
Unpublished Poems by Alexander MacDonald (Mac Mhaighstir Alastair)

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THE CELTIC REVIEW

APRIL 15, 1908

UNPUBLISHED POEMS BY ALEXANDER MACDONALD (MAC MHAIGHSTIR ALASTAIR)

Professor MACKINNON

I. *Variant Versions of Poems already Published.*

THE name of Alexander Macdonald stands so high in Gaelic Literature that any poems which can be proved to have been composed by him must possess the greatest interest to students of Scottish Gaelic. The belief has always been persistent that only a portion of the great poet's compositions has ever been printed. John Mackenzie, who had sources of information not now available—he was, eighty years ago, in communication with an old man, Duncan Mackenzie, who in his boyhood was a pupil in Macdonald's school in Ardnamurchan—makes an explicit statement on this point. Mr. Mackenzie (*Beauties of Gaelic Poetry*, p. 105) writes: 'We have good authority for saying that a tenth of these poems have not been given to the world. His son Ronald had them all in manuscript; but having published a collection of Gaelic poetry, and not meeting with much encouragement for a second volume he allowed his MS. to be destroyed. Dr. M'Eachen, a friend and connection, had the mortification of seeing leaves of them used for various purposes through the house.'

We need not lay too much stress upon the fraction (a tenth) so confidently condescended upon by Mackenzie; but the general statement that Macdonald composed many poems

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which have not hitherto been published is undoubtedly correct. It is gratifying to know that a large portion of the MS. here spoken of has escaped destruction. Among several MSS. sent to the Highland (now the Highland and Agricultural) Society of Scotland, when a committee of that Society was making inquiry regarding the authenticity of Ossian's poems, was that now labelled LXIII. in the Advocates' Library Collection of Gaelic MSS. I read this MS. some twenty years ago, and afterwards gave a brief account of it, with an illustrative quotation, in the *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness* (vol. xvi. pp. 290-1). A closer examination of it made recently has satisfied me that this is beyond doubt the MS. of Alexander Macdonald's poems which was at one time in the possession of his son Ranald; and, further, that it is written in the poet's own hand, a fact which greatly enhances its interest and value. It is a paper MS. of small folio, or large octavo, size, and written about the middle of the eighteenth century. With the exception of one entry, which is not without significance, there is nothing to indicate the history of the MS. before it was sent to Edinburgh. Across the margin of p. 133 is written with a sharp pen, and in clear current hand, 'Mary M'Donald Eachen.' One would fain believe that this lady, who had a share in preserving this valuable document, was related to the Dr. M'Eachen mentioned by Mr. Mackenzie, and to the Angus M'Eachine, 'son-in-law of Boradale, and surgeon formerly to Glengarry's regiment,' who for a time accompanied Prince Charles in his wanderings in Morar (*The Lyon in Mourning*, Scottish History Society, vol. xx. p. 335).

As we now have it, the MS. is only a fragment. It is defective at the beginning, and also at the end. There are, besides, two gaps. It begins abruptly on p. 118. Pages 122-130, and pages 135-142, both inclusive, are wanting. The writing is thereafter continuous on to p. 184, which is the last. With the exception of a word or two, the MS. is written in the old Gaelic hand, and is probably among the last written in this script in Scotland. In 1747 Macdonald informed

Bishop Forbes (Scot. Hist. Soc., vol. xx. p. 354) that he knew of no one except old Clanranald and himself familiar with the old hand. But there must have been others, although by that time probably very few. The Mac Mhuirich *seanachie* of the day was one. Lachlan Mac Mhuirich declared, in 1800, that his father Neil received instruction in reading and writing history and poetry from the latter's uncle Donald, and that he could read the old hand well. This Neil was living when James Macpherson visited the Outer Isles. Alexander Macdonald must have known the man, for according to the son's testimony the poet and his son Ranald carried away some of the parchments which formed part of the library of these Mac Mhuirichs (*Report on Ossian*, p. 275). According to Dr. Donald Smith (*Report on Ossian*, p. 312) the practice of writing in the old Gaelic hand practically discontinued in this country some forty years before he wrote, the most recent specimen which he had himself seen having been written between 1752 and 1768. There is preserved a copy of Macpherson's Gaelic Texts written after 1807 in the old hand, carefully executed by a Mr. Sinclair, who presented his MS. to Sir John Sinclair, so well known in connection with the old *Statistical Account* and the publication of Macpherson's Gaelic Texts. There may be other fugitive efforts of a similar kind, but such may be disregarded in recording the practice of writing Gaelic in Scotland.

