

STRATHGLASS

Chapter from Vol. 1 of the book *'The Catholic Highlands of Scotland'* written by Dom. Odo Blundell, OSB., FSA, Scot. Published 1909

When writing of Strathglass on a previous occasion¹ I mentioned that "from the Reformation until the beginning of last century, the Catholics in the Aird and in Strathglass received no more support from the two chief families of the neighbourhood, namely, the Frasers and the Chisholms, than was to be expected from the heads of clans who looked upon all their clansmen, whatever might be their religion, as members of their own family." It would, however, appear that, for some time at least after the change of religion on the part of the Parliament of Scotland, the Laird of Strathglass retained the old Faith, for I find that "in 1579 Thomas Chisholm, Laird of Strathglass, was summoned before the Court for his adherence to the ancient creed." This fact was brought to my notice by a pamphlet "A Memoir of the Mission of Strathglass," which is a faithful reprint of an earlier one published about fifty-five years ago by the late Mr John Boyd, founder and publisher of the Antigonish Casket. In the Introduction we are told that "the exact date of the Memoir cannot be ascertained, as the date on the title page is missing. It could not, however, have been later than 1851, for the late Bishop Fraser, of blessed memory, who died in the October of that year, was living at the time, as may be seen by the pamphlet itself. The author certainly knew what he was writing about. The pamphlet was reprinted last year in order to rescue from probable oblivion a very interesting chapter in the history of the Catholic Church in the Highlands of Scotland."

¹ "Ancient Catholic Homes of Scotland," p. 96,

It is pleasing to find so much interest taken in the country of their adoption by the former inhabitants of Strathglass, who will no doubt be pleased to learn that the pamphlet, of which the authorship is thought to be unknown, was composed by Rev. Angus Mackenzie, priest of Eskadale, whose original notes are still in the possession of his successor in the Strathglass mission. The memoir will be found in full in the Scotch Directory of 1846.¹

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

The fact that the Laird of Strathglass suffered imprisonment in 1579 is important as showing that he set the example of steadfastness to the ancient faith. When his descendants later conformed to the State religion, the inhabitants of the glen adhered to their first resolution, and hence Catholicity has always prospered there. Another cause which favoured the maintenance of Catholic traditions and rendered possible the erection of churches and of the priest's house here, when they were proscribed in other parts of Scotland, was that there is no main road through this glen to the west coast. At Fasnakyle the chapel was situated where it could only be approached by the road leading from the lower end of Strathglass, eighteen miles distant. This will, no doubt, account for the fact that while the entire territory northwards, and the other adjacent districts, with a few exceptions of modern date, embraced and still cling to the innovations of the so-called Reformation, the inhabitants of Strathglass should from a comparatively remote period form so singular a contrast by their uniform adherence to the Catholic Faith. It is amongst the earliest recollections of the oldest people yet living (1846) that a native Protestant could hardly be met with in the district.

During the interval between 1580 and 1600 the period marked by the renewed activity of the Jesuits in Scotland the spiritual destitution of Strathglass attracted thither their zealous attention. The severity of the laws, however, and the activity of their pursuers, forced them to retire from the district. From the date of their departure, this mission must have been for a length of time without a pastor. According to the tradition of the present inhabitants, the interval between 1660 and 1680 is the date of the revival of the Catholic Faith in Strathglass. This revival was effected by the conversion of Colin, son of the Chisholm of Strathglass who settled at Knockfin, and was the first of the family afterwards styled "of Knockfin." This circumstance

became known to the missionaries who about this time found their way to Glengarry, and two of them repaired immediately to Strathglass. They were received by Colin of Knockfiu, who informed them of his own conversion and of the friendly disposition of his father. Finding thus a confirmation of the reports which they had previously heard, they determined to settle in the country. Of the state of religion in Strathglass at this period, or of the Apostolic labours of these priests, nothing more is known than that they opened two stations, the one in a remote locality near Knockfin, where a humble chapel must have been built, as the place to this day is called Achada- na h-eaglais (the Church field), the other about the centre of the district, at a place called Clachan Comar. The walls of the chapel are still five to six feet in height, whilst the old holy water font remains, and has been placed at the entrance to the chapel. The graveyard round about is most closely filled with graves, and indeed the situation of the whole is most picturesque, being encircled by a belt of trees and placed in the centre of the beautiful fertile strath.

