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TRANSACTIONS

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Gu ma fada bàta aig an armunn fhial,
 A thug dhomh an t-aiseag mu'n ro-phailt a dh'iarr;
 Cha bu leisg a shaothair 'n aghaidh gaoithe 'n iar,
 'S chuir e mi gu sabhailt anns an ait 'm bu mhiann.

Ho mo bhata, &c.

'S tric a dh' fhalbh thu leatha air do tharsuinn siar,
 A' buannachd an astair a mach a' Lochiall
 'S tu air bòrd a fuairidh air 'm bu shuarach triall.
 A ghearradh nan cuaintean cho luath ris an fhiadh,

Ho mo bhata, &c.

'S Camshronach do shloinneadh, cha cheillinn sin uat,
 Do shliochd Iain 'ic Mhàrtuinn, bho 'n Bhràighe ud shuas.
 'S ann a Doch-an-phasaidh a thainig a chuain,
 'S bu mhath air chul bat iad 'n àm sgailceadh nan cnuachd,

Ho mo bhata, &c.

Every little occasion called forth a few verses either in praise, or with the more dangerous power of satire. These verses might not be heard of beyond the township in which they were composed. And they were a pure and simple pleasure, and an innocent pastime. Now the songs are frowned upon, and gossipry take their place. Prosaic influences are penetrating the glens—the newspaper, the English sportsman, the Cockney tourist, the daily steamer, and looming in the distance, the railway—declare that the spirit of poesy has all but fled from Lochaber, and ere she takes her departure let us kiss the hem of her shining garments, and bless her for the riches she had so freely lavished to gladden the hearts of the children of our people through all the days of the years that are gone, and let us prove our gratitude in redeeming from the moth and the rust the precious gifts she had bestowed, and which are about to be lost for ever.

Mr Alexander Macdonald thereafter read his paper, which was as follows:—

ARCHIBALD GRANT THE GLENMORISTON BARD.

Perhaps there is not a small glen in Inverness-shire—perhaps not even in any part of the Highlands of Scotland—that has produced so many singers as that little, narrow one that lies in a south-westerly direction between the western shores of Loch-Ness, and the borders of Kintail, namely, Glenmoriston. To account

for this would be undoubtedly a difficult matter, and would be considerably foreign to the object of this paper; but the fact remains none the less true, and at this time there are few families in that Glen who cannot trace themselves directly or indirectly back to local poets as their ancestors. In referring to those, I do not certainly mean to insinuate that they were composers of the first magnitude, but merely sweet, homely warblers, who gave expression to their inward feelings and their impressions from without, in strains peculiarly captivating to those among whom they moved and had their being. For there are poets for each stage of culture. Some of them we find addressing themselves to poets and novelists particularly; others to thinkers and scholars; and a third class to the common, more or less uneducated, members of the human family.

It is to this last class of poets that Archibald Grant, the subject of this paper, belongs; and it would be doing him and his works a most serious injustice to advocate for him a place even among the leading poets of Celtic Scotland. His station is with another class—that class that do not grasp the history and national traditions of the country of the Gael sufficiently to demand any other than a limited hearing. The productions of all those are to be considered as being more locally interesting than otherwise so; and it is as such that they are at all times to be judged. Grant's poems are particularly addressed to the inhabitants of Glenmoriston, and to the people of some of the neighbouring districts, upon the minds of whom only the Bard desired to impress his sentiments, and to whom, accordingly, he exclusively expressed his ideas. His mission was to those, and consequently many portions of it must be essentially unintelligible to outsiders.

I purpose to deal with the life of Archibald Grant in a two-fold aspect: firstly, his life as an ordinary individual; and secondly, his life as a poet. To understand to any extent my treatment of him as a poet, it appears to me absolutely necessary that I should give you as many facts relative to his life as I have been able to collect, and as will serve to be an index to his poetical nature and character.

Archibald Grant, the Glenmoriston Bard, was born in 1785 at Aonach, Glenmoriston, in a small country cottage, the ruins of which can still be pointed out. He was undoubtedly descended from noble and distinguished families. He was in direct relationship with the Grants of Glenmoriston, who are themselves from the same stock as the well-known Grants of Strathspey. The celebrated Archibald Grant of Glenmoriston was

our poet's great grandfather, while it can be certainly proved that strong ties of kinship existed between himself and the famous family of Glengarry, his grandfather, also called Archibald Grant, having been married to one of the daughters of Ardabiodh, a sister to Julia Macranald, the poetess of Keppoch, who was directly connected with the Glengarry family. Thus, it is clear that nobility and the elements of poetry were combined in the stock from which our Bard sprung.

