartan Badge Slogan
Abercrombie	Blue, and black ground, green forms, double check, white line through green

Anderson Light blue ground, red, yellow and white lines
Scotch Fir

Barclay Blue and green ground, red lines

Cumming Green ground, blue and red checks, pale blue lines
Cumminwood
Davidson Blue and black ground, white (or red and white) lines

Red Whortleberry

Clan or Family

Colour of Tartan
Badge
Slogan
Dyce and Fordyce Blue and black ground, green check, yellow and white lines

Duff Red ground, green, blue, and black checks

Erskine Green and red checks, with red and green lines

Farquharson Blue and black ground, green checks, red and yellow lines
Red Whortleberry or Purple Foxglove
"Cairn na quheen!"
Ferguson Blue and black ground, green checks, white and red lines
Little Sunflower
Forbes Blue and black ground, green checks, white lines
Broom "Lonach"

Clan or Family

Colour of Tartan
Badge
Slogan
Fraser Brown ground, green and blue checks, white and red lines Yew or Cinquefoil
Gordon Blue and black ground, green checks, yellow lines
Ivy "Byde and –"
Grant Red ground, green checks, blue lines
Cranberry "Stand Fast
Craig Ellachie!"
Hay Red ground, green checks, white and yellow lines
Mistletoe "Hollen na garabh!
Leith Red ground, blue, black and green checks, yellow and white lines

Leslie Blue and black ground, green checks, red and white lines

Clan or Family
Colour of Tartan
Badge
Slogan

Menzies Black ground, green checks
Menzie heath "Grip Fast"
Mowatt Black ground, green checks, yellow lines

Scott Red ground, green checks, white and red lines

Seton Red ground, green checks, white and green lines "Set On"
Skene Green ground, red and blue checks, green lines
"Skene"
Stuart Blue and black ground, green checks, red, blue and green lines Oak

THE GREAT ROCK WHICH THE CHIEFTAIN OF NOTH AT HIS ENEMY HURLED (7)

In that somewhat uncertain period when Jock o' Noth, Jock o' Bennachie, and their colossal confreres held sway, the giant of Noth was one day entertaining his rival and namesake of Bennachie in proper and befitting manner within the walls of his lofty fortress. The wassail was noisy and joyous, and the fragrant and delicious mountain nectar – extracted from the heather blossom by a process known only to certain of the ancient Picts – flowed copiously,

Until in their cups the mighty men began to quarrel about their personal strength, the power of their spells and magic, the splendour of their castles, and the height of their respective hills. Failing to come to any ami-

cable agreement on these important points, the two giants fell to fighting, and Jock o'Noth speedily rid himself of his guest by flinging him "ower the barmebin". Poor Bennachie "cam doon wi' an awfu' clype," and picking himself up limped painfully down the hill, while to accelerate his progress Jock o' Noth threw an immense rock after him. Bennachie, however, faced about and, stopping the great stone with his foot, stamped it immovably into the hill side, where it now remains, its broad surface bearing the impress of his massive pedal, in shape – as far as I can recollect – something like the engraving.

Terrible monsters these giants must have been if we are to believe our traditionary ballads.

> Study, stout, and wight,
> Full three good yards about the waist,
> And fourteen feet in height.

Little wonder that when the guard refused to open the city gates to such a "proper youth" he should knock his foot through the wall, and throw down the fortifications with ease. That such sons of Anak were "grisley sichts ta see" we can well imagine, as the same veracious ballad asserts –

> Though Bennachie lies very low,
> And the Tap o' Noth lies high,
> For a' the distance that's between
> Jock heard auld Jonnie cry.

Bennachie, as we have said, was a great wizard, but the enchantments of a beautiful woman, a more powerful magician than himself, eventually overcame him. Lulled to sleep by her incantations, he was laid to rest under a spell in a vast cave, the entrance to which has been lost until

> A wife's ae sin wi but ae ee
> Sall fin' the key o' Bennachie.

A STONE NEAR THE KIRKNEY (8)

In the glen of Kirkney is a stone called the "Deevil's cheer," where "Clootie" is said to have sat and instructed his assistants in "black airt." To this spot flights of witches and warlocks from all parts were supposed to converge at night for their unholy revels.

In these days it was considered sound policy to be on good terms with his Satanic Majesty, and our forefathers were as anxious as possible "nae tae anger the deil" or incur the ill-will of his accredited agents.

Two hundred and fifty years ago they still had one croft of several acres untouched by the plough, and set apart to the Evil One, on the Mains of Lesmoir, and another at Smi'ston howe. Regarding the former, the Presbytery of Strathbogie, on their visitation of the Kirk of Rhynie, 13 August 1651, made enquiry, and Sir Wm. Gordon of Lesmoir, being asked whether or not there was any land in that parisch that was given away (as is commonly said) to "The Goodman" and used not to be laboured, answered, "It was reported to him that there was some of that in his own maines, but that he had a mynd, be the assistance of God, to cause labour the samen. Quherupon he was commended for his ingenuitie in declaring it, and exhorted to take paines shortly to have it laboured." Observe how politely the Presbytery referred to their arch enemy; and when the doughty knight of Lesmoir looked on the interference with Pluto's perquisites as so manifestly uncanny, it need scarcely be wondered at that the less educated should deem it best to pay the deil due deference. Of the other "Goodman's Croft," at the howe o' Smi'ston, terrible stories are told. In spite of the express orders and injunctions of the Kirk, no one for long had the courage to cultivate it. At last the attempt was made, but the ploughshare had scarcely entered the soil when the best ox in the team dropped dead with elfshot, nor was it until several years elapsed, and the minister himself attended to "sain" the animals and their owners, that the land was brought under the plough. The deil had a sort of claim on the last of anything; consequently few would quite empty their plate or eat the last morsel of their food. Even yet the herd boy, discussing a slice of a sappy neep, calls the last mouthful "the deevil's bite," and generally flings it over his left shoulder.

WARLOCKS AND WITCHES (9)

The general prevalence of (presumed) witchcraft in Strathbogie is amply attested by the many cases tried before the Presbytery in past years, and to this day not a few of the old folk are somewhat uncertain about the matter; indeed, the writer is acquainted with several people, neither wanting in intelligence nor education, who believe in the reality of "black art" and in the occult power of self-elected emissaries of the Evil One.

The art of obtaining supernatural powers and charms could be studied, it was believed, under competent masters, at the peril of salvation, through a compact with the master of evil. This latter (compact) was, as may be supposed, a gruesome ordeal, the ceremony being performed in a kirkyard at midnight over the grave of some past master of the black art, gone to his certain doom. Several such graves are said to be well known amongst the Horsemen, from whose ranks these votaries were generally recruited.