The next priest who is known to have served this mission is a Mr M^cRae, of whose history we only know that he was the immediate predecessor of Mr John Farquharson. Of Father John a good deal is known, and yet it is little less than a national calamity that far more is not known. He was, according to Browne's "History of the Highlands," the first person who made a collection of Gaelic poetry. His collection contained all that Macpherson collected, and other pieces besides. In reply to questions by Bishop Cameron, Rev. James Macgillivray, who had been a student at Douai under Father John, stated that he recollected very distinctly having heard Mr Farquharson say that he had all these (Macpherson's) poems in his collection; that he never saw Father John at a loss to find the original in the MS. when any observation occurred upon any passage, and that he heard Mr Farquharson often regret that Macpherson had not found or published several poems contained in his MS. and of no less merit than any of those laid "before the public; that Mr Farquharson came to Scotland in 1773 leaving the MS. in the Scots College of Douai, where Mr Macgillivray had occasion to see it frequently during his stay there till 1775 ; but, he said, it had got into the hands of young men who did not understand Gaelic, and was much tattered, and several leaves had been torn out ; that the late Principal of the College who was then only a student there, remembered very well having seen the leaves of the mutilated MS. torn up to kindle the fire of their stove. When we remember that Father Farquharson at his arrival in Strathglass did not know Gaelic and had there to begin a systematic study of it with the assistance of Mrs Fraser, of Culbokie, we can form some idea of the labour of forming such a collection, which was "in folio, large paper, about three inches thick, written close and in a small letter." The destruction of this manuscript was indeed a great loss, as the poems collected during Father Farquharson's residence of thirty years in Strathglass might have contained many pieces of local interest, besides those published by Macpherson. During this long stay of thirty years, Mr Grant in his "Braes of Mar," assures us that the natives of Strathglass fondly loved Mr John--Maighistir Ian, as they call him ; and they welcome warmly, even now, a Braemar man for his sake. They tell many wonderful anecdotes concerning him, says Mr Grant in the above-mentioned work, p. 228, and he then relates the following, which I will give in his own charming, half -Gaelic style.

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

clerach in terror swooned away, and did not recover till the good father, no way dismayed on his part, stood beside him with his raiment all properly adjusted.

Maighistir Ian had often enough hard times of it. The clerach would then sally out to forage, and would, alas! more frequently than desirable, return emptyhanded. While he was thus employed one evening, a beggar applied at the priest's door for alms. One small basinful of meal was all the house contained, but Maighistir Ian would share to the last with the poor, so, as he held the basin to give away the half, his whole store some way fell down into the beggar's bag.

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

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

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

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

But the clerach sits by the fire in great dumps, chewing the cud of bitter reflection, instead of masticating strong kail brose. You might have easily seen that he considered Providence's providings grievously below the mark. Hark! a tap is heard at the door, the clerach runs forth, and finds there a man on horse back, who, without speaking, hands him a bag, and rides away through the night. The bag was big-bellied and ponderous, the bag emitted a savoury odour, the bag made the clerach's mouth water as he emptied it, tearing out its contents with both hands on the table before his master. And truly it contained very many excellent things of the eatable order, and truly the clerach regaled himself with Maighistir Ian on the rarest viands. "Another time, clerach," quoth the priest, "you will know better." As to the purveyor of the feast the strange horseman you will learn without any wonder that he was never heard of again.