Grant's grandfather was a man of no ordinary distinction in his day. He resided at a place known by the name of Tombealluidh, where he occupied a holding of considerable extent. In accordance with a custom then indulged in extensively by Highland proprietors, Glengarry placed his first born son, Aonghas Og, under the care of Grant during a certain period of his minority, in order that Grant should bring up the young gentleman, and give him the instruction then required. Grant felt proud of having such honour as this conferred upon him by Glengarry, and from the feelings of intense admiration that he entertained towards that gentleman and all that was his, he loved Aonghas Og most dearly, and never took him up in his arms without composing some lines in his honour. From the fragments of those come down to ourselves we can observe that Grant himself possessed the poetic faculty in no small degree; but I am not aware that he ever composed except when inspired by the enthusiasm of his affection towards his portégé. Now we fancy that we almost hear the good old Highlander breathing his strains anxiously and earnestly into the ears of the boy and saying—

Bobadh 'us m'annsachd,
 Gaol beag agus m'annsachd;
 Bobadh 'us m'annsachd
 Moch an diugh, ho!

Bheir Aonghas a' Ghlinne
 Air a chinneadh comannda,
 Bobadh 'us m'annsachd
 Moch an diugh, ho!

Bheir sinn greis a's Tombealluidh
 Air aran 'us amhlan,
 Bobadh 'us m'annsachd
 Moch an diugh, ho!

And again, how affectionately interested in the child the old man was, when he said:—

Ho fearan, hi fearan,
Ho fearan, 's tu 'th'ann ;
Aonghas og Ghlinnegaraidh,
'S rioghail fearail an dream.

Gu'm bheil fraoch ort mar shuaineas—
'Sann duit bu dual 'chur ri crann,
Ho etc.

'S leat islean, 's leat uaislean ;
'S leat Cuaich gu 'da cheann,
Ho, etc.

'S leat sid 'san Dail-Chaoruinn,
'S Coire-fraoich nan damh seang.
Ho, etc.

'S leat Cnoideart mhòr mheabhrach,
Agus Gleabhrach nam meang, Ho etc.

Should we conclude that it was when describing to the young man the pleasures of the chase that Grant sang—

Mo ghaol, mo ghaol, mo ghaol an giullan,
Mo ghaol, mo luaidh fear ruadh nan duine.
Cas a dhireadh nan stuc, o d' ghlun gu d' uilinn,
Lamb thaghadh nan arm 'dol a shealg, na mhonadh.

'O Chluanie 'n fheoir gu sroin Glaic-chuilean,
'Mhaol-chinn dearg thall gu ceann na Sgurra.

'Nuair theid thu do'n fhrith le stri do chuilean
Bithidh damh a' chinn aird gu lar 'us fuil air.

And it may have been, perhaps, when presenting Aonghas Og with his first kilt that Grant addressed the following lines to him :—

Theid an t-eideadh, theid an t-eideadh,
Theid an t-eideadh air a' ghille ;
Theid an t-eideadh, crios 'us feileadh,
Theid an t-eideadh air a' ghille,

Adding, in proof of his ever-increasing affection for the boy, the words :—

Cha cheil mi o dhuin' tha beo
Gur toil leam Aonghas Og a' Ghlinne.

This Angus Macdonald of Glengarry was in course of some time returned to his father, accompanied by 21 head of cattle,

which Grant parted with as a last demonstration of his affection for the young man. Memories of Grant's generosity continued to exist in the Glengarry family for generations after. On one occasion when the last chief that graced the halls of Caisteal-an-Fhithich was passing through Glenmoriston, Archibald Grant, the Bard, was pointed out to him. He frankly and warmly shook the Bard's hand, promising him some favours in recognition of the kindness which the Bard's grandfather showed long before to one of his predecessors. Angus Og was killed after the battle of Falkirk (1745), by the accidental discharge of a gun.