Alexander Macdonald wrote the old hand with ease. This MS. is well written in a large, clear hand, and, where the paper is not soiled, is quite legible throughout. The orthography is not quite so satisfactory. The correct and pretty uniform orthography of Bishop Carsewell, followed with fair success by Robert Kirk and the Synod of Argyll in their publications, was by the middle of the eighteenth century the accomplishment of but very few. Among these the poet must be included, for his vocabulary of 1741 and his poems of 1751 are, all things considered, well printed. But the credit of initiating a reform in the spelling of Scottish Gaelic is properly due not to Macdonald but to the Rev. Alexander

Macfarlane of Kilmelford, who, in his translation of Baxter's *Call to the Unconverted* (Glasgow, 1750), made a very successful effort in adapting the old traditional orthography to the sounds of Scottish Gaelic. This much-needed change was still further developed and perfected by the Stewarts and Dr. Smith in the translation of the Scriptures, and has since been adhered to by competent editors and writers of Scottish Gaelic. The orthography of the MS., except in a few instances where the reading is doubtful, is not here reproduced. The poet himself largely deviated from it in the 1751 edition of his poems. Most readers will be inclined to say that we have already a sufficient amount of bad spelling in Gaelic print. The only valid excuse for adding to the stock would be to provide reliable material for the scientific study of Gaelic dialects, and for this purpose the phonology of the MS. does not provide many examples which are not met with in the living speech. The most characteristic feature of the orthography of the MS. is the almost invariable use of *f* for *bh* in the case of the preposition *bho* (*o*), and its combination with the personal pronouns, *fo* for *bho, o*; *fuainn* for *bhuainn, uainn*,—forms which the poet himself discarded in print. Another is the suppression of the nasal, especially in the case of the article and the conjunction *gu'n* before *f, s, l, m, n,* and *r*, a practice which we might follow with advantage. The time-honoured rule of *leathan ri leathan is caol ri caol* is largely ignored in the MS.

The contents of the portion of the MS. now remaining consist of versions of four poems and songs already published, and many others hitherto unpublished, but which, with one doubtful exception, any competent student of the Gaelic poets would from internal evidence alone assign without hesitation to Mac Mhaighstir Alastair. It will be convenient to deal with the contents under this twofold division.

Variant Versions of Poems and Songs already published.—These are four in number: the well-known waulking-song, *Agus ho Mhòrag*; *Ho ro mo bhobug an dram*; *A Thearlaich*

mhic Sheumais; and *An Airc*. These are all to be found in the 1751 edition published by Macdonald himself; but, as most readers may not have easy access to that very rare volume, reference is here made to the edition of the poet's works now in the market, that edited by the late Mr. Donald C. Macpherson, of the Advocates' Library, Edinburgh, and published in 1874.

1. The MS. as we now have it opens abruptly on p. 118 with the eighth quatrain of *Agus ho Mhòrag* (*Poems*, p. 62) :—

Do chùl peucach sìos 'na dhualaibh,
Dhalladh e uaislean le 'lainnir.

The couplets follow thereafter in the same order as in the printed version, with an occasional variant of word or phrase. For example, the printed lines :—

Mo chion a dheanadh leat éirigh
Do Chaiphten fhein Mac Ic Ailein,

read in the MS.,

M' eudail a dheanadh leat éirigh
Sugh mo chéille Mac Mhic Ailein.

Again, the lines :—

Dhruideadh na Gaidheil gu léir leat
Ge b'e dh'éireadh leat no dh'fhanadh,

appear in the MS.,

Gheilleadh Domhnallaich gu léir dhuit
Ge b'e dh'éireadh leat no dh' fhanadh.

But the great difference between the printed version of this song and that of the MS. is that the former contains no fewer than fourteen verses not found in the latter. These are (*Poems*, pp. 62-5) Nos. 14, 17, 25, 26, 27, 28, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, and the last two.

2. *Ho ro, mo bhobug, an dram* immediately follows the song *Agus ho Mhorag*, on p. 120 of the MS., and continues to the foot of p. 121, giving eight quatrains in all. Then follows

a gap which no doubt accounts for the omission of the remaining five quatrains (*Poems*, pp. 119-120) of this song. The difference between the MS. and the printed version is hardly worth noting: *dram* is in the MS. written *drachm*; *och, och!* (third quatrain, first line) is in the MS. *Ho ro*. The last line of the same quatrain,

'S tu chuireadh an togail fo m' chuim,

reads in the MS.,

'S tu chuireadh mi 'm chadal am phlum.

