

I.

NOTICE OF THE HARP SAID TO HAVE BEEN GIVEN TO BEATRIX GARDYN OF BANCHORY BY QUEEN MARY, AND OF THE HARP CALLED THE "LAMONT HARP," BOTH FORMERLY POSSESSED BY THE FAMILY OF ROBERTSONS OF LUDE, AND NOW DEPOSITED FOR EXHIBITION IN THE MUSEUM, ALONG WITH TWO ANCIENT HIGHLAND TARGETS, BY JOHN STEUART, ESQ. OF DALGUISE. By CHARLES D. BELL, Esq., F.S.A. Scot.

These two old highland targets and two ancient harps are the property of John Steuart, Esq. of Dalguise, formerly high sheriff and now retired master of the Supreme Court of the Cape of Good Hope.

When I saw the harps at Steuartfield, a shooting lodge on the estate of Dalguise, in April last, I felt that relics of such antiquarian value, if not

national interest, ought to be preserved where they might be more conveniently seen by those capable of appreciating their worth as well as by the public, and be less exposed to risks of damage and loss and decay than while in the hands of private custodians however careful.

The matter was accordingly brought at once under Mr Steuart's consideration with a suggestion that they should be confided to the charge of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland for exhibition and preservation. This has been agreed to, and I have been requested to undertake the arrangement on his behalf.

The targets were at Dalguise with a large chestful of old broadswords, shirts of chain mail, and other antiques, and, having been told by Mr Anderson of this Society that genuine old Highland targets are very rare, they were included with the harps in my suggestion. They seem to have been made for use, and to have been used; they have not been merely made up for full Highland dress or as ornaments for the hall.

Target No. 1 is 19 inches in diameter, and retains the leather covering of the front, but has lost that of the back. The front is covered with an ornamental device consisting of two concentric circles, the largest of which is 9 inches diameter and the lesser 4 inches. These circles are both formed of strips of thin brass, $\frac{1}{4}$ inch wide, studded with small round-headed brass nails; the space between the two circles is quartered by four strips of similar material and fastenings, and the centre of each quadrant is ornamented by a large nail head surrounded by smaller ones. The space between the outer circle and edge of the target is Vandyked by a series of eight triangles formed by strips of metal and nail heads in the same manner, and thus showing a star of eight points. In the centre of each triangular space there is a group of five nail heads, one large in the centre and four small ones around it. Round the margin of the target there is a double row of small nail heads, and it is bound by an edging of thin brass plate Vandyked and the points secured by a third row of brass nails. In place of a boss the centre is occupied by a thin plate of brass $1\frac{3}{4}$ inch wide secured by a large nail, the head of which is cut in

radiating lines—the rest of the space within the inner circle has been thickly studded with very small nail heads.

The second target is 20 inches in diameter, the front covered with leather and ornamented with a pattern composed of brass nail heads and circular and triangular plates of thin brass arranged in correspondence with a design which has been tooled on the leather. In the centre is a raised boss $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches diameter and $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch in height, flattened on the top and pierced by a hole $\frac{1}{4}$ inch diameter apparently for a spike. The edges of the boss are fastened down by a row of nail heads and the upper part is ornamented by five heart-shaped openings alternating with circular holes showing inner lining of red cloth. At a distance of $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch from the outer margin of the boss is a tooled circle $\frac{1}{4}$ inch wide surrounding it and set with nail heads about 1 inch apart. Within an inch of the margin of the target there is a similar and concentric circle. The space between the two circles is occupied by a pattern composed alternately of four circles and double triangles placed point to point in four pairs, in the lines of a cross, each of the four circles consists of a circular belt $1\frac{1}{4}$ inch wide and 5 inches in diameter tooled in the leather and studded with nails enclosing in the centre a plate of thin brass $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches diameter, the edge of which is secured by four nail heads with a larger one in centre and four still larger disposed at equal distances in the space between the plate and outer circle. The plate itself is ornamented with a circle of small prominences punched up from the back, and six circular apertures showing red cloth below. Each pair of triangles consists of a larger and smaller placed apex to apex, and equilateral; and the bases of the larger nearly touch the outer circle towards the margin of the target,—they are fastened down at the corners and in the centre of each side by smaller nail heads with a larger in the centre of each triangle, while the corners are pierced with heart-shaped openings showing red cloth below, and the margin of the triangles are bordered by a row of raised prominences punched up from below. Unlike the target No. 1, this has no edging of brass, but the leather is drawn over and secured on the back by flat-headed iron nails driven through a fillet of leather; the

lining of the back appears to have been of cow hide with the hair side outwards ; the strap and handle are rudely fastened with large flat-headed iron nails.

The two harps were in Edinburgh in 1805. They were sent by General Robertson of Lude at the request of the Highland Society and examined by a sub-committee appointed for the purpose. They were described, drawn, engraved (one of them at least was strung and played on), and a book was edited by desire, and under patronage of the Society, by Mr John Gunn, and published by Archibald Constable & Co., Edinburgh, and John Murray, London, in 1807. There is an amount of confusion and error observable in this book which is to be regretted, as the warranty of its origin and the assumption of careful detail have misled subsequent writers, but the engravings and descriptions suffice to prove that these now before you are the identical instruments produced and inspected in Edinburgh in 1805, and that natural decay has not sensibly altered their appearance in the last seventy-five years during which they have been preserved in the families of Lude and Dalguise, their existence forgotten by the general public and almost lost sight of even by antiquaries. Their present condition at their great age indicates the value attributed to them as heirlooms by their owners and those retainers of their owners who have had charge of them.

