

An extract from:

'URQUHART AND GLENMORISTON'

Olden Times in a Highland Parish

by

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In Glenmoriston Columba probably founded the old church at Invermoriston, which was known as Clachan Cholumchille or Columba's Church. In the immediate vicinity of its site is Columba's Well - Fuaran Cholumchille - a holy fountain noted for many centuries for its remarkable curative properties. The origin of its renown in Christian times is probably found in Adamnan's pages. " While the blessed man (Columba) was stopping for some days in the province of the Picts, he heard that there was a fountain famous among heathen people, which foolish men, having their senses blinded by the devil, worshipped as a god. For those who drank of this fountain, or purposely washed their hands or feet in it, were allowed by God to be struck by demoniacal art, and went home either leprous or purblind, or at least suffering from weakness or other kinds of infirmity. By all these things the pagans were seduced, and paid divine honour to the fountain. Having ascertained this, the Saint one day went up to the fountain fearlessly; and, on seeing this, the druid, whom he had often sent away from him vanquished and confounded, were greatly rejoiced, thinking that he would suffer like others from the touch of that baneful water. But he, having first raised his holy hand and invoked the name of Christ, washed his hands and feet; and then, with his companions, drank of the water which he had blessed. And from that day the demons departed from the fountain; and not only was it not allowed to injure anyone, but even many diseases amongst the people were cured by this same fountain, after it had been blessed and washed in by the Saint." The fountain which the Saint so blessed and washed in may, without any undue straining of the imagination, be identified with his Well at Invermoriston. That spring has, despite his rebuke, continued to be in a sense worshipped until our own time, and searchers after health may not even yet have entirely ceased to sprinkle themselves with its water, and to leave their little offerings by its side.