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

Born in 1699, he had entered the Society of Jesus at Tournay. Towards the end of October 1729 he landed in Edinburgh, and presumably passed at once to Strathglass. We have Bishop Cameron's authority that he worked thirty years in the Glen, say till about 1759, when he was appointed Prefect of Studies at Douai. Here he remained till 1772, when he went to his nephew's residence at Inverey. He died in 1782.¹

¹ Celtic Magazine, January 1782,

It was but a few years before his death that the following incident occurred. It seems that at the Scots College at Douai, the sons of Episcopalian Jacobites were not infrequently received. One of the last of these was the amiable Colonel Spens of Craigsanquhar. He died in 1848 at the age of ninety. When Spens was at Douai, Father John Farquharson was superior a man so my authority says of elegant manners, and much respected by every one. He was an accomplished scholar, and so popular amongst the people that at the breaking out of the French Revolution, when the clergy were in great danger, his escape and that of the

Scottish students was facilitated by the inhabitants of the town. He escaped with them in disguise, and after many perils succeeded in reaching England. Colonel Spens used to relate that once standing at his own door he saw in the distance a tall, handsome man of fine presence coming up the avenue. Viewing him through a glass, he said to his wife: " If I thought he were alive, I should say that that was my good old tutor, the Abbe ; but I fear that he has perished." However, his surmise was a true one, and he immediately had to welcome his ancient instructor. I give the account as it appears in the Edinburgh Review (January, 1846), although there must be some error in the dates, as authentic records tell of Father John's death in 1782.

The late Mr Colin Chisholm, who was conversant with all the traditions of Strathglass, published in the Celtic Magazine, January 1882, most interesting details regarding Father John. From this we learn that "in order to avoid detection as a priest, Father Farquharson used to dress in the kilt and tartan hose like the men of the district, and was so dressed on one occasion when celebrating Mass in his sacerdotal in the old meeting-house at Balanahoun, when a party of soldiers entered the building. Over and over again I heard an eye-witness, at that time a young lad, and who was along with his mother on that occasion, describe the distressing scene as follows: As soon as the red -coats came in at the door, one of them, whom he called Sergeant Rushard (Richard), rushed up to the altar and told the priest that he was his prisoner. At this moment all the men in the house started to their feet and vowed that they would bury every one of the soldiers in the floor of the house. Now came the priest s difficulty to keep his congregation from attacking and slaughtering his captors. By his great command over his people he succeeded. But seeing the men forming into a solid phalanx outside, and determined to release him, Father John turned round, drew an imaginary line on the ground, and forbade any man present, on pain of instant excommunication, to follow him across that line. The ladies of the congregation construed the threat as directed only against the men, and they accompanied their pastor for about a quarter of an mile, to a spot where they had to cross a small burn called Alt-a-bhodaich. Here Mairi ni 'n Ian Ruaidh, great-grandmother of Rev. Hugh Chisholm, now priest at St Miren's, Paisley, ¹ darted in, close to the side of Father John, and took the maniple off his arm. Encouraged by her success, an aunt of the late Bishop Macdonell, of Canada (Mairi ni 'n Ailean), got hold of the chasuble, and when in the act of pulling it over the priest s head, she received a sabre blow from one of the soldiers, which cut her head, and felled her, bleeding, to the ground. The wound did not prove fatal, but Mairi ni 'n Ailean felt its effects for the rest of her life. When her grave was opened many years after her death to receive the body (I think of her husband), her skull was discovered to have been cut, and the two edges of the bone seemed to have joined again as if dove-tailed together like the teeth of a hand-saw.

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

After this sword-stroke the soldiers crossed over the old wooden bridge at Fasnakyle, and handed Father John a prisoner to the Chisholm on the green at Comar House. By this time a great crowd had gathered. The Chisholm invited Father Farquharson to walk upstairs and join the ladies, while he himself had his influence taxed to the utmost endeavour to keep his people and the soldiers from imbruing their hands in each others blood. The above statement I heard repeatedly from an eye-witness Colin Chisholm, senior, formerly tacksman of Lietry, Glencannich."

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

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

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

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

¹ Celtic Review, December 1884.

"At Dingwall, 27th April 1743.