Archibald Grant's father, in more respects than one, deserves a passing notice. His name was John Grant. He passed a considerable portion of his life in the army, having been present in the capacity of serjeant at the memorable siege of Gibraltar, in which action he greatly distinguished himself by his bravery and courage. John Grant was a bard of no ordinary power. Many of his productions have been lost and cannot now be recovered; but some of his pieces that are yet to be found in the memories of the oldest persons in the Glen, are highly meritorious. In one of these he refers to his son Archie, the future bard, in a manner from which it can be understood that Archie's sarcastic effusions, addressed to his father when backsliding about the change-house, were taking some effect. Probably the father occasionally forgot to go home at the proper time, rendering it necessary by such conduct to have a visit from his wife and Archie, while enjoying himself with his cronies. This is what he says on the subject—

Iseabail 's Archie 'n drasda bruidhinn rium
 'S fheudar dhomh 'radha gur saighte 'n dithis iad,
 Iseabail 's Archie 'n drasda bruidhinn rium.

Ma theid mi 'n tigh-osa 's gun glac mi ann stop,
 Mu'n dean mi 'leth ol bithidh 'n toir a' tighinn orm.
 Iseabail 's Archie 'n drasda bruidhinn rium.

But by far the best song that John Grant ever composed was when the big sheep were introduced to Glenmoriston—an innovation in land management, to which he evidently was averse. On this occasion he said, apparently referring in the opening lines to one of the Grants of Glenmoriston, then deceased:—

Deoch slainte 'Choirneil nach maireann,
 'Se 'chumadh seol air a ghabhail;
 Na'm biodh esan os ur cionn
 Cha bhiodh na cruinn air na sparran.

Bhiodh an tuath air an giullachd,
'S cha bhiodh gluasad air duine ;
'S cha bhiodh ardan gun uaisle
'Faotuinn buaidh air a chumand'.

Tha gach uachdaran fearainn
'S an Taobh-Tuath s' air a' mhealladh,
'Bhi 'cur cul ri 'n cuid daoin'
Airson caoraich na tearra.

Bha sinn uair a bha sinn miobhail,
'Nuair bha Frangach cho lionmhor,
Ach ged a thigeadh e 'n raoir,
Cha do thoill sibh 'dhol sios leibh.

Ach na'm biodh aon rud ri tharruinn,
Bhiodh mo dhuil ri 'dhol thairis ;
O'n dh' fhalbh muinntir mo dhuthch'
'S beag mo shunnd ris a' ghabhail.

Bidh mi 'falbh 's cha teid stad orm,
'S bidh mi 'triusadh mo bhagaist';
'S bidh mi comhla ri cach
Nach dean m' fhagail air cladach.

Ach a Rìgh air a' chathair,
'Tha 'nad bhuachail 's 'na d' Athair ;
Bi do gheard air an treud
'Chaidh air reubadh na mara.

'S ach a Chrìosd anns na Flaitheas,
Glac a stiur 'na do lamhan ;
Agus reitich an cuan
Gus a sluagh leigeil thairis.

John Grant, however, did not emigrate as many others then did, though he seems to have fostered a lingering desire to leave the Glen at that time, seeing that the management of landed property was anything but promising to men in his station. He reconciled himself to the altered circumstances as best he could. A hymn composed by him on his death-bed, is to be found at page 159 of Archibald Grant's collection of songs. Its matter as a spiritual song is excellent.

Besides Archibald, John Grant had by his wife, Isabella Ferguson, one son and two daughters ; but none of them is known to have possessed the least development of the poetical faculty, except the one. In him was concentrated the whole of that

peculiar characteristic which the family inherited. His mother was quite an ordinary woman, though, as a rule, we find remarkable men having more or less remarkable mothers. There are several of her relations still in the Glen.

From the date of his birth till he attained to manhood, Archibald Grant passed his time in Glenmoriston, but not at school getting his mind informed; for in that benighted age the education of the young was little or nothing better in the Highlands of Scotland than many centuries previously. In his early manhood, Grant, entertaining a fond desire to become a soldier, joined the Glengarry Fencibles, at that time a body of quasi-volunteers raised by Macdonell, the then chief of Glengarry. The enthusiasm with which Grant entered into the exercises of this regiment was extraordinary. Doubtless his mind was early and forcibly impressed with the glowing tales of war and renowned achievements then current in the Highlands. These, along with the vivid descriptions of continental battles, which he would have listened to from the lips of his father, and the numerous songs sung from mouth to mouth in honour of heroes who flourished in the clan feuds of past times, displayed a tempting imagery of war and its glories, transcendently attractive to one, apparently naturally of a romantic and adventurous disposition. Nothing was so enjoyable to our Bard as the memory and occasional reproduction of the military manœuvres through which he was led in Glengarry; and after the dispersion of the Fencibles, Grant frequently recreated himself by initiating the young men of his acquaintance in Glenmoriston, on his return thither, in the mysteries of discipline, causing no small merriment at times by his rather unpolished use of martial language.