The traditions relative to both these harps were given by General Robertson in his letters to the Highland Society. Unfortunately the originals of these letters cannot now be found, and we have only the version given by Mr Gunn, which, however, having been published in 1807, while it could have been contradicted or amended by General Robertson (who lived until January 1820) or the sub-committee of the Highland Society, or others interested, may now be taken as authentic in its main particulars.

The family tradition of Lude alleges that for several centuries past the largest of these two harps (fig. 1) has been known as the "Clarshach Lumanach" or the Lamont Harp, and that it was brought from Argyshire by a daughter of the Lamont family on her marriage with Robertson

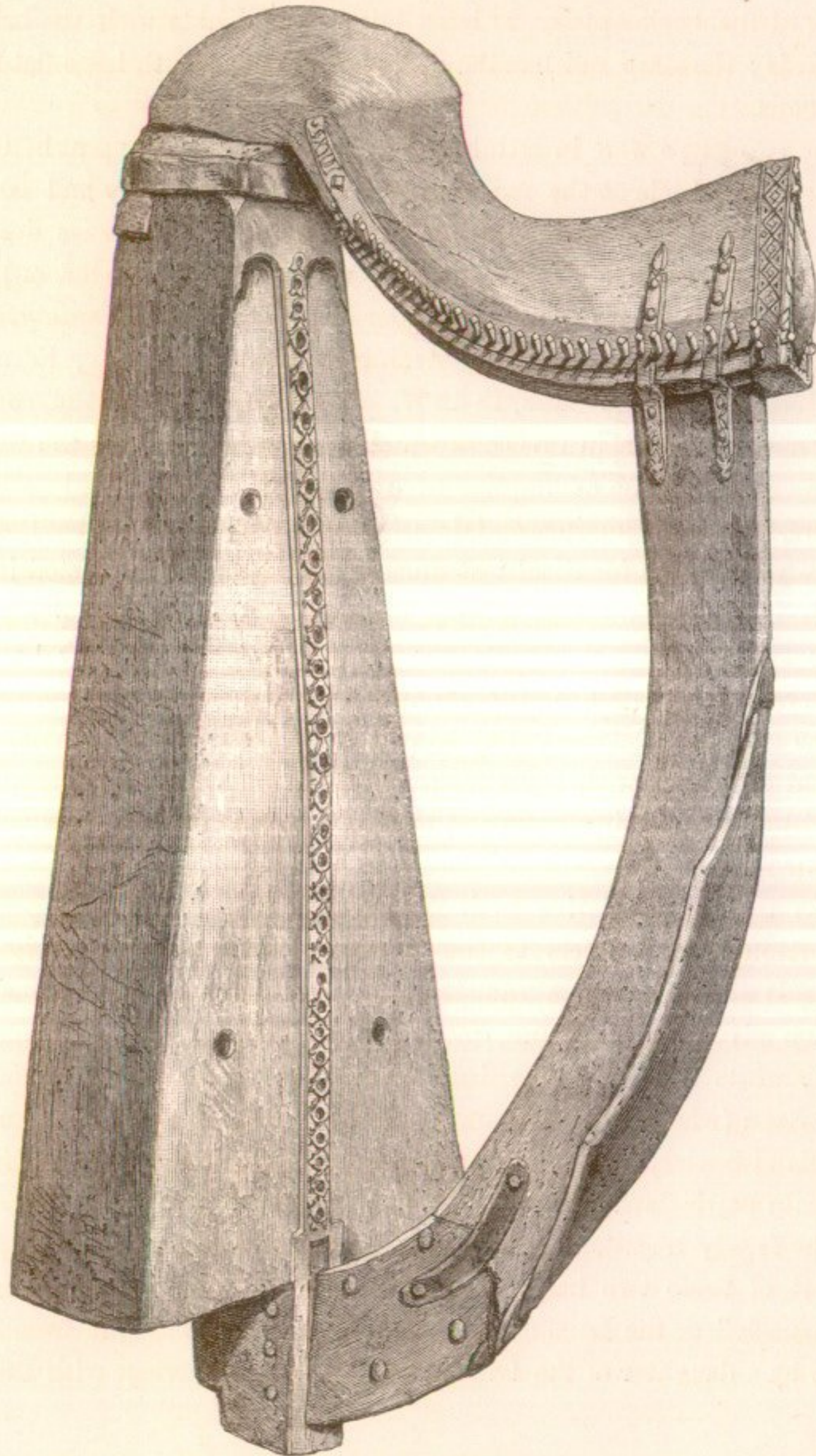


Fig. 1. The Lamont Harp (38 inches in height).

of Lude in the year 1464. It is said to be the oldest as well as the largest of the two, but that may merely arise from its known traditional history from an earlier date, although the structure and workmanship are thought by some to show the greater age. If the probably quiet place it found in the house of Lude be considered, and that it was likely to be valued and cared for there, also that the repairs appear to be of very old date, then the Clarshach Lumanach may have already, before 1464, been an old knocked about, battered, broken, and mended instrument with a pre-traditional story we can now never hope to hear.

It may be observed that it is a plain substantial instrument made more for use than ornament, rather fitted for the wandering minstrel than for noble or royal hands.

The following description may be taken as accurate. For the sake of brevity the sounding board or body of the harp or *com* is simply called the box. The upper arm or cross tree or harmonic curve or *corr* is named the comb, and the fore-arm or pillar or *lamhchrann* is termed the bow.