" The Presbytery do appoint their Commissioners to the ensuing General Assembly, to lay before the said Assembly the following brief representation respecting the state and growth of Popery in their bounds, particularly that the Presbytery do find, besides Mr John Farquharson, a Jesuit Priest, who, for several years, resided and trafficked in the Chisholm s country as a Poppish Missionary, that there is one, Alex. Cameron, brother to the present Laird of Locheale, who hath lately settled in the part of Strathglass that pertains to Lord Lovet, and is employed as a Poppish Missionary in that neighbourhood and Glenstrathfarrar, and trafficks with great success ; and he hath great advantage by his connection with the inhabitants of Lochaber, which gives the people in these corners, wherein he is employed, occasion to suppose that it is in his power to protect them and their cattle from the invasions of the people of that country, or to avenge himself upon them by their means, *by which the few Protestants that are there* are much discouraged, and kept in perpetual terror; that several arguments and methods are said to be used by him that would more become a country where Popery had the advantage of law in its favours than places that are under a Protestant Government, by all which means the Presbytery do find that a greater number have been perverted to Popery in those parts within these few months than thirty years before. The Presbytery do instruct their Commissioners to urge the Assembly to take the matters above mentioned to their serious and reasonable consideration, and endeavour to procure the Assembly's particular recommendation to the Committee for Reformation of the Highlands to take special care for providing these corners, not only with a well- qualified preacher, such as is there presently employed, but also with a Catechist and schoolmaster, and that the Assembly give proper order for executing the laws against the said Messrs John Farquharson and Alexander Cameron, and that the assembly use their interests with the superiors and heritors of the parishes of Killtarlitie and Kilmorack, to protect the Protestant religion in their bounds, and discourage, by all reason able and likely means, the Roman Catholic religion."

As we have already heard of Father Cameron under Lochaber, of which he was a native, let us now see Father John Farquharson in a new *rôle*, that of poet at the expense of the notorious Simon, Lord Lovat. Again Mr Colin Chisholm is our authority,¹ who says, " it is evident from the very plain terms in which he addressed and warned his neighbour (Lord Simon) that he had no very high opinion of him. His lordship had incarcerated the priest's clerk in the "Red Dungeon" at Beauly for fishing salmon in the river Glass, at Fasnakyle, about twenty miles above the Falls of Kilmorack.

¹ Celtic Magazine, November 1881,

His reverence went to obtain the release of his clerk, but my Lord Simon was obdurate, and refused to open the door of the cell. It will be seen that the priest was very displeased, but he was not to be foiled by any old or young sinner; consequently, he fulminated the severe censure embodied in the subjoined verses against his lordship.

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

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

Mr Farquharson, in the words of our Memoir, was soon enlarged, and returned once more to Strathglass, where he continued for several years serving the mission. At length he retired to his native country, Braemar, where, according to the charming inscription on his tombstone, "he spent the evening of his days as chaplain to his nephew, Alexander Farquharson, of Inverey, and died at Balmoral, 22nd August 1782."

Father John Farquharson was followed by Father Norman M^cLeod. Further than the recollections of his holy and edifying life, the history of the mission during his incumbency affords no other facts than that he built a rude chapel, but suited to the circumstances of the times in which he lived. ¹ At an advanced age he retired to Edinburgh, and was succeeded by Father John Chisholm, a native of Strathglass. He was born in Inchully in February 1752, and was early sent to the Scots College of Douai, then directed by the Jesuits. On their expulsion from France he went to the novitiate of the Order at Tournay. When the Jesuits were suppressed in 1773, he returned to Douai College, which by that time had been entrusted to the secular clergy.

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

Regarding his stay at the Jesuit Novitiate, he thus writes to a friend in 1807, fifteen years after his consecration as Bishop: " I wish I was allowed once more to begin my novitiate; the only year I had of it was, I believe, the best of my life." From 1775 till 1792 he laboured with great fruit in the Strathglass mission, where his kinship with the laird was of great advantage to him. Indeed, very soon he so ingratiated himself with the Chisholm that it was no longer a matter of toleration to have a priest in the country. He successfully procured the respect of all the families of distinction in the surrounding districts, and was the first who made a breach in the rampant bigotry which had till then continued to strain on every side the Strathglass mission. At length his increasing popularity began to awaken the jealousy of the parsons, who now began to consult among themselves "what was to be done with the popish priest? " when a favourable circumstance, as they thought, presented itself. Father Chisholm had opened a station in the low division of Strathglass. The place which he was obliged to fix upon was in the immediate neighbourhood of a barn in which the Presbyterian missionary who came occasionally to that quarter preached. This was construed by the local Presbytery into a piece of effrontery that required an immediate check. They met, therefore, and it was resolved that the members of the meeting should head a party to seize the priest. But an untimely observation by one of the brethren, hinting " that they might set out on such a mission, but that

would not warrant the safety of their bones till they returned," daunted them not a little. The expedition was abandoned, and Father Chisholm was left unmolested.