Grant's stay in Glengarry was but short. His connection with the Fencibles having terminated, he returned to his native country, where he betook himself to tailoring for a means of subsistence. We can hardly conceive that he could have selected any occupation that would be more unpropitious to the exercise and development of poetical talent, than that of which he made a choice; and perhaps the barrenness of his poetry, so far as observations on natural scenery are concerned, can, in no small degree, be attributed to the comparative confinement which his work necessitated, though certain it is that at that time tailors were entirely different from what they are now in the Highlands. Their system of work then was to go from house to house, attending here and there, as their customers required their services. We believe our Bard never became a very good tailor. His know-

ledge of the then existing fashions did not extend much beyond the making of trousers, and even in that he was rather deficient as an artist. But when supplied with soft, broad home-made cloth, and common stocking-worsted, he could perform his duty more or less to the satisfaction of his customers. There were two reasons on account of which he was employed, when others in his line were perhaps overlooked—first, that in that age people were not so refined in regard to dress as they now are ; second, Grant, on account of the delights experienced from his inexhaustible store of Highland legends, folk-lore, and traditional tales, would have had a double claim upon the patronage of the people. In his days that institution, which has in the past done so much towards the moulding of Highland character, and towards the growth of Highland aspirations—the Ceilidh—was in full swing, and Grant's society was doubtless extensively courted by all lovers of Highland manners and Highland history. Yet, with all these advantages, he does not appear to have hoped for much profit from the tailoring, and, to ensure a more substantial means of earning a livelihood, he commenced to deal a little in the selling and buying of cattle. He frequently refers in his songs to some of his experiences of the markets. From his speculations in this line he might have derived much gain, for, as a rule, he never spent money on the "keep" of his cattle. His policy in regard to this was to leave with the tenants all over the Glen sheep and other animals to feed for him, and I am not aware that they ever questioned his self-created right.

Thus, from market to market, and from house to house, Grant passed year after year of his life. His home was at Aonach where his sister, Catherine, kept house for him, he having never been married. While there his pastime probably was composing lines of poetry on all such subjects as every day's experience brought under his consideration. It is much to be regretted that many of those songs have been entirely lost, but a few fragments, not among his published works, are still heard sung by the older natives of the Glen. If at all able to rise and move about Grant never was known to be absent on the day of collecting the rents. Though he might not have any important business to transact at those meetings, yet he always liked to be present, as he says himself —

A chionn 's gu faighinn fhaotainn
Seasamh 'n taobh an rum ac'—
'S toil le triubhais bhi measg aodaich—
'S cha 'n e gaol na druthaig ;

Ach dibhearsan agus sgialachd,
 'O 'n is miannach leam e—
 'S dheanainn coir dhe 'n lach a dhioladh
 Gar a fiachainn sugh dhi.

Another motive from which he attended those gatherings was his desire at all times to see and converse with the justly beloved Macphadruig,* whom Grant loved and adored as the incarnation of all that was to him good and beautiful. More than one-half of his poems were composed to the name of this gentleman, who, in return, faithfully reciprocated the feelings entertained towards him by his family chronicler and bard. It may now, indeed, be said that Grant's passion for the esteemed proprietor of Glenmoriston amounted to a considerable weakness; but for this several extenuating excuses could be brought forward. Upon a time, when the rents were being collected at Torgoil, our Bard came the way, and finding that Macphadruig had left for Invermoriston, he exchanged a few words with the factor, who, seemingly did not show the same indulgence towards the Bard as he was wont to get. The following sarcastic lines in retaliation were extemporaneously produced:—

Ni mi cleas amadan Mhicleoid—
 Cha teid mi gu mod gu brath ;
 Gun Mhacphadruig a bhi romham,
 Cha b'e ceann mo ghnothach cach :
 'S ann air a bha beannachadh Dhia,
 'S cha b'ann air an riabhach 'bha 'na aite :
 Chuir esan 'n teaghlach dhe'n rian
 Mu'n robh e sios air Culnancarn.

These verses roused the ire of the factor, and the Bard, in alarm, apologised in verses to be found at page 120 of his Songs.