In the sixth quatrain, line three, for *olamaid* the MS. gives *glumamaid*.

3. *Tearlach mac Sheumais* (*Poems*, pp. 116-118; MS., pp. 160-164). In connection with this poem Mr. Macpherson (p. 116) records a Lochaber tradition that, on the unfurling of the Royal Standard in Glenfinnan, the bard recited it, with Prince Charles sitting on his knee. It is the case that the poet was known to the Prince before this day. Bishop Forbes (*Scot. Hist. Soc.*, vol. xx. p. 352) relates the following incident; the bishop, be it observed, always speaks of the poet as Captain Alexander Macdonald:—'Captain Alexander Macdonald was on board the frigate in Lochannuagh before the Prince set his foot on the continent [i.e. *the mainland*], but he acknowledges he did not then know that the Prince was among the passengers, who being in a very plain dress, Captain Macdonald made up to him without any manner of ceremony and conversed with him in a very familiar way, sitting close by the Prince, and drinking a glass with him, till one of the name of Macdonald made him such a look that immediately he began to suspect he was using too much freedom with one above his own rank.' Mr. Macpherson justly remarks that the poem, as we now have it, must have been 'retouched' after 1745. In the MS. the last two lines of the first stanza are represented by *etc.*; the second stanza is practically identical with the print; the third stanza of the

print is not in the MS., but instead thereof are given the following seven not hitherto printed :—

Ach ged ghabh leis na blaideirean glaganach bòsdail,
 Chuir baidean beag Ghaidheal tri blàir air Rìgh Dèorsa,
 A dh' aindeoin a fòghlum 'sa leòsgair d'a chionn ;
 Gus na chruinnich na bh' aca ann am Breatunn 'san Eirinn,
 Ann am Flànri ri gaisge, 's Prionns' Hesse ri chéile,
 Gu'n chaill iad an spéirid gu leum oirnn le sunnd :
 Tha so dhuinn a' dearbhadh gu robh iad 'nan éigin ;
 'S na'n éireadh na Gaidheil lom buileach gu léir leinn,
 Gu'n ciosaichteadh Breatunn 's gu'n crùinteadh Rìgh Seumas,
 Le comhrag 's le tapadh luchd bhreacan an fhéilidh,
 'S bhiodh Deorsa 's a Reubalaich taruinn a nunn.

Gu'n do ghearr sibh an lagh sin a rinneadh le shìnsreadh,
 Mar shoileas ri Uilleam gu Seumas a dhìobradh,
 An deis duibh Rìgh Tearlach glan priseil a mhurt ;
 An crùn cha do mheal ach a h-aon diubh le dùrachd,
 De'n *lìne* cheart chinntich fìor-rìoghail nan Stiùbhard,
 Nach do bhàsaich ar tuagh, ar puinnson, 's ar cluip.
 De Mhairi 's de dh' Anna mar chleoc a' cur sgàile
 Air ar traoitearachd shalaich gu'n d'rinn sibh dà bhàn-rìgh'n ;
 'S gach neach d'am bu chòir bhì na shuidh' air a' chathair,
 A thilgeil air chùl mar dhiùbhaidh droch bhathair,
 Gus an d'fhuair sibh mu dheireadh torc teallaich nam muc.

Tha aiceid fìor-oillteil 'n'ur broinn nach faigh fòirinn
 Bho aon luibh tha toi(dh)ltinn an coilltibh no 'm mòintich,
 Mar tha 'n sannt a chaill còir dhuibh air a' ghlòir os ar cionn ;
 Cha'n 'eil leigheas ri fhoighneachd do na traoitearaibh mòr ud,
 A ni dhaibh-san sion cobhrach mur dean traoitichean òir e,
 Ann am boiseidibh dò-dhil mu chaol-druim an cuim ;
 Gach céir is gach *druga* dhiubh so a th'aig Deorsa,
 Bho'n tha chuid fein is ar cuid-ne aig' fo a steòirneadh,
 'G am bribeadh 's 'g an ceannach le h-airgiod 's le stòras,
 Gach neach tha gun sion air le rioghalachd shònruicht',
 Gu h-araid sliochd deamhnaidh sin Dhiarmaid¹ o' Duibhn'.