Regarding the several small chapels at Fasnakyle, Clachan, Aigas, and Inchully, I find an interesting piece of evidence from a most unexpected source. A Mr John Knox in 1786 published " A Tour through the Highlands of Scotland." It is written with a strong anti-Catholic bias, yet at one point he says " that the (Protestant) clergy, when they do arrive at the preaching station, find the people in the same situation as themselves, drenched with wet, shivering with cold, and alike exposed to all the inclemencies of weather during the time of service, and on their journey back to their comfortless huts." He further informs us that " while the Protestant clergy are in this wretched condition, having neither dwelling-houses nor places to preach in, those of the Catholic persuasion in the Highlands have both, and which are kept in excellent repair." To which we might add that the Protestant clergy had always their stipend, small though it may perhaps have been, but that the Catholic clergy depended entirely on the alms of the faithful. Without doubt it is a most remarkable fact that despite so much discouragement not to mention absolute persecution on the part of those in authority, the Catholic Faith has been maintained in so many of the glens of Scotland in almost primitive simplicity. There is a charm about this simple religious faith which was a striking characteristic of both people and pastors as recently as fifty years ago, and of which the remains are still often to be seen.

In 1791 Father John Chisholm was appointed Bishop of the Highland district, and was consecrated by Bishop Hay on the 12th February 1792. He left the entire charge of the Strathglass mission, which he had served for seventeen years, to his brother, Mr Aeneas. Bishop John having fixed his episcopal see, like his predecessor, at the small seminary at Samalaman, thence transferred both his residence and seminary to Killechiaran, in the island of Lismore, where he died on 8th July 1814. Father Aeneas came to the Strathglass mission in 1789, and at first resided chiefly at his father's house at Inchully, where he built a small chapel, which stands to this day, but is now occupied as a dwelling-house. In 1793 he obtained the appointment of Father Austin M^cDonell to the lower portion of the mission, whilst he himself retained the upper district, in which he built at Fasnakyle a chapel on a far more elaborate scale than had been hitherto possible. Father Aeneas also extended his missionary zeal as far as Inverness, where in 1810 a room was procured, and as the congregation increased the work of attending to it was transferred to the priest at Aigas. Here Father Austin M^cDonell was much assisted by Mr Fraser, of Moulie, a convert to the Catholic Church, on whose property at Aigas a chapel was opened in 1801.

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

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

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

The ranks of the Catholics in the Upper Mission of Strathglass had been for some time becoming thinner, when Mr Angus Mackenzie wrote his Memoir; still the parent mission can look with complacency on the congregations to which it gave existence, namely, Eskadale, Inverness, Marydale, and Beaully. Of the two last

named, Marydale is the successor of the Fasnakyle chapel mentioned above. It stands at the junction of Glencannich and Strathglass, and was opened in 1868. The church at Beaully, which was opened in 1864, was, like that at Eskadale, built by Thomas, Lord Lovat, and is situated on land adjoining the venerable ruins of Beaully Priory.