A word about the Horsemen. Throughout the N.E. counties there exists amongst the farm servants a secret society, with extraordinary pretensions to antiquity, called "the Horsemen", whose mysteries are as carefully guarded as the Freemasons, and restricted to those who gain their livelihood by the care and management of horses. Small farmers who assist to labour their own land may be allowed into membership, but the more affluent, and probably better educated, are jealously excluded. Its presumed object is to impart useful and necessary instruction in the management of horses and in the virtue of herbs and simples, and it is maintained that Rarey's tricks in horse-taming were the common property of the Horsemen. Anyway, although many farmers entertain a prejudice against members of the society, it is admitted that a Horseman is always

very capable in managing his team, and will often be asked by the uninitiated to break in a stubborn beast, or act the part of Vet.

The Horsemen hold their meetings by night, and in the clear moonlight frequently go in for some sort of circus performance with horses purloined for the occasion from their masters' stables.

There is, however, said to be an inner circle in the society, where black art and all the spells and charms of the Dark Ages are still the subject of study, and whose votaries can 'reist horses, deprive kye of their milk, bewitch meal mills and churns, smite cattle with mysterious sickness, and cast an unholy glamour over "weak womankind."

From details given by those who profess to have seen some of these occult manifestations one is inclined to think that the would-be sorcerers had exercised hypnotic influence both on men and animals. This mysterious power is known amongst the Red Indians and some of the jungle tribes of Hindustan, so perhaps these disciples of diablerie were also acquainted with it long before the days of Mesmer; although unaware of its nature or origin (and who is?) they naturally ascribed it to the influence of that evil power whose aid they sought.

PLOUGHSHARE AND AXE (10)

The Arms of the Andersons of Noth were so charged.

The Anderson Sept, according to Skene, is "an offshoot of the old potent stem of Clan Anrias" and of the aboriginal race. They themselves lay no claim to foreign ancestry, but say they have always been here. Their representatives are widely scattered over the northern counties but are most numerous in that of their reputed chieftain.

In 1696 there were 768 males bearing the name in Aberdeenshire alone, all of whom, with very few exceptions, were either farmers or ploughmen; Also the following who were rated as gentlemen and taxed accordingly:-

The Laird of Candacraig, Chief of the Sept, Anderson of Miltoun of Noth, Anderson of Dunbennan, and Anderson of Bourtie.* Several of the Strathdon families then retained the Celtic spelling, and the old Andermas Fair has probably some connection with the name; Gilanreas or St Andrew's being the oldest known territorial designation of Kindrochit parish in Braemar.

*Old Armorial Bearings of the Andersons of Aberdeenshire.

Candacraig –
ARMS: Argent a saltire sable, surmounted with another
azure, between two mullets gules, and as many boar's heads coupled of the third.
CREST on a wreath, argent and/or a fir tree seeded proper.
MOTTO: Stand Sure.

Miltoun of Noth, Earlsfield and Newtoun of Premnay –
ARMS: Azure a saltire argent, between two mullets or in chief and base, dexter a ploughshare, sinister a Lochaber axe both of the third.
CREST on a wreath, a fir tree seeded proper, issuant from a mount.
MOTTO: Stand Sure.

Dunbennan, Ardbake, and Mellinside –
ARMS: Azure a saltire argent between three mullets or and a crescent in base of third.
CREST: a fir tree seeded proper, issuant from a mount in base.
MOTTO: Stand Sure.

Bourtie –
ARMS: Argent a saltire azure, between four mullets gules;
CREST and MOTTO as in the last.

None of the male descendants of these families now possess any landed property in the shire.
But once on a time there arose a great shearer in the parish of Tirrienessil, by name Baubie Forbes, w hose fame as a "forcey uman", and a protty han wi' th' hyeuck," became noised abroad. Bogieside of course took umbrage, and from amongst its strapping queans selected one named – I think – Eppie Gordon, to take the conceit out of Tirrienessel, and humble the pride of the Forbes folk. The two lasses met accordingly on the hairst rig, where a vigorous competition for the honour of their respective clans, parishes, and reputations ensued. The result was, however, a draw, both appearing equally eident, forcey, kibble, and clean; but alas, alas, Strathbogie! Baubie Forbes bore away the palm for personal beauty.

On the Knowe of Bogieside there formerly existed the very complete remains of a Druid's temple. Unfortunately, in the early part of this century most of the stones were removed and broken up for building at the Mains of Druminnoir. All that no remain are the supposed altar and its "horn" (illustration at page), with four of the encircling pillars, one of which is cut by the masons' irons.

In the parish of Clatt, a few miles distant, there was probably the finest specimen of Druid's temple in the north, but it also fell a victim to the vandalism of the age some eighty years ago.

THE GREAT STONE NEAR THE BELL-KNOWE

Many sculptured and unsculptured standing stones are scattered about Strathbogie and its neighbourhood, generally attributed to the ancient Picts. The stone referred to is No. 1 of the opposite illustration. In making these sketches, I derived great assistance from drawings in the possession of Rev. R Harvey Smith, M.A.

No. 1, Known as the "Craw Stane", stands in a field near the Bell Knowe on the farm of Mains of Rhynie.

Nos. 2 and 3 once stood in a field South of the village and were popularly, but without reason, supposed to mark the spot where Lulach fell. They were moved to their present site on the Square about 1864 and have since been almost entirely defaced by the "nickims" of school boys.

No. 4. Fragment of a very large stone which originally stood at Muir of Rhynie. Unfortunately it was broken up for building, and even this, the only part for some time preserved, has at last disappeared, being, it is said, built into Mrs McAdam's stable wall.

No. 5. Discovered in the foundation of the old church when the kirkyard was being improved in 1877.

No. 6. Fragment (about one third) of a sculptured pillar found with No. 5 in 1877. It was broken up by the masons and built into the wall of the graveyard. This, the largest fragment, was afterwards taken out from its position beneath the west pillar of the gateway by order of the Duke of Richmond and Gordon, on the representation of Miss Maclagan.

The meaning of the strange symbols with which these ancient monuments are incised is wrapped in mystery.

The salmon, the sacred fish of the Druids, is evidently represented on No. 1. A similar fish, surmounting a double curve or arch (as on No. 3) was found on a stone 4ft x 2ft unearthed some sixty years ago, beside the great Druid temple in Clatt. The other figure on the Craw Stane, commonly called "the elephant" is supposed by Pennant to represent the musimon, an animal now extinct. Others say it is the Celtic Ceres in the shape of "a proud crested mare." Similar incised figures are found in Hindustan, and Logan says it is one of the most usual and most remarkable forms engraved on our ancient obelisks.

On No. 6 is displayed, with other symbols, the crescent moon, anciently Anactis, “the lady with the white bow,” worshipped b the Celtic nations with great veneration, and regarded with superstitious feelings up to recent date. (“Turn yer siller fan ye see the new meen”).