The extreme length of the Lamont harp is 38 inches, and the extreme width from front to back $18\frac{1}{2}$ inches. The box, which is hollowed out of one piece of wood, is 30 inches in length by 4 inches in breadth at the top and 17 at the bottom, the depth of the sides throughout being 4 inches, with a swell of the front from sides and ends to the centre of 1 inch under the projecting band through which the thirty-two string-holes are pierced. The string-holes have each an ornamental mounting of brass of peculiar form, all of the same pattern, except those of the three upper and two lower holes, which are of horse-shoe shape, terminating in quatrefoils. There are four sound-holes, of $1\frac{1}{3}$ diameter in front, and the original back is gone, having been replaced by a new one. The projection at the lower end of box which carries the bow is $4\frac{1}{2}$ by $2\frac{3}{4}$ inches. The comb, which rises 4 inches above the top of the box, projects $15\frac{1}{2}$ inches in front and terminates in a triangular end 6 inches high by $2\frac{1}{2}$ broad at the base, faced with a mounting of brass, the sides of which are chased in geometrical patterns, the front having a plain oval projection, like a setting, in the centre, the remainder chased in a pattern partly foliaceous

enclosed by a raised rope border and fastened by three studs with carved heads near the corners.

The comb is pierced through a metal bar on each side, which has a border of fret work, by thirty-two pin holes. Two of the pins are wanting. It is strapped to the bow by two straps of brass 7 inches in length, $\frac{1}{2}$ an inch in width, each fastened by four nails. They are both ornamented with a chased pattern, and terminate at the lower extremities in the heads of animals. The bow measures in a straight line from the front insertion in the comb to that in the foot 28 inches, and curves with a spring of $6\frac{1}{4}$ inches. It is $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide, $1\frac{1}{2}$ thick, and expands in front to $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches. This bow is now considerably warped, and its broken parts are held together by rude iron clamps.

Mr Gunn gives only thirty strings, but it is evident that there are thirty-two string-holes and thirty-two pin-holes, and it will require more than his opinion that the two shortest strings could not have been struck to induce belief that the maker of such an instrument did not know what he was about when he made provision for them. Mr Gunn also mentions the set of the comb and bow as intended to give scope for the bard's voice. It may be so, but it appears from the joint at the insertion of the comb into the box, and from the strengthening by repair, as if that set might have been caused by warp of the wood under long-continued tension of the strings.

Mr Gunn compares this harp (which he calls also the Caledonian harp) with that of Brian Boromhe or Boru, preserved in Trinity College, Dublin, but it will be apparent to any one who turns to page 9 of his work, that he has confused his notes of the two harps, and is writing of the other one—a mistake proved in page 85, where he remarks on the perfect resemblance of Queen Mary's harp to that of Brian Boru.

The other harp (fig. 2) has long been known as that of Queen Mary. The corrected version of the Lude tradition regarding it, as given by Mr Gunn, page 78, is that when Queen Mary was on a hunting excursion in the highlands of Perthshire in 1563 she had this harp, and presented it to Miss Beatrix Gardyn, daughter of Mr Gardyn of Banchory, whose

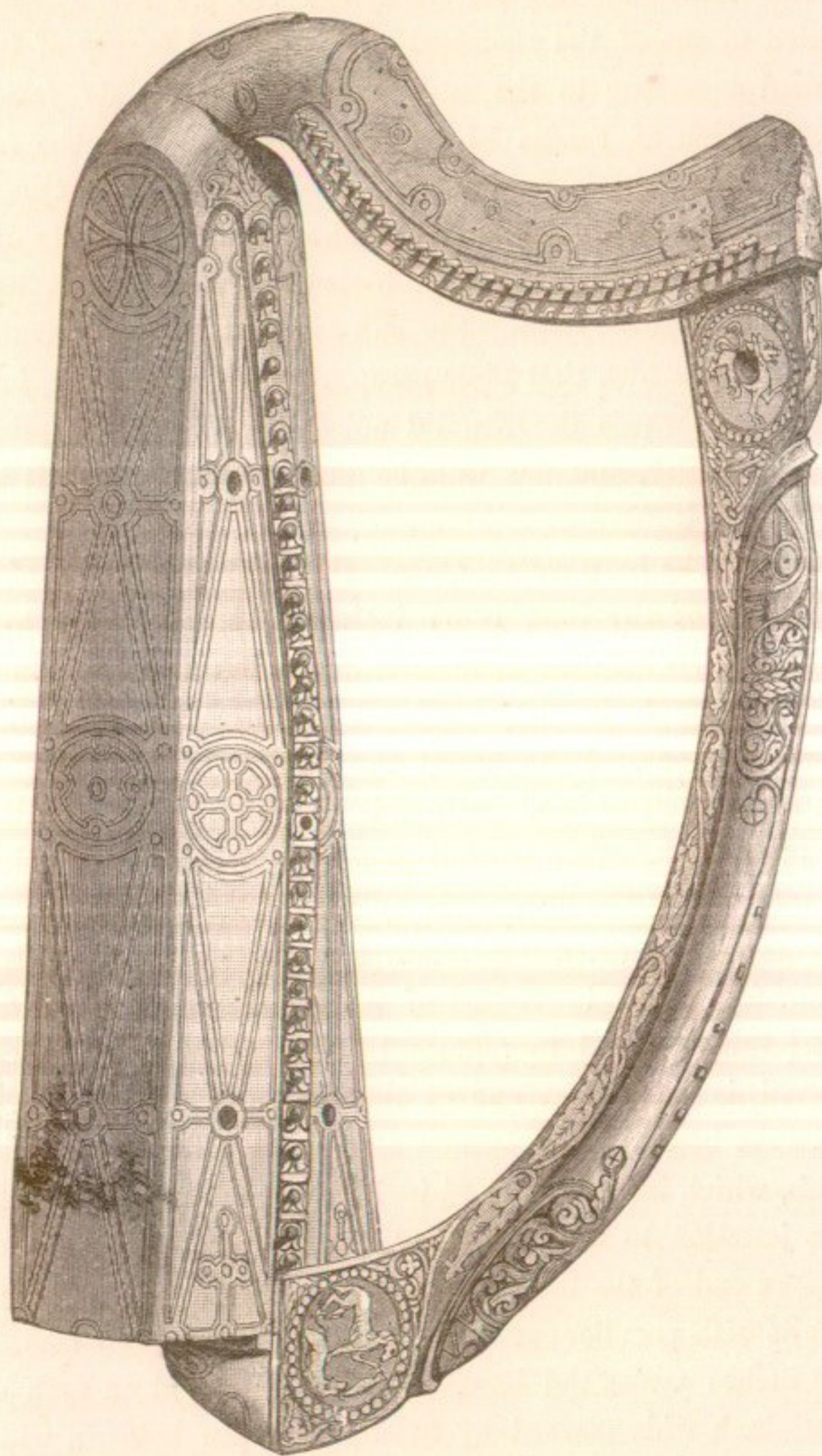


Fig. 2. The Harp called "Queen Mary's." (31 inches in height).

