

**THE POETICAL WORKS OF
ALEXANDER MACDONALD, THE
CELEBRATED JACOBITE POET:
NOW FIRST COLLECTED, WITH A
SHORT ACCOUNT OF THE AUTHOR**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649761494

The poetical works of Alexander Macdonald, the celebrated Jacobite poet: now first collected, with a short account of the author by Alexander MacDonald

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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GLASGOW:

PUBLISHED BY G. & J. CAMERON.

1851.

MEMOIR.

ALEXANDER MACDONALD, was the son of the Rev. Alexander Macdonald, minister of Aird-na-morchnan. The time of his birth is not known, but it was about the year 1700. According to the tradition of that country, he was born at Dalilea, on the banks of Loch Sheil, in Meidart. Of his early history and education little is known. According to some reports, he was intended for the Church; and, from his own writings, it appears that he had received some classical knowledge. The first authentic memorial of him appears in a book entitled "*A Gaelic and English Vocabulary*," which he published in the year 1741. The book was published at the expense of the Society in Scotland for propagating christian knowledge, for the use of their Schools.

At this time Macdonald served the Society in the humble capacity of schoolmaster, at Aird-na-morchnan, and he informs us, in the preface, that the Society suggested the undertaking to the Presbytery of Mull, and the presbytery laid it upon him to prepare such a work for the use of their scholars.

The situation of schoolmaster was probably not very congenial to the temper and disposition of the bard; and an opportunity soon occurring, he laid down the birch, and took up the sword. When Charles Edward landed in 1745, he was joined by most of the Clan Macdonald, and Allan Macdonald, younger of Clacronald, having also answered the call, he was followed by the poet; who attended the young chief till the close of the Rebellion. After the defeat at Culloden, the bard was obliged to

skulk and hide himself for a year or two, in the wilds of Meidart and Arussaig. It was during the time of his concealment that he composed the greater part of those fiery and enthusiastic Jacobite Songs, which astonish us by their boldness, while they delight us with the beauty and elegance of their language and composition.

After the act of indemnity had passed, the bard came forth from his concealment; and the family of Clanronald, either grateful for his services, or willing to reward his devotion to their cause, appointed him halberdier, or land steward of the Island of Cunn. It was probably about this time that he forsook the religion in which he had been educated, and embraced the creed of his patron, who belonged to the Church of Rome.

Soon after this he came forward and published his poems at Edinburgh, in the year 1751. The book is full of the most violent and fearless Jacobitism, and the most daring and rebellious language; where the reigning family are held up as worthless usurpers; bloody and cruel tyrants, who were regardless of the lives and property of the subjects. "The butcher Cumberland," is often introduced, and held up as a bloody and cruel monster. On the other hand, the Rebels receive their due meed of fame; and even the hearty and treacherous villain Lovat is represented as a *saint* and a *martyr*.

The passions and prejudices of those who had been engaged in the Rebellion must have been highly gratified by the publication of this volume, only five years after their unsuccessful struggle. The author's name appeared in the title-page; but the more cautious printer did not venture to let his name be known. The book must have obtained a rapid sale; and in the year 1754, it was partially reprinted by John Orr, a bookseller in Glasgow.

Of the author's history after the publication of the book, very little is now known. He was of a restless and unhappy disposition, and did not long retain his office in the isle Canna.

He composed a number of songs after this, and one of them, called "Alexander's removal from Egnig," displays curious traits of the irritable and discontented temper that embittered his life. He there represents all things animate and inanimate—rocks and thorns, thistles and wasps, ghosts and hobgoblins, combining to torment and persecute him. It is said that the true cause of this removal was a quarrel with the priest; this appears to be alluded to in the lines, (page 90.)

"am fear a
Dheanadh ascaidh-caglais thruigh orm,
Ma'n chuir eadh a chluas tri chasid."

He removed to Invermor, in Kintyre; a place represented as full of all good things, flowing with milk and honey, and "free of ghosts and hobgoblins." How long he remained in this rocky paradise is not known, but he appears to have lived for some time in Moray, as he composed a very elegant song in praise of that country.