'Ur Dia 's 'ur Creideamh ar beagan de dh' òtraich
 A bhunnigeadh a creagaibh de leuganan òrdha,
 Gu'n chaill sibh air einntinn 'n 'ur rógairbh d'ur Prionns',

¹ If this Diarmad is to be identified with the hero of the Ossianic ballad, there will be at least two 'mentions' of the old Gaelic heroes in Macdonald's poems, the other being Cuchulainn (*Poems*, p. 23).

'Ur rìgh is ar rìoghachd a dhìobairt air stòras,
 'S 'ur n-anmannan priseil air bhriob thoirt do dheamhnaibh,—
 Bha 'n iobairt ro dhòlach, ge bòidheach na buinn.
 Biodh amhluidh sin dhuibhse mar thachair do Iudas,
 An coinneamh 'ur claiginn sibh a thuiteam le sùrdaig,
 'Ur mionach fo'r caol-druim a' sgàineadh 's a' brùchdadh,
 Chionn 'ur *tréus(on)* 's 'ur n-ain-disleachd d'ur rìoghaibh 's d'ur
 dùthaich,
 As na rinn sibh de bhùrach feadh gach sgùrr agus luim.

Bidh mìl' Anathéma is ceud Maranàta,
 Mu bhathais na béiste rinn Serlus a chàineadh ;
 Mar sin is na Gaidheil, sliochd ardanach Scuit ;
 Sliochd dàicheil Ghathelus d'an d'éigheadh buaidh làraich :
 'S co b' urra riu taruinn ann an caithream nan clàin,
 'Nuair a lasadh am mearrdhachd gu fearr-loiteadh tuirc.
 'N a leig sibh am baiteal ud Lòchaidh air dhearmad,
 'Nuair a bha sinn le'r lannaibh mar choirce 'g 'ur searra-bhuain ?
 Mar sin 's an Allt-eirinn 'ur *hero* triath Labhar,
 A dh'fhag Alastair euchdach gun spéirid gun labhairt,
 An reubalach breun sin le 'réisimeid churst'.

Sgap agus sgaoil sibh mar chaoirich roimh mhàrtain,
 An là sin Cillsidhe gu'm b' oillteil 'ur sgànradh,
 Gach fear 's e ruith teann 's beul cam air gu phluic :
 Bha Morair Ghlinn-garaidh 's e ruaig air Mac Caillein,
 Air muin a stéid sheanga 'g a dhubhadh 's 'ga theannadh,
 'S mur a bhith i thoirt thairis gu'n do ghearradh dheth 'm pluc :
 Cha d'fhag sinn riamh duine gun rà'adh fo thalamh,
 De na thachair am blàr ruinn de dh'alach Mhic Caillein :
 Gu meal iad a' bhuaidh sin gach aon uair a thachras
 Iad ruinne ann an tuasaid, am bualadh, no 'n each-reis,
 Gur a leinne bhuaidh lannach 's buaidh pheannach an cuid-s'.

*Labhthathar*¹ *labh-hathar*, *labh-hathar*, a Dheòrsa,
 Gu faigh sinne buaidh ort, 's bidh an tuagh air do sgòrnan,
 Gu spàrr an Dia mor thu ann an gaoisne thaobh t' uile :
 Bidh do chadal gle luaineach air do chluasaig an còmhuidh,
 Ma bhios beò-shradag suas diubh cha'n fhuaraich an gò riut,
 An dà *chedar* ghlan òg de phòr an deagh stuic ;
 Ge do chaisg thu do phathadh le fuil ar fiath uaibhreach,
 Bidh am fion ud ro shearbh dhuit 'nuair a phaigneas tu duais ris.

¹ In the older language the phrase might be read *làmh t'athar*, *t* (for *do*) being frequently aspirated. So *mh* for *m'* (= *mo*). Cf. *supra*, vol. ii. p. 32, n. 2.

Làbh-hathar e fathast, a *chanibal* Dhuidsich,
 Bidh a feòlach sin daor dhuit mu dheireadh a' chluich
 A rinn t'athair

FINID.