The figure on No. 3, generally known as “the auld Peicht” has been the theme of endless conjectures. Other symbols – such as single and double discs and mirrors, curved arrows, zig-zags, javelins, combs, sceptres etc. – are common all over the N.E. of Scotland, although their meaning is exceedingly mysterious. Dr Anderson was endeavouring to prove that these rude carvings did not exist before the tenth century, but most students of Celtic antiquities place them about the beginning of the Christian era, and the strange Ogham characters found engraved here and there would seem to indicate an early origin. Of these inscriptions the most famous is that on the “Newton Stone,” whose runic puzzle has baffled the powers of our most eminent archaologists. The Rev. J M Agnew, its latest and apparently most successful interpreter, translates it thus:-

“Azif, Count of Shevach, and Sjyer (his Countess) were here trampled to death by Xyoloubth in the year 241 of the cut off Saviour.”

The Sculptured Stones of Rhynie.

THE BELL-KNOWE (13)

An artificial mound or knoll, surmounted by a few trees, where the bell used to hang when the old Kirk of Rhynie stood in the graveyard below it. It is undoubtedly one of the old Moothills (or Raths, as the Irish call them) on which judgments were delivered. The law courts – anciently held in the Druid circles – were transferred to the churches on the abolition of pagan worship, and there held until prohibited by an express canon of the Scottish Church. Moothills were then constructed, generally in the close vicinity of churches. Another example is the Bas (Gaelic, death or judgment) of Inverury.

"THE AULD MOSSIE" (14)

Was an exhausted peat moss, from which the Rhynie district had long obtained its supply of fuel. In many places (termed swyles or showdies) the great depths of the morass were covered by an elastic scum, on which it was possible to walk, and where the greenest and most succulent of "natural" grasses sprouted most luxuriantly, offering a great temptation to the bovine breed. Cattle straying into it frequently broke through this crust, and "laired" so hopelessly in the mire that it required much rope and muscular exertion to get them out. Beautiful tracts of marsh reeds, wild cotton, and lovely aqueous flowers, with occasional expanses of open water, diversified its surface. It was a paradise for snipe, plover, and wild fowl. The eerie cry of the curlew and the dismal drumming of the iron-bleater gave it an uncanny reputation after dark, when now and then a will-o'-the-wisp, or dead-candle, flickered amongst its marshy reeds; while in the morning the spectre-like figure of the "craigit-heron" might be dimly seen through a heavy mantle of mist.

Of course, it had its guardian hobgoblin, a terrible being termed Tod-lowrie, evidently of the Kelpie breed, who enticed cattle – particularly "broon quaicks" – to "sappy pastur," and "smored" both them and the "herdie". The old folks were guilty of maintaining this monster's existence, with the object of deterring the rising generation from exploring his dominions. Tod-lowrie, by the way, would only drink at the well of "Meg Cow" and good old George Fettas was popularly believed to have frequently seen this uncouth creature taking his morning draught.

The Auld Mossie, however, was no doubt, deleterious to the health of the neighbourhood, which certainly did not suffer by its drainage and cultivation some twenty years ago.

RHYNIE (15)

Rhynie, called in old documents Rhynyn – i.e. Rhy-nien (Righ-(na)-nighean) "Prince of King of Maidens" (?) was a Burgh or Barony conferred on the Chief of the Gordons, in whose representative was vested the civil and criminal jurisdiction of the district. Its "heidin-stene" once stood near the present centre of the village, and "Ione Laing Baron of Noth," who lies in Kearn Kirkyard is said to have been the last of its vice-ducal rulers.

Formerly the village consisted of two small clachans – "the meers" and "the toun," but both have long since shaken hands, exchanged their walls of fell and dyking for more substantial stone and lime, shed their

"breemie-thack," for a more comfortable, if less picturesque, covering of slate, and assumed an air of modern respectability.

On the square where the celebrated Bull markets and fairs were held, once stood the famous "Roon Pumpie," the oldest well in the district, around which circled endless traditions and an unsavoury wall. The latter, which did duty as a "lock up" on market days (on the understanding that its prisoners should effect their escape when sober) has been removed and the latter will doubtless soon disappear likewise, while wrinkled old ladies – now that the well is covered over – need no longer stand in dread of being dipped into it by a hair tether to cure them of incipient witchcraft.

With the gradual disappearance of the crofters the population of the district has decreased, although the village has had a slight augmentation. In bygone days the proximity of powerful enemies made its inhabitants revengeful and warlike, but in later years they have prided themselves most on their intellectual powers, and on giving a lead to the surrounding districts in every movement of enlightenment and social progress, with which however the illuminating power of their gas-works is scarcely in keeping. It was here that the system of mutual improvement, now a world-wide institution, had its beginning, the original class having been founded by the talented Congregationalist minister, the Rev. R Harvey Smith, M.A.

(16)

THE BELLS WITH ITS SOFT MELLOW TONE

Lord Huntly and his lady are said to have each cast a handful of gold and silver coins amongst the metals from which the Rhynie bell was cast, hence its peculiarly mellow (?) sound.

The Kirk was furnished a few years ago with a very handsome bell-tower and spire through the munificence of the late Mr James Symon, sometime of Melbourne.

"THE PLACE WHERE TWO CHIEFS ARE AT REST"

These two standing stones are beside the Free Kirk Manse of Rhynie, in which, by the way, the late devoted missionary, Mr A Mackay of Uganda, was born and reared, his father, the Rev. Alexander Mackay, LL.D. being the well-known geologist and geographer.

The monuments are of great antiquity and were much venerated. A proposal to shift them to another side, when the Free Kirk was built, was strenuously opposed and, although exactly in front of the church entrance, they still remain.

Probably they were erected by the Druids, and may have still continued as a place of judgment after the introduction of Christianity, standing stones having been so used in several places until the close of the fourteenth century.

Tradition, however, very dimly and vaguely asserts that they were set up over two great chiefs who fell in mortal combat, and that disputes were frequently settled between the stones by an appeal to arms. Even at a later date, in the famous market days, the invitation to "come up to the Stannin steens" was a defiance which the fierce drovers and swashbuckler clansmen were ready enough to throw in each others' faces as a challenge.

Up to eighty years ago the fairs at Rhynie and Clatt seldom ended without the old clan rivalry asserting itself, and bringing on a faction fight which would have delighted the "sowl" of a bog-trotting Donnybrooker.

Illustration of the two Standing Stones

Everyone carried a stout cudgel, and the dandies paraded in the tartan of their various septs, with dirk and broadsword. After business, whiskey drinking, feats of strength, fencing, and athletic sports became the order of the day. What Samsons they were to be sure! What fabulous fencers, and what a razor-like edge their claymores always carried!

One sturdy champion, whose fame has outlined his narrow span, could break the arms of his opponents "like wizzent bourtree." Another bon sabreur, with the utmost ease, shaved off one by one all the buttons, brooches, and buckles from his antagonist's Highland dress, and would have lopped off his legs next had his rival not cried out, in the very nick of time, "Be-haud ye, sir! I'm fairly maggert!" Such preliminaries led on to the grand melee, and before night the Rhynie Gordons and the Forbeses o'Clett, backed by all their friends and allies, were pitching into each other in fine style; and woe betide the poor man who had brought a load of peats to the fair, and failed to part with them. Better ammunition could not be desired, and in a twinkling the creels would be torn from his shaltie's back and the contents sent "fung" at the foemen's faces.