He lived a life of poverty and dependance, and, after many wanderings, died at a place called Sanding, in Argyll, and was buried in Island Flunnah, in Lochshell.

He was married to Jane Macdonald, of the family of *Dalton-cu'* in Glenelg. He composed a song on her, which is not remarkable for tenderness or affection, but cold and artificial, when compared with his lofty and impassioned strains in praise of Moray. Some of his descendants still remain, and one of them died a few years ago at Loig, in the isle of Eige.

AIS-EIRIDH

NA

SEAN CHANAIN ALBANAICH;

NO'S

NUADH ÓRANAICHE GAÉLACH.

MOLADH AN ÚDAIR DO'N T-SEAN CHANAIN CHAELIG.

Gu' h-ì 's crìoch àraid
Do gach cniat fo'n ghrèin,
Gu'n smuaintis fhéor
A phàisteachadh ri chèil';
Ar n'ionntamers a rùsgadh,
Agus rùn ar orì,
Le'r gnìomh, 's le'r giùlan,
Sùid chair air ar dè.
'S gu' boidh ar beòil
A dh'ìobra Dhia na'n dèil,
'S e h-ard clàrìoch mhòd,
Go bi tuist dèsan eil.
'S e'n duine féin,
'S ann chrèatair rèasont ann,

Gu'n d'thug toil Dé dh'a,
 Gibht le bhéul thí caimt :
 Gu'n chum e so,
 O'n uile bhrúad gu léir ;
 O ghábht mhór phaiseal-a'
 Dheòilbh' na Ìomhaidh féin !
 Na'm boirte balbh e,
 'S a theagna marbh na cheann,
 B'f'n iargoin shearbhb i,
 B'fheart bhí marbh no ann.
 'S ge h-àroma càncin,
 O linn Bhabal fuair
 A'liochd sin Adhamh,
 'S i Ghòelig a thug buaigh.
 Do'n labhradh dhàicheil,
 An urram àrd gun toairms',
 Gun mheang, gun fhàilium,
 Is urra càch a buaigh.
 Bha Ghòelig, ullamh,
 Na glòir fìor ghuineach cruagh,
 Air feadh a chruinne
 Ma'n thuilich an Tuil-ruagh.
 Mhair i fàs,
 'S cha d'theid a glòir air eòll
 Dh'ain-deoin gò,
 A's mò-rùin mhòr na'n gall,
 'S i labhair Alba,
 'S galla-bhodaiche féin ;
 Ar fàidh, ar priunnaidh,
 'S ar díceanan gun éis.
 An taighe comhairt' an Rìgh,
 'Nasir shuigheadh air bòian'-a chàirt,

'S i Ghaelg liobhta,
 'Dh'fhuasgladh shaoim gach cùis.
 'S i labhair Colum
 Allob ! a chinn-mhoir,
 Gach mith, is maith,
 Bha'n Alba beag is mòr.
 'S i labhair gail, is gaidheil,
 Nou' chieirich, a's clèir,
 Gach fear a's bean,
 A ghluiseadh teang'am beul.
 'S i labhair Adhamh,
 Ann a phàrrais féin,
 'S bu shiubhlach Gàidlig
 O bheul àlainn Eabh'.
 Och tha bhail ann !
 'S uicseach gann fo dhè,
 Glòir gach teanga
 A labhras caint seach i.
 Tha Laidinn coimhllont',
 Tortach, teann nì's leoir ;
 Ach sgalog thràilleil e
 Do'n Ghaelig choir.
 Sa'n Athen tuboir,
 Bha Ghreigis eòr na tìan,
 Ach b'ion d'i h-ordag
 Choir fo h-òr chrios grinn.
 'S ge min, sian, bòidheach,
 Cuirteil, rò bhng flobht',
 An Fhraingis ioghar,
 Am pailis mùr gach Rìgh ;
 Mà thogras càch orr',
 Fairt d'an ainbh-cheich' féin.