In 1814 Father Aeneas Chisholm succeeded his brother as Vicar Apostolic of the Highland district, and removed to the seminary at Lismore, where he died in 1818. An interesting link between the old country and her Canadian daughter is afforded by a relic of these two holy bishops. It is thus described in the Tablet, 18th January 1908. " In Antigonish, an old woman brought out from her breast a beautiful pectoral cross, a peculiar cross with two cross-bars, like an archiepiscopal processional cross, with the inscription, 'S. Ignati, ora pro me ' on the reverse was, 'Sine peccato originali.' I asked if she knew anything of the history of the cross, She replied, 'No,' only that she had heard that it once belonged to the Easbuigean bana, 'the fair Bishops.' Now the 'fair Bishops' were Bishops John and Aeneas Chisholm, Vicars Apostolic, who are buried in the island of Lismore, near Oban. She had it from her mother-in- law, a Mrs M Quarrie, from the island of Eigg, in the Old Country, whose maiden name was Macdonnell. With these data, I wrote to the parish priest of Indique, Cape Breton, the Rev. Archibald Chisholm, who seems to have the Highland traditions at his fingers ends. I asked him if he could help me to trace the beautiful relic back to the 'Easbuigean bana' Mrs M Quarrie being a Macdonnell. I got a reply by return of post, stating that he had no doubt but the cross belonged to the 'fair Bishops.' They had a sister, who married a Macdonnell of Glengarry. She had three daughters: one married a man in Skye, another married a M^cQuarrie in Eigg, and a third came out with Father Macdonnell, who was afterwards first Bishop of Kingston, Ontario. She was not more than six weeks in America when she married an Allan M^cNab, who was later or his son Sir Allan M^cNab, Prime Minister of Canada, at Ottawa. This same priest has in his possession the book of the spiritual exercises of St Ignatius, as also a flask, which were once the property of Father John Farquharson in Strathglass." In the same letter to the Tablet the writer mentions his pleasure at finding "in the diocese of Antigonish 80,000 Catholics, of whom no fewer than 45,000 are Gaelic - speaking. . . . There are sixty Gaelic-speaking priests and fifty Gaelic-speaking nuns, at the head of whom is the venerable Gaelic-speaking bishop, Right Rev. John Cameron, D.D. What is equally satisfactory is that the best Highland Catholic traditions are nurtured and fostered by the people. Home Highland Catholicity cannot hold a candle to the sturdy Gaelic Catholicity of Nova Scotia."

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

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

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

It is wonderful that only twelve years after these and similar atrocities spread fear and terror through the Highlands, Hon. Simon Fraser should be able to raise 800 men for the service of the Crown, and that at a time when he was not possessed of an inch of land. To the above number were added 700 more brought by the gentlemen to whom he gave commissions. A large proportion of the whole were men from Strathglass. The memory of their deeds in Canada is still fresh in the Dominion, where they greatly distinguished themselves under the command of their natural leader Hon. Simon Fraser. In consequence of his services, the English Government promoted him to the rank of Lieutenant-General, and restored to him the family estates of Lovat, forfeited in 1746. Again, in 1775, General Fraser raised two battalions of 2,340 men, known as the Fraser Highlanders the old 71st Regiment. The General himself was a great favourite with all the men under his command, as also in Strathglass. Here are two tales from the pen of Mr Colin Chisholm, whose account I have followed in the preceding. John Macdonell, tenant on the Fraser estates, left Inchvuilt, in Glenstrathfarrar, to join the Fraser Highlanders. He was distinguished from his neighbours by the patronymic of Ian Buidhe-mor. The men, on the eve of their departure for the north, were assembled at Inverness, the transports riding at anchor in the Sound of Kessock ready to sail. They were all mustered on the south side of the Ness, and answered to their names. All were ordered to be in readiness to embark the following morning, and every precaution was taken to carry this order into effect; but under cover of night, our hero, John Buidhe-mor, eluded the vigilance of the guards and patrols in town. He, however, felt that it was of no use to attempt crossing the old stone bridge the only one at that time in Inverness; the river was in high flood, but John was not to be foiled. He went down to the large ferry-boat which in those days busily plied between the Maggot and the Merkinch. When he reached the boat, he found it firmly secured by a strong iron chain, fixed in a large stone, and locked. What was to be done? Neither chain nor lock could be broken without making a noise which might betray him. At last the happy thought occurred to him to try whether he could not move the stone into the boat. John, a man of herculean size and strength, succeeded in lifting it, and placing it in the craft, and having rowed himself quietly across, he left boat and stone in that position to sink or float as they pleased. With all the speed he could command, John went off to Inchvuilt, a distance of more than thirty-two miles from Inverness. He gave his wife and children some important instructions about the farm, bade them an affectionate farewell, and retraced his steps to Inverness.

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

¹ Celtic Magazine, July 1881.