4. *An Airc* (*Poems*, pp. 134-145; MS. pp. 169-174). The MS. version of this poem differs so much from that published that no satisfactory comparison can be made without having access to both. Accordingly, although the poem is somewhat long, it is here printed in its entirety. The published version runs to 78 quatrains; the MS. version to 64. Twenty quatrains of the MS. are not found in the published version, eight of which are in the preface or introduction. On the other hand the printed version contains over thirty quatrains not found in the MS. Among these are the generous eulogy on Captain Duncan Campbell (*Poems*, pp. 138-9); the quatrains dealing with Colin of Glenure (p. 142); *Lachann dubh Bhaile-Ghrogain* (pp. 143-4), and others. In many cases the order of sequence is transposed; in others the text is largely altered.

Here is the text of 'The Ark' as in the MS. :—

Adhra¹ mhialach nan cat,
 Air dhealbh nathrach 's a grundd fuar,
 'Nuair thig Tomas le chuid each,
 Bidh là nan creach mu d' bhruaich.

Thig seann fhàisdinnean, gu teach,
 Bheir a chuidheall car mu'n cuairt,
 Am fear tha ìosal bidh gu h-àrd,
 Fear eile gu làr gu luath.

Thig claidheamh, tein' agus càs,
 Tuil-bheum sgriosach, bhàiteach bhuan,
 Air gach seorsa sluaigh is caorach,
 Eadar Adhrá 's Uisge Chluaidh.

Bidh t' inbhir 's do ghlinn an staid chruaidh,
 Lasair ruadh a' gualadh stiall,
 Frasan teine tolladh sgamhan,
 Plob is canain feannadh chiad.

¹ The river *Aora* of *Inbhear-aora*, 'Inveraray.'

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Na prionnsach' cho cruaidh ri creig,
 'G éirigh air an corra-biod,
 Ri steiceadh lag toirt orr' glag,
 Aig meud am buig.

Tha dioghaltas le guth àrd,
 Mar bha fuil Abeil 's an speur,
 'G iolach 's ag ùirnigh gu h-àrd
 Gort is plàigh theachd air gach cré.

Air gach cré a dhearg an làmh
 Anns na rinneadh oirnn de bhruid,
 De dh' uaislibh onarach prìseil
 Nan tri rioghachd bho ghniomh curst'.

Thig plaighean na h-Eiphit gu léir
 Bho speuraibh 's an talamh g'ur murt,
 Cuid eile dhiobh leum bharr chreagaibh,
 Mar a thachair do'n treud mhuc.

Ged chaidh mi gu m' shuain gu h-òrdail,
 Mar bu chòir do'n h-uile Criosdaidh,
 Chunnacas bruadar de dh'ion bòcain,
 Chuir air bhalla-chrith m'fheòil is m'fhiacalan.

An déis dhomh tuiteam ann am chadal,
 Chunnacas aisling chuir orm cùram,
 Guth 'g am mhosgladh suas gu sgairteil,
 Dol air theachdaireachd 'nuair dhùisginn ;

Dhol chur nan Guibhneach ¹ 'na faicill,
 Gu'n robh cruaidh bhreitheanas oillteil
 Ri teachd orr' as leth am peacaidh,
 An cuid creach, 's an cleachdadh *treusoin*.

'S gur beag nach b' aithreach le Dia
 Gu'n do ghin e riamh am pòr,
 Dream a thréig an Dia 's an rioghachd,
 'S a rinn iodhol d'an cuid òir.

Dh'earbadh rium esan a ruighinn,
 Alastair cridhe lean deònach,
 Ris an standard sin Phrionns' Teàrlach,
 Dh'fhuilngeadh bàs as leth na còrach.

¹ *Guibhneach* for *Duibhneach*, 'a Campbell,' from the early surname *O'Duibhne*.

Dh' earail an guth labhairt ris-san,
 A chlisgeadh fios chur air saoraibh,
 A dheanadh gun fhàilinn da (f)àrdoch,
 Ro' n tuil ghàbhaidh bha gu taosgadh.

'S amhuil sin a labhair mise,
 Gun ghnè chur ris no thoirt bhuaithe;
 Labhair mi ris rioghail, sgairteil,
 Dol mu'n teachdaireachd ri luaithir.

A Naoi Chaimbeulaich an àigh,
 Dean Airce dhuit féin a bhios pailt,
 Sàbhail do theaghlach gu luath,
 Tha 'n tuil ruadh a' teachd air n-ais.

Cha ruig i leas a bhi ro mhòr,
 Gu foghainn dhi a bhi beag,
 Ceithir fichead làmh-choille 's a dhà,
 'S biodh i cho làidir ri creig.