THE MEN FROM GLENLIVET (18)

The hardy inhabitants of the Glenlivet district were notorious for their cattle-lifting propensities, their raids being sometimes carried into the heart of Morayshire. "Bochail" was their well known and much dreaded war-cry. They followed their feudal chief, the head of the Clan Gordon, and were generally on friendly terms with all his people. In the earlier part of last century they made their final foray across the Bogie, harrying the lands of Druminnoir and carrying off much cattle and plunder. At the farm of Bogieside, where resistance was made, they "set the corn-yard a-bleezin and bun' a'body aboot the toon, carryin aff a'thing they could lift, pots and pans, cogs and cheese-chessils." That night they encamped on the Muir o 'Rhynie and "heild an awfu' splore," drinking and dancing to the bagpipes far through the night, but they were "up and aff afore screech o' day," leaving a huge pile of useless plunder behind them. The Rhynie people were apparently on very good terms with these lawless catterans although they declined a share of the proffered spoil, and permitted the Druminnoir people to remove whatever they wished from the outlaws' leavings. Several articles were never reclaimed – in particular one big iron baking girdle is still retained as a relic by the Andersons of Pourin.

In earlier days, Gilderoy and his band occasionally paid the district a visit. He had hiding places both at Coreen and in the Cabrach, and a cave on the Tap. Several other notorious freebooters also came from long distances but seldom gained much by the enterprise. In 1689 a score of fierce catterans from Lochaber suddenly dashed into the heart of Aberdeenshire, lifted six score of black cattle, and drove them off. Fifty well-armed horsemen were soon in eager pursuit, but although Lochaber was more than a hundred miles away, so skilfully did these wild Highlandmen conduct their retreat amongst the hills and mosses that the Aberdonians only came up with them at Dalunchart, beyond Loch Erricht in their own country where they were bivouaced around a huge fire and roasting part of a beast they had slaughtered. Not wishing to shed blood, the farmers offered them a bag of meal and a pair of brogues for each animals, but the fierce Lochaber men contemptuously told them to be off or they would take from them the meal and brogues as well as the cattle. Further parley was useless, so the fighting at once began, and in a few minutes the Lochaber men were shot down and the cattle recaptured.

In the earlier part of last century the inhabitants of the districts from Upper Strathbogie to Strathdon deemed it prudent to pay tascal money to a certain Michael Dunbar for playing the spy upon cattle-stealers, and recovering their cattle. This Michael Dunbar would appear to have been originally an outlawed Jacobite. For some time he had a gang of broken men as desperate as himself in his service. With these he encountered and defeated various bands of freebooters, and also lifted cattle on his own account from other districts.

On one occasion a party of Highland reivers carried off three score "nowt" from Rhynie and Auchindoir. Michael Dunbar, with his men and a posse of farmers were soon on their track and found the catterans encamped in the wild glen of Culsh above the Andersons' farm at Kildrummie. One man was on the watch whom Michael despatched with a stab of his dirk, the others were asleep in a long tent. Michael placed the

farmers on either side to shoot all who issued from the furthest end of the tent, then he and his best right hand swordsman, each with claymore and target (the latter having a dagger spike fixed in the centre) entered at the other end. Michael, being left-handed, took the right side of the tent, while his man fought on the left. "And then began a murder grim and great." Michael's instructions were to "see and keep the livin in front and leave naethin but deid ahin," and in the darkness the two desperadoes made terrible havoc, most of those who escaped from the tent being s hot by the farmers. More horrible still are the stories related of Michael's doings amongst the red-coats, whose detachments were working on the military roads.

Dunbar is said to have crawled into their tents or quarters at night and placed his hand on the mouths of the sleeping soldiers while he dirked them to the heart. Towards the end of his career he waylaid and murdered travellers in the most cold-blooded manner. He died in an old house in the parish of Kearn, and it is related that one day the old woman who looked after him having gone out, leaving a little dog in the room, was horrified on returning to find the dying freebooter crawling after the dog with his naked dirk "Gaggerin' for bleed," he said, for it was "sae lang sin he leet the life oot o' onything." This terrible dirk he kept suspended at the foot of the bed in front of him, and pointing to it would say, "That's the durk and this is the haun' that leet oot saven sauls in ae night." On another occasion, when the minister or priest was with him and urging him to confess his crimes he is credited with saying, "I hae sinner't scores o' sauls but saxteen war the King's reid-coats, and surely that'll gang a lang wye tae clear me o' a' wyte wi' my Maker."

The Corrielaur catterans also attained great notoriety principally as receivers of stolen cattle. The head of the gang who held the farm was known as "Auld Corrie," and had a white shaltie to whose tail he was in the habit of attaching the halter of any beast he laid surreptitious hands on by night, and then sending them both adrift knowing that the pony would soon find its way to Corrielaur with the prize. Coming to Beggardykes at Kennethmont with his shaltie one night, he pretended to be "a peir man unco' dowie and sair for fouchen," and begged for a shake-down in the barn. A bed was offered him, but Auld Corrie declined the luxury and went to sleep amongst the straw. Next morning the farmer found him still sleeping, but discovered that during the night the "best beast aboot the toon" as well as the pony had been stolen. "I widna mind my ain loss sae muckle," said honest Beggardykes, "but I'm rale sorry at the peir man losin's shaltie."

Corrie was soon after this convicted, and tradition says he was lodged in Aberdeen tolbooth under sentence of death. Here he sent for his son and informed him of the exact spot on the hill where his hoard was hidden. Young hopeful found his way home and set out next morning with a spade to unearth the treasure, when who should he find sitting beside the now rifled hiding place but "Auld Corrie" himself, escaped from durance vile, who saluted him with "ah, ha, ma billy! The eggs are in anither nest noo!"

Another story tells of a poor beggar woman and her boy who came to Corrielaur one night and asked shelter. A woman gave them some food and told them they could sit by the fire for a little, but warned them to leave before the home-coming of any of the men. The woman of the house went out, and in her absence a score of armed men arrived.

The poor beggar woman and her boy ran to a corner behind some boxes and his themselves amongst a heap of newly-flayed sheepskins from whence they could hear the catterans arranging to carry off the cattle from several of the neighbouring farms during kirk time next morning (Sabbath), preparatory to starting with those already in their possession for the southern trysts. Soon after supper the reivers retired to rest; first "sainin' themselves" in Roman Catholic fashion, but some of them going outside left the door open and the terrified beggar woman tried to slip out. She was observed, however, and captured after a short chase.