Towards the latter end of his life, Grant was attacked by rheumatic pains in his legs, and his sister having died, and he being left alone, removed from Glenmoriston to Stratherrick, where he resided in the house of a niece of his. His departure from his own beloved Glen, to a place in which he was necessarily a comparative stranger, must have cost him many a deep sigh. Glenmoriston was the cradle of his youth, and the world of his maturity; and can we doubt that sweet memories of his existence there entwined themselves around his aged soul as the ivy-

* Mac-Phadruig is the name by which every Chief of the Grants of Glenmoriston is locally known.

branches around a tree? But at that time Glenmoriston, much as he loved it, was partially losing its interest to him. The benevolent and kind-hearted Macphadruig had left it some time previously, and an advancing wave of what we now call civilisation was converting the people somewhat from what they used to be in their relation to poets and poetry.

In Stratherrick Grant lived for some years after his removal there. During that time he composed several songs, but they are all lost. Two years before the time of his own death he heard of the decease of Grant of Glenmoriston at Inverness. It is well known that the Bard composed a lament for his dead patron, which was never even heard in Glenmoriston. Soon thereafter Grant became subject to great confusion of mind. His powers of memory became perfectly useless to him, and, altogether, he was rapidly dissolving. He died in July of 1870, in his eighty-fifth year. When tidings of his death reached Glenmoriston all were struck with grief, as if they had lost a near and dear friend. In due time his remains were brought from Stratherrick and interred in the grave-yard of Clachan-Meirheard, Glenmoriston, where not so much as a stone marks his resting-place.

An trom shuaimheas
 Fo fhailean uaine,
 Tha corp an uasail
 Gun uail an tamh ;
 A cheann gun smuaintean,
 'S a bheul gun fhuaim ann ;
 A chridhe gun ghluasad,
 'S gun bhuaidh na' lamh.

With reference to Grant's death, the *Inverness Courier* of 21st July 1870, says:—"Last week the mortal remains of Archibald Grant, the Glenmoriston bard, commonly called Archie Taillear, were consigned to the grave. He was nearly a century old. The Bard, though totally uneducated, was full of traditional story, could compose very spirited verses of poetry; and his wit, humour, and fun were the delight of his countrymen at all meetings, such as weddings, funerals, christening banquets, and rent gatherings. He was a particular favourite of the late lamented J. M. Grant of Glenmoriston and Moy; and was so well liked in the Glen that he was allowed to graze so many sheep *gratis* on every farm. There is a general *tuineadh* for old Archie—

'Ach thriall e a chadal gu brath
 Gu talla nam bard nach beo.'

Grant was not a big man ; but was known far and wide for his activity. At athletic sports held in different districts around in his time, he was known to have invariably carried off the first prizes for the long and high jumps. When young and agile, he could at any time jump his own height. His person was altogether ordinarily well formed. His head was proverbially small, but high, somewhat pyramidal in shape. His features were good. He was rather eccentric with regard to his dress. He, as a rule, wore tartan suits, with a large white collar extending down to his shoulders, almost the size of our present cloth tippets. He was exceedingly fond of cleanliness, and possessed a very high estimation of himself; though far from being in the least ignorantly conceited. Though he was never at school, he learned somehow to write his own name. He never ceased deploring the total want of education from which he suffered. His memory was extraordinarily capable, and his acquaintance with old traditions and general folk-lore embraced the most of the leading families in the Highlands. He knew the local history of every district and village around for many generations back.

At home, Grant was usually cheerful, evincing a tendency towards a harmless display of homely wit. This is evidenced by the following lines, which he composed at a time when his sister and a neighbouring old maid were discussing the advisability of their attending a ball that was to take place in the vicinity, it having been in those days rather customary with elderly persons to appear at such entertainments. He, overhearing their remarks, said :—

Tha cailleachan liath a' bhaile 'so
 A' sior ruith gu ballachan ;
 Tha cailleachan liath a' bhaile so.
 A' stri ri fearaibh oga.

'Nuair 'bhios cach 's na rumaichean,
 Ag ol air fion nan tunnaichean,
 'S ann bhios mo chuidsa chruinneagan
 Gun fhuran ann 'sa' chlosaid.

'Nuair 'bhios cach gu surdail
 A' stracail feadh nan urlar,
 'Sann 'bhios mo chuidsa 's sgug orra
 'Nan suidhe 'n cuil na moine.