Cha d'thainig duine bho d'fhreumh,
 A shiòlaich bho baron chúiphochd,¹
 Saor bho bhuiisgean Loch-nan-eala,
 Mur faigh carraid gu faigh croich.

Sibh fein as coireach ri 'r dìteadh,
 A thréigsinn 'ur rìgh 's 'ur dùthcha,
 'Nuair dhìobair sibh Dia 's an fhirinn,
 'S oighre glan *bneach* rìgh Stiubhard.

Tog de d' mhobhsgaid 's thoir ort sùrd
 Air Airce ùr a dheanamh suas,
 Thig an tuil-bheum ud cho cas,
 Mar thig fras am Faoilleach fuar.

Paidhir de gach seors' as fearr
 As gach meur a chinn á d' stoc,
 Thoir cuide riut anns an Airce,
 Tha muir bàite-sa teacht ort.

Mu mhnaibh, cha tig iad ad charaibh,
 Cha'n 'eil cunnart orra 'n dràsta,
 Bho nach nàdarra d'an seòrsa
 Èirigh le Deòrsa no Teàrlach.

Ma thig a' bhana-bhàrd ad lionaibh,
 Osdag mhì-narach an Obain,
 Ceangail acair ri(the) de bhranndaidh,
 Gu bhi toirt dram do na ronaibh.

¹ The reading is clear. Whence the designation?

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Ach ma chinneas i 'na Ionah,
 A' slugachdainn beò le muic mhara,
 Gu meal i a cairtealan fheòlain,
 Ach a sgeith air còrsa Chanaidh.

Bàrcaidh an tuil 'nuair nach saoil thu,
 'S maith a dh'fhaoidte gur h-ann an diugh
 Tàrr leat do dhilsean 's gach caraid,
 'S Barrnacaraidh fàg a muigh.

Thig so cho cas ri beum-sléibhe,
 Sgrothaidh e leis gach ni thachras,
 Na Caimbeulaich bho'n is réubail,
 Lomaidh e geur bho na clachaibh.

Gun trocaire cuirear as daibh,
 Lannar as iad le reachd àraid,
 Gu h-àraid Herod Iudea
 Sgrios clann Bhethel 'sireadh Theàrlaich.

Na tugadh dì-chuimhn' no mobhsgaid
 Ort Loudon fhagail an dearmad,
 'S fear eile ni mach am paoidhre,
 Ge bu traoitear gheibh e tearmunn.

Thoir dhachaidh Dughall is Iain,
 'S gach fear tha dligheach dhuit teasraig,
 'S de gach teaghlach eile caraid,
 Cuir ad Airc, ach fàg Sroneasgair.

Tomhais agus cuir ri meidh iad,
 An dias as cudamaich dhiubh tearuinn,
 Mur faigh thu cuplachadh ceart diubh,
 Leis a' chraiceann leig an t-earball.

Na toir neach air bòrd gu d'leasair
 Ach pòr de fhleasgaichibh calma,
 Na leig gnè eunlaith a steach ort,
 Ach gu teachdaireachd dà chalaman.

Achachrosain 's Achamhuilinn,
 Fàg aig an tuil iad d'an stiòpadh,
 Gus an caill iad an cuid saluinn
 Fhuair iad á saille (an) sìnnseadh.

Tilg mac prothaist Donnchadh 's an fheamainn,
 Gu deanamh do Neptun ceilpe,
 'S mur h-òl e na gheibh e 'n t-sàile,
 Sìor chum ris an daoi-fhear *celti*.

Edarlinn a chinn 'na *chocles*,
 Seumas am procadair cliùtach,
 Tilg fo bheinn nam barr-rochd iad,
 Mallachd nochd is bhochd ud Mhùideart.

Mar sin agus Noble goiceach,
 Poca croite bhios aig Iudas ;
 'S ge toigh le d'chàirdean a' phlàigh ud,
 Leig fo shàil an daoi-fhear dùbailt'.

Cum a muigh gach fear de d'sheòrsa,
 As Deòrsach da rìreadh 'na chridhe ;
 Na ceum thairis do *Chomission*,
 Mu'n dean na's miosa riut tighinn.

Druid a mach lobhar na h-Oitreach
 Gus an caill e otrach dheamhnaidh,—
 Gu faic mi toradh do mhalairt
 Teachd le ballaibh as do sgòrnan.