A council was then held as to how they would dispose of her, and finally they are said to have taken her away and buried her alive in a moss pot. The boy got away unobserved and, seeking refuge at the nearest house, told them his story. Next day a strong party well armed – instead of going to the kirk – visited Corrielaur but found only a few people about the place and no trace of the beggar woman, and although there was a great collection of cattle they could not say how they had been come by, as Corrie frequently "boucht nowt" in quite a legitimate manner.

Some writers are anxious to claim an exceedingly ancient and uncertain Continental ancestry for the Gordons. Logan, however, writing in 1830 says: "The Clan Chattan, do indeed say they sprung from, or were connected with, the Chattans of the Continent, but the Gordons, The Frazers, the Menzies and the Ruthvens have no traditions of their descent from the Gorduni, the Frissii, the Menapii, or the Ruthveni of Gaul." And whatever may have been their origin, it is as an essentially Scottish race that they have attained to honour and distinction.

Adam, the first of the name in the North, is said to have married the only daughter and heiress of David de Strathbogie, thus having a double claim on his Northern possessions. He was without doubt one of the most able and far-seeing men of his time, and by his wisdom laid the foundation for the future greatness of his house. It is said that, finding the country in a state of starvation, the result of civil war, he imported a great quantity of meal and bestowed a boll on every person adopting his surname, by which means he both relieved the prevailing destitution and gained the gratitude and attachment of his people.

Most of his successors fell fighting for their country, until in 1402, on the death of Sir Adam at Halidon Hill, there was but is daughter Elizabeth left to represent his family. At this time, however, there were also living the celebrated Jock and Tam Gordons, although whether they were natural sons of Sir Adam or of Sir John who fell at Otterburn, or whether as many content, they were the legitimate grandsons of Sir Alexander, will always be a disputed question. Tradition states that Elizabeth the heiress declared that she was the only true Gordon amongst them, 1all others being but bastards or bow-o-meal Gordons." This lady married Alexander Seaton, who adopted the name of Gordon, and from whom descended the noble family of Huntly.

The two other Gordons – viz, Jock o' Scurdargue and Tam o'Riven – whatever their origin, proved themselves brave soldiers and fearless men, being generally recognised as the clan leaders, and from them have descended many nobles and gentlemen whose gallant deeds have added much to the lustre of the family name. Both Jock and Tam, as well as two other less famous brothers, were the possessors of considerable estates, as the ballad states:-

Jock of Scurdarg had houses grand
In Bogy, Mar, and Buchan land,
Straloch, Pitlurg, and Auchindoir,
Cairnbarrow, Buckie, and Lesmoir.

Deach, Sauchin, and Keithock mill,
Of Tam of Ruthven owned the will;
Balveny, Cults, and Cluny Moir,
Auchindroin, and many more.

To Jock o'Scurdargue the Gordons are indebted for their well-known motto, "Byde, and -!" or, as generally written, "Bydand." Word of some depredations committed on his lands having been brought suddenly to this fiery chief as he sat at meat, he sprang to his feet in a rage, jerking his dirk from its sheath. For several

minutes he stood speechless contemplating some terrible revenge, till, raising the weapon, he uttered the words, “Byde, and -!” then struck his dirk furiously into the table. After this the words “Byde, and - !” followed by a menacing gesture, were used by the Gordons to indicate that vengeance was in store.

Jock and his descendants were said to be known by the peculiarity that they would never speak or answer over the s shoulder, but always turned their front full to their interrogator.

Of Jock’s great castle at Scurdargue not one stone remains upon another, although a farm house of the name is supposed to be near it ancient site.

Tam o’Riven was also a great warrior, and fought, amongst others, with the Abbot of Grange and his retainers for the possession of some land in Balloch Hill. He was furthermore famous for being the father of eighteen sons and the possessor of a “lucken han” (web-fingered).

As illustrative of the power and influence of the House of Gordon, Knockespock states, in his notes to Thom’s poems, that in 1813 the duke could ride 140 miles on his own property, his vast possessions extending from the East Coast of Aberdeenshire to Ben Nevis on the West, while at his marriage 44 lairds of his name and clan sat down to dinner with him at Gordon Castle.

THE SURNAME IS ALMOST UNKNOWN (20)

The Gordon race appears to be steadily disappearing from the rural districts in which, formerly, lay its chief strength. Many fine old estates have passed into other hands, and comparatively few of the landed families are Gordons, save by assumption. In Strathbogie there are very few farmers of that patronymic and, in the village of Rhynie, once a stronghold of the clan, there is but one solitary and recently settled family. The Gordons appear to have a singular fatality of ending in female representation.

CRAIGBEG (21)

Craigbeg (little rock) is a narrow pass, between the shoulder of the Tap and the Ord Hill, down which dashed the "merry Essachie." The scene of Lulach's last struggle, it has always had an uncanny reputation, and since the Cabrach road was cut across the steep face of its northern brae, a good many accidents have occurred from horses suddenly "reistin," or taking fright in the dark, without any apparent cause; for, of course, horses can see spectres and apparitions not discernible to their drivers.

THAT HOWE WHERE THE BLACK BEAST IS FEARED (22)

In this howe of Smi'ston was situated the Goodman's croft dedicated to the evil one (Note 8), and a hideous reputation for sights and sounds, gruesome and uncanny, appertained to the spot long after its cultivation.

A great unearthly "black beast," of uncertain shape, was supposed to make nocturnal journeys between Bogie, or Smi'ston's dam, and the hill. Presumably, the monster was of the Kelpie breed; anyway, it was admittedly a "fearsome sicht," and its appearance to a farmer was the sure precursor of "ill amo' the owt," if not of personal sickness. The "black beast" however, was but a mild specimen compared with some of the horrors which this devil-dedicated howe could on occasions exhibit. A skeleton sitting on the dyke, an open coffin on the path, ghosts, dead-candles, spectre funerals, and latterly hearses – all betokening impending bereavement or death – were more to be dreaded, and sixty or seventy years ago a batch of jovial farmers, returning happy from Huntly market, would sober down strangely, and fortify themselves with strong pinches of sneeshin, and the frequent ejaculation. "Gweed preserve us frae a' ill!" before crossing the dreaded howe, in which the sudden appearance of a sheep on the dyke, or of another equally startled wayfarer, has set many a superstitious rustic running and roaring as if the devil were indeed at his heels.

The cxxi Psalm, repeated aloud, was considered the best safeguard against these uncanny apparitions, now relegated to the past.