family is now represented by Mr Gardyn of Troup. She appears to have been married to one of the ancestors of the present family of Invercauld, distinguished according to the custom of the Highlands from his size by the appellation of Findla More, and from her both the families of Farquharson and of Lude are descended. In this manner Queen Mary's harp came with one of her female descendants into the family of Lude.

If we could have had General Robertson's own words it would have been far more satisfactory—but the sub-committee and Mr Gunn appear to have ignored the idea that their paraphrase left an opening for cavil on the part of those whose theories did not fit it. The description of this harp also is so faulty, and has been so much relied on, that it is thought necessary to give it anew as follows :—

The length of the harp called Queen Mary's, from the top of the comb to the extremity of the foot, is 31 inches, and from front to back 18 inches. The box, which has four sounding holes about $\frac{3}{4}$ inch diameter, is a truncated triangle in shape and is hollowed out of the solid ; it is 5 inches wide at top and 12 inches at the bottom, with a thickness of $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches ; it has a swell of front from ends and sides to the middle or string hole band of $1\frac{1}{4}$ inch. This band is pierced by twenty-nine holes, each of which is protected on the upper side by a horse-shoe shaped brass border, and the band is strengthened by cross straps catching the points. The projection or foot at the lower end of the box extends $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches beyond it, and is $2\frac{1}{4}$ thick, carved to represent an animal's head. The back is much decayed, is patched at one of the lower corners, and dovetailed at the top into the box.

The comb, which is from $2\frac{1}{2}$ to $3\frac{1}{4}$ inches high and alters in section from oval at the junction to triangular at the extremity, is inserted obliquely into the upper end of the box, and projects in front of it $14\frac{1}{4}$ inches. It rises and falls with peculiar curves, and ends in a triangular face $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches high and 2 inches across the base. It is strengthened on each side by a brass band $\frac{3}{4}$ inch wide pierced by twenty-nine pin holes in which there are twenty-nine pins. Immediately below the band at the front an additional pin hole has been made through the wood, in which there is a

shorter pin for a string, which seems to have been attached to a metal loop at the lower end of the string-hole band.

The bow measures in a straight line from the front insertion in the comb to the front insertion in the foot $27\frac{1}{2}$ inches. The chord of the arc of the inner curve is 23 inches, and the rise of the curve above the centre of the chord is 4 inches. At the upper insertion the bow is $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches by $1\frac{1}{4}$, and at the lower $3\frac{1}{2}$ by 2 inches wide and thick. The middle part of the front of the bow is expanded so as to form a convenient hold for the hand, and has six silver knobs in the median line. This part tapers slightly above and below, and ends both ways in boldly carved heads of animals, reaching to within 4 inches of the top and $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches of the bottom.

The decorations appear to be in two styles, the first on the comb and box and the other on the bow. The ornament on the box and comb,



Fig. 3. Ornamentation of upper part of box of Harp.

which appears to have been burned in, is simply geometrical, excepting some fine foliaceous scroll work on the former near their junction (fig. 3). The front of the box is divided into two panels by the median band con-

taining the string holes. The centre of each is occupied by a circle enclosing an equal armed cross having a circle in the centre and the arms terminating in segments of circles enclosing smaller circles.

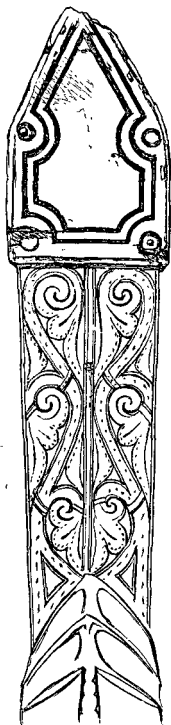


Fig. 4. Triangular front of comb and upper part of front of bow of Harp.

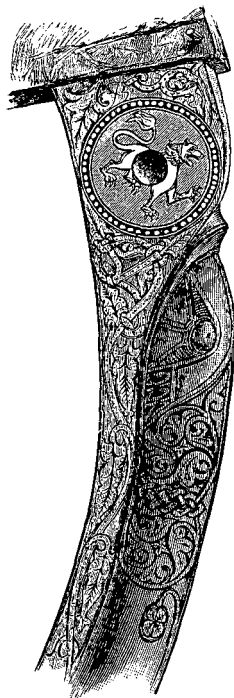


Fig. 5. Upper and lower ends of the bow (right side).



Fig. 6.

Below the two lower sounding-holes are two crosses of similar character, and from the double bordering circle around each sounding-hole proceed

double lines completing the general pattern. The sides are ornamented in the same manner, but somewhat varied.

The comb above the band and below it on the right side is also decorated with a pattern of lines and circles, and below it on the left side is an



Fig. 7.

Upper and lower ends of the bow (left side).



Fig. 8.

arcade of semi-circles. The triangular front of the comb (fig. 4) is similarly ornamented.