Cum ri Sir Donnchadh an *càbin*,
 'S buin gu còir ri Inbhear-atha
 'S bho bhios tu pailt de dhìbh Fhrangaich,
 Cum gun taing riu casg am pathaidh.

Mu dheidhinn fir Choire-chunna,
 Na fàg an cunnart nan tonn e,
 Thoir air bòrd a steach an duine ud,
 'S buin ris urramach neo-lombais.

Cum a mach fear Chnoc-buidhe,
 Ach guidheam ort na leig a bhàthadh,
 Ceangail gu daingean ris *buoi*,
 Bheir snàmh dha 'n uidheam a' chrà-gheoidh.

S nuair nighear e d'a ana-bhlas Deòrsach,
 'S an fhairg' air a leon air fas miota
 Spion a steach e 's thoir dha *cordial*,
 A bheir beò e 'n deis a shliobraich.

Bidh tigh Chaladair an dòchas
 Gu leig thu air bòrd gu léir iad,
 Bho'n tha 'n cogais teann 'g an sgròbadh
 Nach h-e Deòrsa an rìgh ach Seumas.

Ach coinnsionaicheam thu le h-òrdugh
 An Rìgh mhòir d'an còir dhuit géilleadh,
 Tilg a mach iad uile air flèodradh,
 'S àrcan mor fo chòrr an sgéithe.

THE CELTIC REVIEW

Bidh sin mar phurgadair aca,
 'G an glanadh 's 'gan cartadh bho 'n òtraich,
 An sin 'nuair sgùrar iad bho 'm peacadh,
 Thoir gu caomh a steach air bòrd iad.

Ceangail cù, cat, is clach-mhuilinn,
 Ri muineal burraile Mhic Nibhein,
 Tilg sìos e le neart 's le cudum¹
 An craos sluganach na dileann.

Air neo, ma's e do thoil fein e,
 Cum agad e gu feum fithich,
 'S biodh e cuide ris a' chalaman;
 Gu'n cuirt' air falbh iad 'nan dithis.

Southall, creachadair nam bantrach,
 Nan dilleachdan fann, 's nan deòraidh,
 Iobair suas air altair Neptuin,
 Air son a chreachan 's a dhò-bheart.

Tighearna nan Ard, ma chasas
 E riut 's e 'g asnachadh didein,
 Tha e de sheòrsa glan suairce
 Nach robh fuar do'n teaghlach rioghail.

Thoir dhasan ionad cho taitneach
 'S a bhios agad anns an Airce,
 Biadh is aodach 's mòran dibhe,
 'S giullachd gu h-innich d'a chàirdean.

Caiptin Sgibinnis an traoitear,
 Ged robh e raoiceil 's a' gal riut,
 Tearmad no iochd cha do thoill e,
 Rìgh nan slaoightirean am balach.

Ceangail bolla lìn mu mhiadhon
 Bheir pian dha 's dligheach d'a choire,
 'S nuair bhios e de phlubraich curraidh,
 Slaod leat gu h-ullamh a stigh e.

Donnachadh buidhe Mac-an-Aba,
 An glagaire fada seòlta,
 Thoir urchair dha air an aigeal
 Gu leaba chadail nan sòrnan.

Gabh air laimh Iain bàn na Coinnil,
 Mo dhilsein coinniullach gràdhach,
 Thoir dha biadh is deoch is coinneal,
 Boul agus gloine 's a' chàbin.

¹ *Cudum*, a favourite word with the author, perhaps a variant of *cudithrom*.