A few years before Goodman's croft was turned over by the plough, a curious little man, very old and wrinkled, built himself "a wee fell-an'-stene hoosie" on its unhallowed ground. Who he was, or where he came from, was a mystery; nor could anyone understand how he lived for, except pottering and about his cottage and pulling weeds, he did no work, nor did he purchase any victuals. He answered civilly when spoken to,

but shunned all society. At night he was frequently seen sitting on the "lum" of his "hoosie" gazing intently at the sky. There could be but little doubt he was a professor of black art and a wizard of high standing. After a while he was missed, and someone venturing to all found the little man very ill of smallpox. In his house were meal and provisions in plenty; also lots of big books, bundles of herbs, and strange instruments. A "forcey unman" was prevailed upon to act as nurse, and found her patient very mild and tractable, but as soon as she set her foot outside the door, he would begin talking to some invisible being in a strange tongue. Having to leave the house one evening for several hours, the nurse was astonished on returning to hear two voices conversing in the unknown language, and on entering found a strange gentleman dressed in black, sitting by the bed. On looking at the stranger closely, she observed to her horror that he had club feet or, as she felt certain, cloven hoofs, encased in leather, while the terrible glitter in his fiery eyes left no doubt that she was in the presence of the enemy of man. Presently there came the sound of wheels; the gentleman in black went out and, peeping after him she just caught a glimpse of a black coach, drawn by sable horses, disappearing in the gloom.

During the night "the auld mannie wore awa," and having, with fear and trembling, performed the last offices to the dead, she set off to Rhynie to tell the news. Several villagers, including the "vricht" with al his "strachtin-brod" and measuring-rule, returned with her. To their surprise they found a braw coffin already there, and all the books, herbs and instruments gone. It was decided to "lift" the remains next forenoon, and a few neighbours gathered to assist at the interment. The lid was scarcely screwed down when up came a great hearse to the door; two mutes entered, removed the coffin and placed it silently in the vehicle. Both then climbed on the box and the hearse began to move, slowly at first, but with increasing speed, so that no one could keep up with it, and in a short time it was out of sight – at least, so says the legend – and at this time, be it remembered, there were no wheeled vehicles in the district; consequently no roads worthy of the name, and no hearses nearer than Aberdeen or Elgin.

In moist weather a long streak of mist frequently lies in the howe and may have given rise to the story of "spectre hosts" supposed to be the ghosts of dead Highlandmen flying from the field of Harlaw, concerning which battle many legends and traditions survive, as well as a number of rude, but eloquent ballads in the lowland tongue, and the Prosnacha cath Gariach in the Gaelic, commencing:

A chlanna Cuinn, cuimhnichidh
Cruas an am na h'iorghuil, etc. etc.

Composed by Lachlan MacNuireach, bard of Donald of the Isles, to animate his fierce clansmen before the battle.

A well-known tradition in the district affirms that on their way to Harlaw, each of Donald's Highlanders planted a "birk-wand" in the soft ground between the farm of Old Meldrum and the burn. The survivors, returning after their defeat, each pulled up a wand and, seeing what a great number were left, broke into the wildest lamentations; hence the place is still called Leerichielaw.

RUINS OF LESMOIR (23)

Lesmoir Castle, built in 508, belonged to a branch of the Scurdargue family, its lords being famous as well for scholarly erudition as for soldierly bearing and skill. A very interesting Latin ms. Written by one of these old knights, treating of astronomy and the influences of the heavenly bodies is in the possession of the Congregationalist Minister at Duncanstone. The Lesmoir Gordons, like those of Birkenburn and Minmore, boasted the fesse chequy on their shields, in token of alliance with the Royal Stuarts. After holding a high

position in the county for several hundred years, they became heavily involved, and about the middle of last century were forced to sell their estates which, after one or two transfers, were purchased by the Duke of Gordon. The family of Lesmoir Gordons is now supposed, like that of the famous Glenbucket and several others, to be extinct.

The castle was formerly a place of great strength, surrounded by a moat. It is now an unshapely ruin, most of its massive walls having, with the vandalism of the age, been used in the construction of farm houses, but what is still standing is of great thickness, and splendidly built.

THE CASTLE OF CRAIG (24)

Another place of extraordinary strength, overlooking the beautiful and romantic "Den of Craig," was commenced in 1510 by Patrick Gordon, a scion of the Scurdargue family, who fell at Flodden.

Many strange stories are told of the old castle and of the warlike chiefs who held sway within its walls, but their line is now extinct, the second last laird having been the last real Gordon.

At the entrance to the castle are the old "heidin steens" from Lesmoir; inside can be seen the sliding panels referred to at page 41; also the "hangin' cleek," on which tradition says the old lairds executed summary punishment on insubordinate vassals; while some time ago a secret chamber was discovered nearly full of skeletons and decaying human remains.

KILDRUMMIE CASTLE (25)

The ruins of this once royal residence are amongst the most interesting in the North. Formerly it had seven towers, five storeys in height, connected by battlemented walls, and enclosing over three Scots acres. Part of the lofty "sna' toor" still remains, and is evidently of great antiquity. A subterranean passage is said to have afforded egress from the castle dungeons.

In the neighbourhood are a large number of curiously constructed Pictish houses underground.

The celebrated siege and betrayal of the castle in 1306 is an incident of wonderful interest in Scottish history.

As the seat of the powerful Earl of Mar, Kildrummie was the centre of the Jacobite rising in 1715. A chain of chieftain's castles, at almost equal intervals, extended between it and Corgarff, which latter was garrisoned by redcoats from the year of Culloden till 1831.

THE DON (26)

A fine salmon river, 44 miles in length, passes through the principal estates of the Forbeses, who have been a very numerous and powerful clan in this region as far back as there is any record, and who have either given a designation to, or received their name from, the parish of Forbes.

Concerning the origin of this word are many amusing tales, such as the turning of wild pigs into pork by Ochonchar the Irishman who, by virtue thereof claimed the country, designation, and coat-of-arms – "for boars." Then there is the story of Bess, the beautiful heiress (surname unknown) and her poor but valiant sweetheart who slaughtered a savage boar and saved her father, all "for Bess." The surname however is evidently territorial and derived from the Gaelic Ferbasach or Ferbass, daring and fearless, and such the Forbes clansmen have proved themselves in many a well-contested struggle.

The slogan of this clan, "Lonach" (high-swelling) is derived from a small hill in Strathdon, where they once obtained a decisive victory, and where the annual muster of the Forbes Highlanders is still held.

It was in a large measure owing to the great exertions of Lieutenant Colonel Gordon Forbes in 1787 that the gallant 74th Highlanders so speedily completed its establishment. The regiment was then dressed in the Grant tartan (discarded in 1809 for the ordinary uniform of the line), but on the restoration of its Highland designation in 1846 it received the Forbes tartan (trews) and continued to wear this until the re-organization of 1882, when its title was changed to the "2nd Highland Light Infantry," and its tartan to the Mackenzie-Macleod.

DRUMINNOIR (27)

Was known as Castle Forbes for several centuries, having been the stronghold of the Earls of Forbes until the present Castle Forbes was built at Putachie in the parish of Keig, when the Strathbogie estate was sold to

an old family of the Strathspey grants under its ancient Gaelic designation. The site of the old castle was at some little distance from the present mansion, and the burn of Kearn filled the moat by which it was completely surrounded. It is said to have had a tower of immense height from which a watch could be kept on Rhynie. This, however, appears an impossibility. The ancient castle was destroyed by fire but the great entrance tower of immense thickness, with armorial bearings carved over its huge doorway survived the conflagration, and was carefully rebuilt on the site of the new Elizabethan mansion of the Foularton Grants.