The two sides of the bow near the ends have two circular spaces, each of 3 inches diameter, which are surrounded by a pellet border. The two

upper circles (in figs. 5 and 7) contain Griffin-like animals with one fore

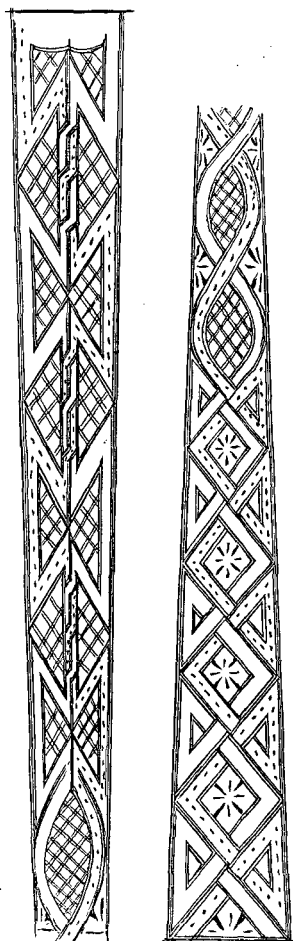


Fig. 9.

Fig. 10.

Interlaced patterns on inner curve or edge of the bow.

paw uplifted, that on the right (fig. 5) damaged by a hollow made in the wood apparently to receive a setting. The lower on the left (fig. 8) contains a winged dragon-like biped with a triple tail. The lower on the right (fig. 6) shows a group consisting of the figure of a horse-like animal standing with uplifted fore-foot over the tail of a fish, the head of which is in the mouth of a nondescript beast. The flat part around and extending between these circles (in figs. 5, 6, 7, and 8) is covered with a running pattern of foliaceous scroll-work incised and burned and the ground stained. Above the animal's head on the upper part of the front of the bow (fig. 4) are two symmetrical divisions filled with scroll-like work, and the corresponding part below the spaces are filled with a pattern of linear ornament. The inner curve or edge of the bow (figs. 9 and 10) is occupied by an incised and stained pattern of interlaced work and linear ornament.

The part of the rounded front immediately behind the animal's head is occupied by symmetrical patterns of interlaced work of foliaceous scrolls carved in bold relief—and there are traces of interlaced work incised on the flat oval space in the centre ornamented by the six silver studs.

On the front of the comb and on the upper right hand side of the bow there are the remains of the nails which

probably fastened the metal ornaments stolen about 1745, said in the Lude tradition to have been golden and jewelled, showing Queen Mary's portrait and the royal arms of Scotland.

A reference to the "Encyclopædia Britannica" will show how the confusion about the Lamont harp has been adopted, as also the error about the number of strings. Brian Boru's harp has also thirty, not twenty-eight, for it seems the bow when in its broken condition closed on the two lower string-holes, and the pins could not have been numbered; the error is repeated in "Collectanea de Rebus Hybernicis" and in "Camden's Britannia." The cast of that harp as restored is now exhibited by Mr Briscoe of Dublin, and we have engravings of it in the work of Mr Edward Bunting entitled "Ancient Music of Ireland," published by Messrs Hodges & Smith, Dublin, 1840. We find in the lectures of Professor Eugene O'Curry, M.R.I.A., edited by Professor Sullivan, and published by Williams & Norgate, London, and Kelly, Dublin, 1873, vol. iii. page 267, that Dr Petrie says this harp, popularly known as that of Brian Boru, is not only the most ancient instrument of the kind known to exist in Ireland, but is, in all probability, the oldest harp now remaining in Europe. Shall we not say that this harp, so long called Queen Mary's, has equal if not superior claim to great antiquity so far as structure and workmanship can enable experts to form an opinion? It must be very old, for the traces of the ornaments which, according to the Lude tradition, were fixed on it in or before 1563, and stolen about 1745, were placed over the original enrichments, and with solittle appreciation of their beauty, that a hollow appears to have been dug out for a central stone in the body of the griffin. The group in the lower right side of the bow must be symbolical, referring to some myth or legend long ago forgotten.

We need not repeat the story of the Chevalier O'Gorman as to Brian Boru's harp (fig. 11), or the remarks of its critics, except in so far as the latter bear directly or indirectly on Queen Mary's, which from its similarity to it has been claimed as an Irish instrument.

Professor O'Curry, agreeing partly with Dr Petrie as to the fabulous nature of the Chevalier's account of the deposit of Brian's harp at Rome