At another time while at home Grant was called upon by a

young man who required him to tailor a pair of trousers. His request was stated as follows :—

Gu ma fada maireann beo thu
 'Dhuine choir agus a thaillear,
 'Sann a thainig mi do d' ionnsiudh
 'S mi le m' thriusair air dhroch caradh ;
 'Chuid di air a bheil na cludan
 'N deigh rusgadh air mo mhasan ;
 Cha 'neil math dhuit m' fhaicinn ruisgte ;
 'S bheir mi ionnsuidh air do phaigheadh.

To this the poetical tailor replied :—

Tha thu thein 'do ghille tapaidh
 'S tha mi 'faicinn gur a bard thu,
 'S ma bhios mi na's fhearr de'n chnatan
 Ni mi a' gearradh a maireach.

In society Grant was a commonly pleasant individual ; but not, I understand, so liberal with his purse as poets are known everywhere to be. When treated well by others the only duty that he considered incumbent upon him to perform in return was the composition of some lines in praise of them, and in recognition of their kindness. He was at all times, it must be confessed, grateful for the slightest favour shown to him ; and almost anything was sufficient to form the subject of a song for him. At a time when he was passing along from the Glen to Invermoriston he fell in with a wood contractor, Mr Elder by name, with whom and his workmen he spent some time rather jollily. These gentlemen must have made a favourable impression upon the Bard, for we find him say of them :—

Daoine nach bu bheag oirnn,
 'Siorramh Dubh 's a Masonach,
 Nam biodh coinneamh eil' againn
 Air coille Mhaighstir Eildear.

But he apparently had a word of remonstrance given him by some old women, and his retort was :—

Bha na cailleachan a bha lamh rium
 Lan creidimh agus crabhaidh ;
 Ach dh' fhaoduinn's a bhi ann am Parras
 'Cheart cho sabhailte ri te dhiubh.

It was probably about the same time that he composed the following lines to the wood-cutters in the Glen, who were making a most unusual noise as he was taking the road :—

'Dol sìos no 'dol suas dhomh
 'Sann a bhobhar iad mo chluasan ;
 'Mar bha 'n airce dha 'bualadh
 'Sann tha'n fhuaim tha'n Craig Bhlairi.

Tha na h-eich air am pianadh
 " 'S paighidh 'feamain am fiarach ;"
 'Chuid nach marbhar le gnìomh dhiubh
 Ni Eas-Iarruraidh am bathadh.

A verse is amissing here, in which the Bard introduces a goblin, whom he supposes to have got so terribly frightened at the great noise as to have made up his mind to remove to another part of the country, where he would be entirely free from its influence—

Ach thubhairt am bochdan 's e 'tionndadh
 Gheibh mi ceartas 'san duthaich ;
 Tha fear Phortlàr air mo chulthaobh
 'N duine duthchasach gradhach.

His readiness in repartee and brilliancy in conversation were of a very high order. He chanced one day to fall into a discussion with the Rev. Mr Macbean, of Fort-Augustus, concerning Highland weddings. Grant upheld that dancing and music were absolute necessities for the general success of a wedding, quoting in support of his contention from Scripture that there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, at which the Redeemer of mankind was present. To this, however, the preacher objected: "Cha 'n eil an Scriobtar a radha gu'n robh ceol agus danns' air a' bhainis a bha 'sin gu ta," to which the Bard quickly replied: "Cha'n eil e 'radha nach robh."

At another time, on a certain Sunday morning, he happened to meet a Glenmoriston "character" known by the name of "Padruig Tailliar." Padruig was just then making his way home from the public-house, considerably the worse of drink; but being ready-witted, and a child of the muse in a small way, he saluted Grant with the following lines:—

Faillt us furan ort 'Illeasbuig,
 'S duine cleasail thu co dhiu ;
 Ach na'm biodh tu air seisean
 'S mi gu'n seasadh air do chul."

These words took well with Grant apparently, for the reply shows decided good humour. It runs—

“Moran taing dhuit a Phadruig,
'S duine gradhach thu codhiu ;
Ach a mheud 's a chum thu an t-Sabaid,
Ghabh thu sacramaid do'n lionn.”

Another of his sayings deserves notice. He was one day coming down the road between the Glen and Invermoriston when he saw a man on horseback riding towards him. For some reason or another he crossed from one side of the road to the other just as the man was passing him. Somewhat displeased at the Bard's conduct, the man asked him why did he not walk along the side of the road on which he was at first, to which the Bard quickly retorted—“Saoil nach fhaod mise 'n rathad a ghabhail air a tharsuinn, agus thusa do 'ghabhail air fhad.”