KEARN (28)

Kearn (Cairn) is said to have been so named from the heap of stones which marked the grave of some Pictish prince of prehistoric fame. Although now attached to Auchindoir, Kearn had formerly its own parish kirk, and
a ludicrous ballad yet commemorates the connubial misery of one of its ministers. The kirkyard, which is very old, possessed a more than usually alarming stock of ghosts and dad-candles, so that most people preferred cutting across the fields after dark to keeping the road. It was also said to be tenanted by a hideous ghoul, termed the “erth-hun”, who feasted on the dead, and whose teeth could be heard crunching the coffins ere the mould was covered in.

Sixteen barons of Forbes are said to lie in the old kirk-yard and for several years their burial vaults were used by smugglers who took good care that the kirkyard ghost and dead-candle were frequently en evidence.

THE GREEN-COATED FAIRIES (29)

The level haughs of the Bogie are marked in many places by circular velvety patches of brighter green where the fairies were supposed to have danced in the moonlit nights. “Good neighbours” indeed were these little folk to their particular favourites, but generally mischievous and spitefully inclined. Their existence was believed in by not a few of the last generation, and many little misfortunes and annoyances attributed to their unfriendly influence.

Yet the ”Doinne-ma” were to be pitied. They had to render an annual tribute of children to the infernal regions, so to save their own offspring they were always on the watch to steal “unchristened weans.” They also endeavoured to substitute their own weakly babies for fine healthy specimens of the human race, so that between the birth and baptism of a child great precautions had to be taken, and a most vigilant watch kept on the recent arrival. Nor was it safe for the mother to venture out in the gloaming until she was “kirkit”, for the “little folk” would surely cast a glamour over her and lead her in a dreamy trance to suckle their own

meagre infants in fairy land; from whence, in an hour or two, the poor mother would return dazed and weary, unable to nourish her own child.

Various incantations and superstitious forms were used to circumvent the schemes of the fairies, such as tying a hair-tether round the bed, marking the sign of the cross on the threshold, windows, hearthstone and bed door, waving an open bible three times, etc. etc.

Curious silver brooches whose magical virtues could baffle all the spells of fairyland, were also much prized. One such talisman, which has long been in the family, is in possession of the writer's brother, and was in great request amongst the neighbours when "an addition" was expected. Originally this trinket came by marriage from the Rosses.

The Fairy Brooch

DUNNIDEER (30)

Dunnideer, like the Tap (on a reduced scale) is a green conical hill, surmounted by a vitrified fort, within which are the ruins of an old castle said to have been built by King Gregory in the ninth century. According to tradition the hill is a huge fairy treasure house, so full of gold that everything about it is impregnated with the precious metal, and the sheeps' teeth become gilded when they browse on its pastures. Evidently Dunnideer was a residence of Pictish royalty, and a place of importance in the early ages.

Mention is made of it by several ancient writers, and its castle appears, along with those of Strathbogie and Rothiemay, in John Hardyng's map of Scotland 1465, with the intimation that it was one of the places where King Arthur held his Round Table.

LOCHABER NO MORE! (31)

Who can describe the feelings awakened in the heart of the Fiorgael by the solemn music of the ancient and mournful dirge now thus generally designated. Fitting only for the bagpipes, transposed probably to a funeral march from the unmeasured and agony-stricken lament of a hoary pibroch, whose pathetic origin has long been lost; but bearing in its every note the throbbing voice of sorrow, lamentation, and eternal parting; it has for ages been to the Celt the interpretation of his soul's intensest agony; and its wordless notes, like the most thrilling of his ancient pibrochs, speak to his heart with overpowering eloquence, solemnised by a thousand sacred traditions and mournful associations. Lowland and even Highland poets have sought to wed trumpery words to its music, but the Gaelic speaking Celt, who alone understands and reveres its sanctity, knows t hem not or despises their profanity.

Such an effect had it on the brave old 92nd when "Bonnie Geordie Gordon," the Vth Duke, asked the pipers to play it as the Battalion embarked, that the marching ceased, every other noise was hushed, soon tears began to fall, and there was scarce a dry eye in "the pretty regiment." Many of the young lads from Badenoch and Lochaber covered their faces with their hands, as they stood in the ranks and sobbed aloud. From that day to this the pipers of the Gay Gordons have never sounded this sad melody, save over the dead, or when some veteran officer bade the gallant regiment good-bye.

In the Seaforth Highlanders it is only heard over the grave, the last tribute of affection to the fallen comrade ere the earth covers him.

After the funeral volleys have been fired, and the accompaniment of martial music has died away, the Seaforth pipers encircle, and stand over the open grave, and there sound their wailing dirge of "Farewell to the Brave." At no other time is it heard, its practice being restricted to the small chanter within closed doors, or in some remote glen, and the feelings with which a Seaforth or Gordon Highlander can hear what, to him, is a dirge so sacred and solemn, played with carelessness and levity by others may be better imagined than described.

AUCHLINE (32)

The Smiths of Auchline were members of an old family, long resident, and still numerously represented in this neighbourhood, who trace their descent from the noted "Harry o' the Wynd".

One of Harry's descendants, who went as armourer to the Mackintoshes, having quarrelled with that clan, settled at Banchory, from whence his descendants spread widely over the county, and acquired certain estates at Banchory, Inveramsay and Auchline. In Clatt, Rhynie and Auchindoir they became so numerous that it is said 100 from these parishes successfully contested a football match at Old Aberdeen.

Amongst their number was one renowned swordsman and athlete, "Kurst Rob," about whom many stories are told. On a later occasion, 42 couples of Smiths, each pair mounted on one horse, as was then the custom, are said to have appeared at a wedding of one of the family at Mytice, Rhynie. Curiously enough – although farmers – most of the Smiths had each his own anvil, at which he kept up an acquaintance with the trade of his forefathers.

The Smiths appear to have generally favoured the Jacobite cause. "The Heraldry of Smith in Scotland" says (page 26): "The Inveramsay Smiths were notorious Jacobites, and more than once proscribed for their attachment to the Stuarts." In the '45 Peter of Auchline took the field for Prince Charlie. Shortly before this he had married Annie Gordon, either a ward of, or in some way connected with, the Wardhouse family, whose lair presented him with a sword. Wardhouse himself, although but newly married to Miss Smith of Methven, was enthusiastic in the Stuart cause, and equipped for the field along with his particular friends, Forbes of Brux and Lumsden of Ardhuncar (commonly termed "The Turk o' Towie.") Happily for Wardhouse, the Duke of Gordon was able to restrain him from taking part in the disastrous enterprise, but he was unmercifully lampooned by the local poets.