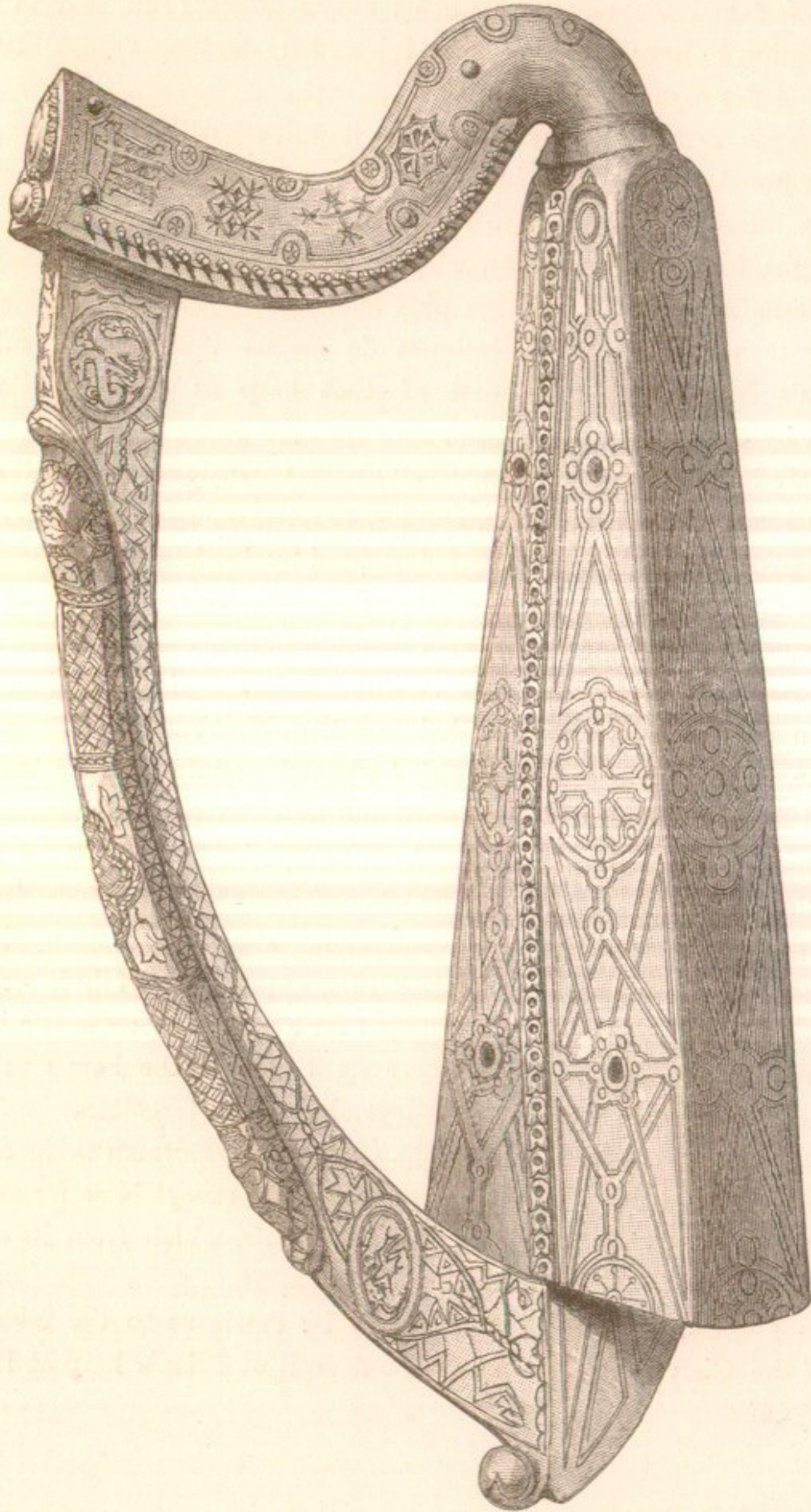


Fig. 11. The Harp called Brian Borumha's, in Trinity College Library.

by his son Donogh, brings his knowledge of ancient Irish poetry to bear, and finds some curious references to harps of the O'Briens, such as, that between 1204 and 1242, Gilla Brigde Mac Conmidhe or Albanach went on a special mission to Scotland to regain the small sweet harp of Donnchadh Cairbreach O'Brien in which he failed, and O'Curry asks, might the harp not have remained until taken to England with the Regalia of Scotland by Edward, and afterwards been presented by Henry VIII. to the Earl of Clanricard as the harp of Brian Boru, or O'Brien's harp.

About 1570 another O'Brien harp seems to have gone adrift into a strange country, viz., the harp of Conn O'Brien, Earl of Thomond.

Mr Edward Bunting doubts the accuracy of Mr Gunn's information and the evidence as to how Queen Mary's harp came to Lude, as well as the reliance to be placed on a tradition half a century old as to the royal arms, and portrait, &c. He says, and Mr Gunn coincides, that Rory Dall Morrison, an Irish harper, visited Lude about 1650!

According to the tale of the old blind Irish harper Denis O'Hempsey or Hempson, corroborated by another named Arthur O'Neill, this Rory Dall was known in Ireland as Rory Dall O'Cahan or Kane, and he (Roger, evidently the same Rory) died in Scotland in a nobleman's house, where he left his harp and silver key. Lord Macdonald gave a valuable silver key to Echlin O'Kane, another Irish harper, about 1773, which key was sold in Edinburgh. Probably there was then no harp fitted to the key in Skye and he (Mr Bunting) must look for it elsewhere. That Rory Dall was at Lude about 1650, and composed one of his best purths in honour of the ancestor of General Robertson, called "Suiper Chiurn na Leod," or Lude's supper, and it is very remarkable that of all the pieces formerly played on the harp in question by General Robertson's great grandfather, who was the last person who performed on it, this very purth of Rory Dall is now the only one remembered in the family, the only piece of musical tradition that clings to *the harp*—shall we say—*of its composer*, who may have been only four years old in 1650 (*vide* p. 26).

By such shadowy links of reasoning it is sought to show that this harp,

known as Queen Mary's, may have been the property of Donnchadh Cairbreach O'Brien or of Rory Dall O'Cahan, but with submission to your better judgment, it may be confidently asserted there is nothing suggested that can be placed in competition with the statement by a gentleman of high standing of the tradition of old highland families handed down along with the heirlooms themselves from house to house and from generation to generation with reverential care. As to the lost decorations, there would probably be enough knowledge of heraldic blazonry among the Lairds of Lude and their friends to prevent any mistake as to the royal arms.

The Gaelic word Dall is neither an additional Christian nor surname, whatever those unacquainted with the language may suppose. It is simply descriptive as "blind," and gives no greater reason to suppose the identity of Rory Dall O'Kane and Rory Dall Morrison, because both were harpers, than that blind John Brown is the same man as blind John White, because both are fiddlers. It so happens that Kane as a Christian name was not uncommon in the family of Roderick Morrison, but it seems nothing is made of that point in Bunting's "Theory," which, compounded as it is, of an ingenious chain of statements and deductions, may be most satisfactorily disposed of by giving from other and more reliable sources the true parentage, &c., of Rory Dall, the famous Scottish highland harper.