- Mo bheannachd ort fein, a bhobain,
 Nach do dh'ob bhi rìoghail deònach,
 An saoghal busgadach claon-cham,
 'S do chinneadh daonda le Dèorsa.
- B' anabharrach do chudum rìoghail,
 Nach do spionadh mar ri càch thu,
 Leis an tuil-bheum ud bha coitcheann
 Eadar an Oitir 's Bucàrna.
- An eachdrainnean Sheumuis bidh sgrìobhta
 D'a mhac priseil do neo-mhealltachd,
 Cho làn de bhudhannan rìoghail
 Ri h-ugh brìdein mu uchd Bealltainn.
- Gheibh thu cùirt is moran cliù,
 'S bidh tu buidheach air a dheireadh,
 Dean cabhag air tèarr 's air ballaibh,
 'S dean Aire de dharach Loch Seile.
- Mac Dheòrs' òig, ged thuit e 'm peacadh,
 Le impidh pragsain 's le gòraich,
 Leig plumadh dha dh'ionnsuidh'n aigeil,
 'S thoir gu grad a steach le d' ròp e.
- Spàrr Aisginnis ann an tuba,
 'S fàg e fo luideart an anfhaidh,
 Biodh e measg nan tonn air uideil,
 Gus an caill e chuid de'n ain(th)eas.
- Ma dh' fhair'eas tu Caipitín Donnchadh
 Am measg an tromlaich 'g ad ruighinn,
 'G ad atach a' guidhe bùird ort,
 Cuidhill gu sùrdail steach 'nad chri' e.
- Richardson, grad thilg thar stoc e,
 'S tric a thog dhuinn tosta Thèarlaich,
 Bho 'n a shleamhnaich e 'na chreideamh,
 Ascaoin Eaglais air a' mhèirleach.
- Gach ministèir Guibhneach bha 'g ùirnigh,
 'S a shùilean dùinte 'g ar damnadh,
 Fàg ann am purgaidair bùirn e,
 Gus an caill e sgùrainn anma.
- Ma chi thu fear a' chreidimh dhìomhair
 A' fuireach gu gle chian an uachdar,
 Ma sgairteas e 'Dia 's Rìgh Seumas,
 Spion le teumadh steach air ghruaig e.

Ach gabh-sa mu thimchioll do ghnothaich,
 Gun mhoill, gun choimheirp, gun fhàillinn,
 'S mar a dh'àithn am B(r)igadier,
 Air chionn na dlle dean Airce.

FINID.

A comparison of the two versions of these poems and songs proves, to my mind, that the MS. was written by Alexander Macdonald after the disastrous campaign of the '45 was over, but before 1751, when he published his volume, one might say even before the humane administration of the forfeited estates of Moydart by Captain Duncan Campbell was fully established. The poet, in the interval, added some of the most striking couplets to the famous *Agus ho Mhòrag*, as *e.g.* :—

Leanaidh mi cho dlùth ri d'shàiltean
 Agus bàirneach ri sgeir mhara.

He found reason to suppress seven stanzas of the poem *A Thearlaich mhic Sheumais* and to add one, while he largely revised 'The Ark.' The deletions and additions in this last poem are very interesting. Several of the suppressed quatrains of the Introduction are crude and unmusical, but the same cannot be said of the remarkable verse (MS. No. 12), which is quite in the poet's vein when he means to strike hard, nor of those in praise of John Bane of Connel, which for one reason or other he also deleted. The most remarkable addition is the eulogy on Captain Duncan Campbell, a man whom he castigates brutally in an earlier poem (MS. p. 155), as will be seen later. It may be added that some of the many changes on this poem are so far indicated in the MS. itself. There are deletions and substitutions of text, marks and crosses on the margin opposite lines and verses which are suppressed or altered or transposed in the published version, while the quatrain—

Air neo ma's e do thoil fein e,
 Cum agad e gu feum fithich,
 'S biodh e cuide ris a' chalaman,
 Gu'n cuirt' air falbh iad 'n an dithis—

is written, in a smaller and perhaps a different hand, on the top margin of p. 173. The fact is, the MS. version of 'The Ark' must be regarded as a rough draft of which the published version is the final revise; so that with respect to this poem we are able to have a look at the great Jacobite Bard in his study, or, as he himself says elsewhere, in his 'closet,' where, he adds, the Muses frequently visited him.

A SKETCH OF WELSH LITERATURE

ARTHUR HUGHES

INTRODUCTION

So far as I am aware, there has not hitherto been published any attempt to give a brief connected outline of the history of Welsh literature from the earliest times to our own day. I am therefore not without hope that the present sketch may reasonably but very diffidently claim to indicate the lines along which such an attempt might be made, though, being the first of its kind, it cannot be regarded otherwise than as tentative. Its defects will be found to be many. My own youth, apart from any other consideration, precludes me from having acquired the necessary scholarship and experience to do justice to the subject. Still, 'the atrocious crime of being a young man,' as Pitt would say, need not prevent one from trying to do one's best, even in spite of a precarious state of health. Scientific and scholastic these articles are not meant to be; it has been intended rather that they should be interesting to those who may be desirous of having some idea as to what there really is in Welsh in the way of literature. An exhaustive and complete account of Welsh literature is impossible in the present state of Welsh scholarship. Even the drawing up of a sketch such as the following purposes to be I have found by no means an easy task,—so little has been done, so much remains to be got through, before anything like