Brux, although proscribed, escaped safely, but "The Turk" was killed at Culloden, where Bold Peter Smith also fell. Peter's wife, with some relatives, went to look for her husband, but all they brought back was the steel basket of his sword, cut in two places by tremendous blows. This relic is now in the possession of Peter Smith, the sixth in succession of that name.

The adventures of Bold Peter formed the theme of a number of rude verses, fragments of which have been strung together and completed, as far as possible, in the following ballad:-

BOLD PETER SMITH O' AUCHLINE

They hae met in the Wardhouse wuds,
Annie Gordon, fairest o' fair,
An' bold Peter Smith o' Auchline;
Nae young man wi' him could compare.

She has fastened his bonnet o' blue
Wi' the Stuart cockade so white;
He has sworn to her to be true,
An' for Bonnie Prince Charles to fight.

She has let him to Wardhouse ha',
For the young laird waited him there;
On bold Peter he buckled a sword,
An' said, "This for Charlie you'll wear."

"This sword with his daughter gave James,
The sixth of that true Royal line,
To Huntly, my kinsman, and now
Fair Annie and sword are both thine."

Smith bowed low and kissed the white hand
Of sweet Annie, fairest o' fair,
Then said, "All my kinsmen the Smiths
Shall the gay Gordon tartan wear.

"Weel kent are the proud Smiths o' Clatt,
All sprung from 'Old Hal o' the Wynd;'
'For their own hand' aye fight they yet;

A race bolder you will not find."

Twa score o' Smiths dance at their weddin',
Twa score o' gay Gordons were there;
The wa's o' Wardhouse were ringin',
An' bonfires lighted the air.

All drank to the health o' fair Annie,
They drank to the bridegroom a' roun,'
They drank to the chiefs o' the Gordons,
And Charles, the heir to the croon.

Now, Smith has gone up Bogie side,
Past Rhynie and on to the West,
For at Moidart had landed the Prince,
An' sent for the man he thought best.

So a letter* to Peter was brought
By a Hielandman trusty and strong,
Asking Smith to come quickly on,
And bring all his brave men along.

*This letter is still in existence. It was shown, with several other relics, to her Majesty Queen Victoria, on her visit to the West Highlands.

Then Glenbucket and Clova and Craig,
Dalspersie, Ardhuncar, Manar,
Lord Lewis, wi' Miltoun o' Noth,
Soon followed Auchline to the war.

An' mony a bonnie brow steuk
Fae the auld aucht and fourty dauch,
Buckled on his grandfather's# sword,
An' gathered frae hillside and haugh.

"My Gutcher left a guid braid sword,
Though it be auld and rusty,
Yet ye may take it, on my word,
It is baith stout and trusty.

Now, doon through the lowlands they've driven
The redcoats like sheep all about,
An' bravely the Gordons' braw pipers
Did skirl and blaw at their rout.

And then in old Holyrood's halls
Bonnie Annie and Peter are seen;
On battle-field smith had been bravest,
Of beauty sweet Annie was queen.

Laing tells us that on starting for Culloden, Forbes of Brux in particular "was well equipped with sword and dirk."

Fine collections of Culloden armour from the “Auld-an-forty” have been shown at bazaars both in Huntly and Rhynie.

Now over the Border all march,
To Derby press conquering on;
One step more and London was taken,
And Charles had mounted the throne.

They wavered, they turned back again
Woe, woe to the faithless and proud;
Back, back to the Highlands they came,
Still fighting, still victors, uncowed.

As they passed Strathbogie once more,
And feasted at Rhynie with glee,
To Auchline brave Peter went straight,
His bonnie young son there to see.

Culloden, they stand on thy muir,
Half famished, half clad in the cold,
Unrested, the proud clan o’ Gordon
Are mustered, but fearless and bold.

The snell wind blaws drift in their faces,
But thicker than hail drops the lead.
O fierce is the charge and the struggle
Till bleeding, or scattered, or dead.

Ochone! Ochone! dear Prince Charlie;
Alas! for the fate that is thine.
Ochone for the dead and the butchered,
And proud Peter Smith o’ Auchline.

An’ woe for fair widowed Annie
And her son now fatherless made,
For a’ she’s got o’ her husband
Is sword-handle wanting the blade.

That basket of steel with blue ribbon
She found ‘mongst a heap of the slain,
And the heirloom as priceless in value
Her kindred will ever retain.

Brightly shining it hangs on the wall,
Round it yearly blue ribbon is rolled;
It speaks to Smiths, father and son,
Of fair Annie and Peter the Bold.

Fierce old Glenbucket, the descendant of a brave and handsome race, and who finally escaped to France, was perhaps the most prominent Jacobite champion in the kingdom and the terror of the Hanoverian clans.

King George, it is said, entertained an especial horror of him, and would turn pale if his name was suddenly mentioned. At night the dread chieftain, draped in bloody tartan, came in a nightmare to the trembling monarch who would start in his sleep and cry frantically for aid. When calmed and assured of his safety he would say in his broken English – "I dink de great Glenbucket be coming!"

HEADS UP! (34)

Before the Seaforth regiment could take up its position in the line of battle at Kandahar, it had to move a considerable distance in quarter column under the shelter of a low narrow bridge. About the centre was a deep hollow which exposed it to the enemy's batteries on the Baba Wali Kotal, and as soon as the front of the column came opposite this depression the Afghan guns opened fire with great accuracy. One projectile tore up a long furrow between the second and third companies, and several shells which exploded a little beyond passed close over the column with a most appalling noise. The close proximity and the terrifying sound of these unpleasant missiles caused some of the men, principally the recruits of a draft lately joined, who now found themselves for the first time under the fire of artillery – to duck their heads in a rather undignified fashion. The colonel – a brave and distinguished officer, with a noble and lofty bearing, who never at any time betrayed the slightest sign of weakness was exceedingly annoyed. Turning in his saddle with disdain deeply marked on every feature, he scornfully surveyed the battalion, which was marching with splendid precision, and said in his calm haughty voice, "A good soldier only bows his head before his Maker! Have some of the 72nd forgotten to say their prayers until now?"

His stern impressive words went to every heart, but another minute added a relieving touch of the ludicrous, for as the next shrieking projectile came tearing overhead, another dashing and fearless officer called out in a voice of such compressed wrath as to provoke a smile, "Heads up! heads up, you d****d recruits!"

An hour later the old Seaforths were struggling desperately with ball and bayonet, amongst a maze of orchard walls and tangled vineyards, against the swarming hordes of ferocious fanatics.

There in the thick of the fight, leading a gallant charge, fell their fearless chief; and around him in the same wild rush went down many of his hardy and faithful Highlanders, the royal red of their bonnie tartan turning dark as it soaked in the rich blood, that a short time before had suffused some of their bright young faces with a burning blush.