He was the son of John Morrison of Bragar in Lewis, and born about 1646 according to Mackenzie, *vide* "His Beauties of Gaelic Poetry," p. 85. His father was a man of some mark and varied ability. See Captain Thomas' "Tradition of the Morrisons," vol. xii. of our Proceedings, pp. 526-531, and Appendix ii. of Nicolson's "Gaelic Proverbs," p. 407. Roderick had four brothers, of whom three became clergymen. He was sent with two of them to be educated at Inverness, and there he lost his eyesight from smallpox. Music instead of theology became thenceforth his study, and his father is said to have declared that the education of Rory as a musician cost him more trouble and expense than that of the three ministers. Iain Breac, chief of the Macleods, engaged Rory as a

bard and harper, and in both offices he earned a reputation that still lives.

The chief gave him the farm of Totamor in Glenelg rent free, but with the death of Iain Breac change of days came to Dunvegan. Rory appears to have been ejected from his farm by the new laird, after which he returned to Lewis, where he died at a good old age, and was buried in the old Church Yard of Uy, near Stornoway.

It is to be feared that the recovery of General Robertson's letters to the Highland Society in 1805 is hopeless. It is doubtful whether they were ever returned by Mr Gunn after he had them. They have been sought for in vain among the Highland Society Records, and if, as is probable, Mr Gunn's papers have disappeared during the last seventy-five years, we can now only refer to that version of the Lude tradition which was published in 1807, and give such scraps of information relative to it as have come under notice during inquiry.

Attention has been directed to a statement that Beatrix Gardyn married into the family of Luss, not Lude, that the Luss family have a harp and a legend like those of Lude, and that a notice to that effect might be found in the supplement to Burke's "Landed Gentry," vol. iii, 1848, p. 55, under the head of Garden-Campbell of Troup and Glenlyon, as follows:—"In 1551 the Laird of Banchory received from Queen Mary a harp, as a prize for a piece of music performed by him at a musical competition, held soon after the Queen's arrival in Scotland, and at which the Laird attended, in the disguise of a minstrel. This harp was carried by a daughter of the Laird, on her marriage with the Laird of Luss in Dumbartonshire, into that family, and is still preserved."

As the marriages of the Lairds of Luss are minutely and authentically detailed in a work named the "Chiefs of Colquhoun," by William Fraser, Edinburgh, 1869, and as it appears there that none of them married Beatrix Gardyn or any other daughter of Banchory, although it may be open to question whether a granddaughter or other descendant may not have been so married, it seems quite possible that Luss is merely a misprint for Lude, and that Dumbartonshire instead of Perthshire may be a

consequent geographical correction by "*the reader*" of the press. In any case the statement should be supported by more information about the marriage, as well as about the harp alleged to be still preserved, before it can be unhesitatingly accepted.

In the same work of Burke, under the head of "the Lineage of the Robertsons of Lude," both the harps are mentioned.

It is stated that Charles, fifth laird of Lude, married, during his father's lifetime, Lilius, daughter of Sir John Lamont of Lamont, chief of the name, of ancient family and extensive estates in Argyleshire. It was with this lady (Lilius Lamont) there came one of those very curious old harps which have been in the family for several centuries, hence this one was called "the Lamont Harp."

John, grandson of the said Charles and Lilius, seventh of Lude, married Beatrix Gardyn, widow of Finla More, ancestor of the family of Invercauld, who was killed the same year at the battle of Pinkie.

This, if verified, would be a satisfactory solution of much apparent discrepancy, but unfortunately in the same book we have an equally distinct statement, under the head of Farquharson of Invercauld, that Finla More married first, Beatrix, daughter of George Garden of that ilk; second, a daughter of Baron Roy of Kincardin Stewart, and was killed at Pinkie in 1547. If so, Beatrix Gardyn could not have been a widow in 1547 without some possible occurrences left unnoticed by Burke, and if a widow, may have had two husbands, and probably another name, before 1563, when she is said to have received the harp from Queen Mary;—she is alleged to have borne two sons to Finla More, and may have had three sons and two daughters by John, seventh of Lude.

The second marriage of Finla More is again noticed by Burke in the lineage of the Farquharsons of Haughton, which sets forth that the great granddaughter of that alliance became the wife of Farquharson or Cumming of Kellas about the year 1580; but Beatrix Gardyn is said elsewhere to have been the second wife. (See Suppl. p. 400—Farquharson of Whitehouse.)

The following extract from a recent publication may not be out of

place. Its notice of the harps must refer to a date prior to November 1730, when John twelfth of Lude was served heir to John eleventh, his father, the last performer on the ancient harp, who had been fifty-six years in possession of Lude, and had married Margaret Farquharson, only daughter of Invercauld. (See *Burke's Landed Gentry*, 1848.)

Nicolson's "Collection of Gaelic Proverbs" is based on Macintosh's work, published 1785, or on a later edition which must have been issued very near the date of his death, on the 22d November 1808, as it contains (p. 199) a notice of Mr Gunn's book of 1807. It records "the following interesting reminiscence."

"Harps were in use in the highlands and isles of Scotland time immemorial, till the beginning of last century, and even later; for Mr Robertson of Lude, General Robertson's great grandfather, the gentleman whom the elegant poet Struan immortalizes in his poems, was a famous performer on that instrument, and I have heard my father relate the following anecdote of him:—

"One night my father said to Lude that he would be happy to hear him play upon the harp, which at that time began to give place to the violin. After supper Lude and he retired to another room in which there were a couple of harps, one of which belonged to Queen Mary. 'James,' says Lude, 'here are two harps, the largest one is the loudest, but the small one is the sweetest, which do you wish to hear played?' James answered, 'the small one,' which Lude took up, and played upon till daylight.