I now come to his poetical work. A special characteristic of his works is that the most of his songs were inspired by the individual character and actions of men whom he himself admired. We can trace this feature in many more of our bards than one ; and must look upon it as having had its beginning with the family chroniclers of ancient times. Our poets could be divided into a few classes ; among which would be numbered pre-eminently that class, from times immemorial, employed as family historians to our chiefs.

A perusal of Grant's works proves that his *forte* was in praising and describing the virtues and deeds of such men and women as appeared to him great and worthy of his notice. We must not, however, suppose that the virtues of individuals were understood by him as by a Shakespeare or a Pope. A poem revealing the peculiar traits of the human mind, or one even moralising upon the uncertainties of life and the destiny of mankind on earth, would have no audience in the Highlands of Scotland some years ago ; whereas a production tracing a man back ancestrally for generations, linking him with a Goll, a Cuchullin, or a Diarmad, and extolling him for the part that his ancestors and he played on the stage of war, would have met with a most cordial reception from all. This was the criterion by which poetry was judged by our forefathers ; and a poet, to meet the requirements and taste of his age, would have to understand his surroundings, and reconcile himself thereto. Grant naturally composed in the strain which his place and age called forth. Were he living now, probably his book would contain very different matter from what is now to be found within its covers. His book, however, is both entertaining and instructive. No minor

bard can be mentioned whose works show such a thorough knowledge of general Highland history as Grant's. From the mythologies of the Feinn to the legendary and traditional tales of recent dates, he knew almost all, adding thereto a considerable sprinkling of actual Scottish history.

His descriptive faculty is comparatively high, but to a certain extent misapplied. Had he produced a greater number of poems and songs upon the subjects generally embraced in what is classically known as pastoral poetry, I make bold to say that he would have been astonishingly successful. From the efforts that he did make in this direction it is easy to observe that natural scenery, with its many beautiful and glorious manifestations, breathed and spoke to him in that peculiar, heaven-born language only to be interpreted by the gifted poet. Let the following lines, in which the Bard addresses his beloved, and discourses on the magnificence of the hills, woods, and glens of his native country, speak for themselves :—

. . . . 'Sa ghleannan uaine sluagh gu'n chas,
An t-uisge dluth a' sputadh blath ;
'Sam barr ga bhuaibh cho luaith air fas—
Cho nadurrach 's bu choir dha.

'S an crodh air airidh-samhradh reidh
'S na laoigh 'sa' chro fo sgeod nan geug ;
Gach maduinn driuchd a' bruchdadh feur,
Roimh shleibhtichean nam Mor-eas.

A' bhanachraig og is coire fiamh
'Sa falt mu cluais le guailleann sìos ;
Gu lubach fainneach, bharr air sniomh
'S gach ciabh air dhreach an oir dheth.

.
Na h-eoin a' leum bho mhiar gu miar,
'Sa ribheid fhein a'm beul gach ian ;
'San doire gheugach spreidh ga'n dian,
Is sian cha d' thig na'n coir ann.

.
Cubhag dhubh-ghorm feadh nan gleann
'Seinn gugùg air stuc nam beann ;
'Sa mhan le muirn gu lub nan allt
'S gu abhmaichean nam Mor-eas.

'S ni 'n coileach turraraich moch 'sa' Mhart
 'Sa burrachdail air gach torman ard ;
 'San liath-chearc 's i na fiamh da 'gheard
 Air fairidhean nam Mor eas.

Smudan 's e ri turs 'sa' choill—
 'Sann 'shaoil le cach gu'n d' fhas e tinn ;
 'Sa smeorach 's i ri ceol d' a chaoidh,
 'Si 'n duil nach beir i beo air.

'S chit' aig anamoichead nan trath
 'Grian a boisgeadh thair gach mam ;
 'S na minn 's na h-uain air spuaic nan carn
 'Sa garleas mu'n nam Mor-eas.

Yet, even in these verses, it will plainly be seen that more attention is given to animate than to inanimate nature. But this must not be considered a great fault, for a poem touching upon the beauties of the earth, like a landscape painting, is never complete without the introduction of animation into its details.

The love element of Grant's poetry is particularly interesting. He must have been, in common with other poets, extremely susceptible to the influence of feminine beauty; and I have reason to believe that no earthly sight could affect his inmost soul more than a beautiful, fascinating woman. She appeared to him on his own confession—

Mar a' ghrian a bhiodh air sleibhtean,
 'Nuair bhiodh na speuran gun smal orr'
 Beagan mu'n d'thig an oldhche,
 'Us i 'toir boisgeadh air gach bealach.

