

**FEARCHAIR-A-GHUNNA:  
THE  
ROSS-SHIRE WANDERER,  
HIS LIFE AND SAYINGS**

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Fearchair-a-Ghunna: The Ross-shire Wanderer, His Life and Sayings by A. MacLennan

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**A. MACLENNAN**

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# Rearchair-a-Ghunna

## THE ROSS-SHIRE WANDERER

HIS LIFE AND SAYINGS

BY  
THE AUTHOR OF "THE MAID OF FAIRBURN,"  
&c., &c.

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## CONTENTS



| Chapter                          | Page |
|----------------------------------|------|
| I. EARLY LIFE . . . . .          | 1    |
| II. THE WANDERER . . . . .       | 9    |
| III. ECCENTRICITIES . . . . .    | 22   |
| IV. SELF ESTEEM . . . . .        | 34   |
| V. INGENUITY . . . . .           | 44   |
| VI. QUAIN REMARKS . . . . .      | 52   |
| VII. GRAVITY AND DEATH . . . . . | 65   |





# FEARCHAIR-A-GHUNNA, THE ROSS-SHIRE WANDERER.

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## CHAPTER I.—Early Life.

Birthplace — Education — Personal Appearance — Incipient Eccentricity—Story of Early Life—Smuggling—Burning the Gauger's Cottage — His Brother's Death — Punishing the Informer—Adrift.

FARQUHAR MACLENNAN, *alias* Fearchair-a-Ghunna, was born in Strathconon, Ross-shire, in the year 1784, and spent his youth in that district. Little is known regarding his life during that period, and probably it was as uneventful as were the lives of his neighbours in the beautiful strath mentioned. His father, a well-to-do crofter as crofters went, did not think it necessary to burden his children with a school education, and even had the idea occurred to him there were but few facilities for carrying it out. Poor Farquhar was therefore so destitute of literary attainments that, to the day of his death, he could not distinguish A from B. His knowledge of the English language was also very limited, the only words he assayed being "yes" and "no." But though thus unlearned

and unaccomplished, young Farquhar received the elements of a more practical education on the farm and on the moor. Shooting, smuggling, and agriculture appear to have been the three principal pursuits of the district in those times, and in the first two of these the subject of this sketch took great delight.

Farquhar's personal appearance was quite in keeping with his character and mode of life. He was somewhat low in stature, but firmly built, with broad square shoulders, and at this period possessed a gait remarkably erect and almost stately. His head was covered with a profusion of long, bristly hair, which seldom, if ever, was combed. His eyes were small, restless, and piercing, while a fixed determination was stamped on his care-worn countenance.

It is not now known whether in his early youth Farquhar was subject to that aberration of intellect which, in later years, caused him to take to a wandering life. The probability is that it was of gradual growth, though its progress was eventually hastened by the troubles resulting from the smuggling propensities of the family. There is one story told of Farquhar's youth which indicates that he had begun even thus early to show symptoms of mental disease or eccentricity.

It was in the spring season of the year that Farquhar's father, who had no grain-seed for his croft, sent him for a supply of seed to Strathpeffer, which was famed for the purity of its