Another Strathglass man in this distinguished regiment was Alexander Macdonell from Invercannich known by the patronymic of Alastair Dubh. His courage and daring seem to have been the admiration of the whole regiment. By the united testimony of his countrymen who served in the Fraser Highlanders and afterwards returned to Strathglass, it was recorded in the district that Alastair Dubh was one of a camp of British soldiers occupying some outlying post in Canada, where some of the contents of the military stores under their charge were disappearing in a mysterious way ; and the officers, determined to detect and punish the culprit, ordered the soldiers to watch the stores every night in turn until the thief was discovered. Strange to say, the first sentinel placed on this duty never returned. Sentry after sentry took his turn and place, not one of whom were seen again. One night the duty fell to the lot of some faint-hearted man, who, firmly believing that he would never return, was much disconcerted. Alastair Dubh, as compassionate as he was brave, pitied the poor man, and bade him cheer up, asking him at the same time what he would be disposed to give him if he would mount guard that night in his place. "Everything I have in the world," was the reply. Alastair did not ask for more than the loan of his bonnet, his top-coat, and his gun for that night only, all of which were readily placed at his disposal. Alastair began his preparations for the night-watch by crossing some pieces of wood, on which he placed his neighbour's top-coat and bonnet. He proceeded to examine the gun, and loaded it with two bullets. He then primed and loaded his own gun with a similar charge, remarking that such was his favourite shot when deer stalking in Strathglass. Alastair mounted guard at the appointed time, took his two guns along with him, one bayonet, and the dummy in top-coat and bonnet. He stuck the dummy in the snow within some fifty or sixty yards of the sentry-box in which he stood. Ordering the man he relieved to retire, he expressed an opinion that the contents of his two muskets would give a warm reception to the first two thieves who approached the stores, and that the bayonet would probably satisfy the curiosity of a few more of them. During the night he noticed a huge object, under cover of a thick shower of snow, coming towards the stores by a circuitous route, apparently with the view of getting behind the dummy. In this the monster succeeded, and getting within a few paces of it, he, tiger-like, sprang upon it, when both fell on the snow. The strange object was soon on its legs; but no sooner was he up than a couple of bullets from Alastair brought him again to the ground. After a minute's moaning and rolling on the snow he managed to get up, and attempted to reach the sentry-box, but Macdonell fired at him a second time, sending two more bullets through his body, which brought the monster again to the ground, this time to leave it no more.

By this time the whole garrison beat to arms, and soon crowded round the body of a gigantic Red Indian. A strong party was sent on the track made in the snow by the wild savage in his approach; they thus managed to trace and reach his cave, which was found guarded by a fierce Red Indian squaw and a young man, both of whom prepared to give battle. The woman was killed in the struggle to capture them which ensued. The soldiers ransacked the cave, and found every cask of rum, box of sugar, and other articles that had been stolen from the camp, either wholly or partially consumed, in the cave. Horrible to relate, they also found the heads of every one of their missing comrades in the dreadful place. Just as if exhibited like trophies, each head was suspended by the queue, or pigtail, then worn by the British soldier, from a peg round the inside of this charnel-house.

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

But such a body of men could never be raised in the same circumscribed area now, for even of so popular a corps as the Lovat Scouts only one squadron of 120 men comes from Strathglass. It was not, however, without some hesitation that at the beginning of the nineteenth century the clearances were effected in this district. We have heard of the " Easbuigean Bana "; it was the " Bhantighearna Bhan," -- the fair lady -- who long resisted the idea prevailing at that time of clearing off the smaller tenants and letting large tracts of land to farmers from the south. As a widow, she had the rental of part of the late Laird of Chisholm's lands,

and so long as she lived the small tenants were safe in their holdings. At her death, however, the best farms were let secretly, and half the inhabitants of the Glen were left without house or home, whilst later on only two farmers of the name of Chisholm were left, where before almost the whole strath had been farmed by them. For some years the Lord Lovat of the day received many of these on to lands in Glenstrathfarrar, but later this most fertile valley was devoted to deer also, and these are still in possession. Well may we look forward to the day when another " fair lady " may arise to give preference to the good people who long ago were such faithful Christians, such devoted tenants, and such sterling soldiers, as were those of whom the surviving traditions in Strathglass tell.

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

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

Antigonish Casket, 21st November 1907.