Numerous quotations could be added, each interesting as throwing light upon the Bard's manner of passing time in the society of the fair sex. They are still living in Glenmoriston whose names are associated with some of the Bard's love adventures.

There remains one conspicuous feature of his poetry still to be referred to, namely, sarcasm. Sarcasm, of itself, is no part of true poetry. Yet, in the mouth of a poet, sarcasm has often been found to prove a powerful weapon for the suppression of corruption and crime. Grant, happily, had no cause to exercise his sarcastic wit particularly for this object, but he always thought it his duty to treat any incident of local interest with that saturation of sarcasm that never fails to take effect where the whole matter is to be understood. From a number of songs composed

from this impulse, I quote a few verses to show his success in this respect. The composition from which they are reproduced concerned an accident which befell three men of his own acquaintance on their return from Falkirk, where they had been attending a cattle market. The accident with which they met was that they lost the steamer in Glasgow, which was to take them home, and this, of course, inconvenienced them much in those days of limited travelling facilities. When the tidings came to the ears of Grant, he was in no way disposed to sympathise with the unlucky trio. He rather took occasion to make the whole country laugh at them, when he said:—

'S ghabh sibh gu port an Glaschu
'Chumail coinneamh ri luchd chasag ;
'Nuair nach d' rug sibh air a' Phacaid
Bha sibh airsnealach gu leor.

'S truagh a dh' eirich do na chaiptean
'Bh' air a "Ghlen-Albinn" nach fhac iad ;
'S gun deanadh iad a dh-or a sgapadh
Na dheanadh beairteach e ri 'bheo.

Rachadh iad timchioll na Maoile,
Sud am beachd a bh' aig na daoine,
Gus a faiceadh iad gach ioghnadh
A bha'n taobhsa dhe'n Roinn-Eorp'.

Bha iad a g' inns' ann an tighean
Gu'm bu chloinn iad do Dhiuchd Athol,
'S gun robh iad 'sa' h-uile rathad
'Gabhail aighear agus spors.

'S thainig iad do dh' Inbhiraora,
'S chur Mac Cailean orra faoilte ;
Gun robh carpatan d'a sgaoileadh
Agus aodach air gach bord.

Ach labhair a *waiter* gu h-iargalt'—
" 'Sann agaibh tha na coin chriona ;
Gar iongantach nach e mial-choin
'Th'aig cloinn iarlaichean air rop."

'S fhreagair iadsa gu briagha,
" Gur e th' againne coin ianaich
Thainig a talmhainnean fiadhaich,
'S cha'n fhac' thu h-aon riabh dhe'n t-seors."

Ach gur e *waiter* bu ghlice
'S labhair e re each gun fhios doibh—
“ Cha chreid mi nach fhaca mis 'iad
Anns an Eaglais Bhric le drobh.”

Thainig naigheachd 'an taobh-tuath so
Le cho fad 'sa' bha iad uatha
Gu'n canadh gach neach a chual' e
Nach robh na daoine uaisle beo.

It would be unnecessary for me to expatiate further upon the several other elements constituting Grant's poetry. His patriotism pervades all his works so fully that a paper could be written upon that alone. I now feel that I have said quite enough regarding himself and his songs. Perhaps I should state, however, before concluding, that some useless repetitions and cripple verses apparent in his book are traceable to his utter want of education. His songs were published under great disadvantages. Among other things, an extraordinary feeling of religious belief was taking hold in Glenmoriston just as they were being collected, which proved directly against the success of the undertaking. The book, undoubtedly, contains many grammatical mistakes and printer's errors which could have been avoided. But if we were not possessed of the songs of Archibald Grant, as they are, it is most probable that we should be without them altogether.

3RD MARCH 1886.

On this date Mr Angus Fraser Macrae, 172 St Vincent Street, Glasgow, was elected an ordinary member. Thereafter Mr P. H. Smart, Art Master, Inverness, read the first part of a paper on “Celtic Art.” As Mr Smart is to take up the subject on a future date, we do not give the introductory part in this volume.

10TH MARCH 1886.

On this date Mr William Maccord, Collector of Customs, Inverness, was elected an ordinary member, while Mr Colin Chisholm, factor's office, Highland Railway, was elected an apprentice member.

Thereafter Mr William Mackay, solicitor, Inverness, read a paper entitled—