"Upon a visit to my native country of Athole, about five years ago, I had the curiosity to enquire of General Robertson if the harps were still in the family. The General told me they were, and brought them upon the table, at the sight of which I was quite overjoyed in viewing the musical instruments of our ancestors, as well as those of the renowned heroes of Ossian.

"After my return to Edinburgh, I immediately gave notice of the harps to the Highland Society of Scotland, who wrote to General Robertson requesting a sight of the harps, which he was so obliging as to grant.

“Mr Gunn, teacher of music in Edinburgh, has since published an ‘Essay upon the Harp,’ with representations taken from these very harps.

I have the vanity to think the bringing of these harps before the eyes of the public to be one of the most pleasant actions of my life, as in all probability they must either have been lost or destroyed by time, without ever having been known to the world; and those fastidious gentlemen who take pleasure in opposing everything respecting the antiquity of the Caledonians, would have persisted in denying the use of the harp among these people, as they do many other things.”

Of course, as the Lude tradition does not trace the Queen Mary’s harp further back than 1563, and as from appearances it may even then have been an old instrument, it is quite possible it may have been made in Ireland, quite as possible as that the so-called Brian Boru harp may have been made in Scotland, but the style of decoration is so distinctive that Queen Mary’s harp may be fairly claimed as Scottish.

Although one at least of our celebrated harpers is alleged to have been Irish, namely Muireadach Albanach or Muiredach of Lios an Doill or

O’Daly, supposed progenitor of the M’Vurrichs, so long bards of Clan



Fig. 12. Memorial Slab at Keills

Ranald, it is well known from incidental notices in ancient writings that in former ages the harp music of Alba was as celebrated as that of Erin. The artists and artificers of Caledonia were quite equal to the construction and decoration of this elegant specimen of Clarshach, otherwise we must suppose that all our arms and ornaments, on which such masterly work of like style has been spent, have been imported, and while the Irish antiquaries point to the square pillarless harp on the Ullard or Urrard stone in proof of its early use in Erin, so may the antiquaries of Scotland refer to their sculptured stones, where it is found in its triangular shape. Besides West Highland examples, we have it on the Dupplin Cross, on the Auldbar Stone, on the Stone at Shandwick, and on the Cross at Monifieth. A stone at Keils in Knapdale (fig. 12) has one much resembling Queen Mary's harp, with very similar decoration of the box in that plain rule and compasses style which is so much in contrast with the bold, free artist-like work in the bow, as to lead to a belief in the division of the labour of construction.

The ancient race of the Robertsons of Lude became extinct only a few years ago, not more than four or five, and it is not known whether the last descendant, Colonel J. A. Robertson, F.S.A. Scot., left any documents relating to these harps among his family papers,—but the most indisputable evidence of their great age is to be readily seen, by the antiquary, in the style and materials of the instruments themselves. Their early history is unknown, and the verification of the existence of one of them as a royal gift in certain houses for more than three centuries, can only enhance, in a minor degree, the interest with which they must be regarded. Nevertheless I regret that after exhausting every source of information known or suggested to me in seeking to test the value of the Lude tradition, there can only be laid before you such a very limited amount of contradictory and unauthenticated data. Individual opinions will differ, but in my view, that tradition, kept clear of the padding by which it seems to be supported in Mr Gunn's book, may be taken as being worthy of reliance until better refuted than it has yet been.

The tradition bears that Queen Mary presented this harp to Beatrix Gardyn. It may be doubted if it goes further. The story of that original

gift may have been told from generation to generation, and from Banchory to Invercauld and Lude, but there have been more than one Queen Mary in Scotland, and naturally, in the course of years, this tale became connected with the best known Queen Mary, probably before the marriage of John Robertson eleventh of Lude, the last performer on the harp, with Margaret Farquharson of Invercauld, the descendant of Beatrix, by whom it may be reasonably conjectured the harp was brought to Lude.

As to Queen Mary, Beatrix Gardyn, and the marriage of her descendant with Lude, General Robertson might agree with Mr Gunn's version, but the book itself should be referred to for the remainder. Its composition may show traces of the line between the bare tradition for which the general must be held responsible, and the flowery antiquarian suggestions and statements introduced to make up a bulky, saleable, and readable publication. Material of that sort would not be likely to meet contradiction, but, where he touched on the tradition, Mr Gunn had his attention drawn to a misstatement even after part of the work was printed. General Robertson had not said that Beatrix Gardyn married one of his ancestors, but that one of her descendants had done so, and more towards the end of the volume Mr Gunn amended the error by a footnote. As to the date of 1563, we may regard that, and the great hunt in Athole, as Mr Gunn's own contribution, based on the idea that Mary Stuart, daughter of James V., must have been the Queen Mary of the tradition, not Mary of Guise, her mother. Of course Mary of Gueldres, wife and widow of James II. of Scotland, having died in 1463, it is improbable that she gave the harp to the first wife of Finla More, who was slain at Pinkie in 1547; it is hardly possible, even supposing Beatrix Gardyn to have been a very juvenile musician or an infant, before 1463, and that he was a very old man when he fell, eighty-four years after the death of Mary of Gueldres.

This is a mere sketch of an interesting subject. As such it may attract the attention of others who, with inclination and more ability, have better opportunity of further enquiry. I would especially suggest to any one who may know of the alliances and history of the old houses of Banchory or Troup, Invercauld, and Lude, that he might trace the line of Beatrix

Gardyn to its junction with the Robertsons of Lude, and report the result to this Society, with dates, and a note of the authorities relied on, so that if possible we may have the truth cleared of those encrustations of extraneous growth that so frequently gather round a long-transmitted oral tradition.